THE SIEGE MYTH: THE SIEGE OF DERRY IN ULSTER PROTESTANT POLITICAL CULTURE, 1689-1939

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INTRODUCTION

THE SIEGE MYTH:

REBELLION AND LOYALTY, A CONTRADICTION IN TERMS?

Protestant Political Culture and the Siege of Derry: A Story of Contradictions

The Siege of Derry of 1689 was a turning point in Irish history which contained all the ingredients of an historical epic. The Siege lasted for 105 days, making it the longest siege in Irish, or British, history, and 10,000 people, almost one in three of the besieged population of the city, died as a result. In the international arena, the successful defence of Derry was crucial in securing the English Crown for William III, in the wake of the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688, and in the defeat of the deposed King James II and his ally, Louis XIV of France. In Ireland the struggles of 1688-91 ensured that land and power remained concentrated in the hands of Protestant colonists, most of whom had come to Ireland during the preceding century. To a great extent, the political settlement of the 1690s shaped the development of Irish society for centuries to come. Ireland continues to live with the consequences of the Derry Siege.

The story of the Siege of Derry of 1689 is also the single most important historical myth in Ulster Protestant political culture. For at least two hundred years, thousands of Ulster Protestants have marched in Derry every year, in annual commemoration of the beginning and end of the Siege. Since the early nineteenth century the Apprentice Boys Clubs of Derry, a body similar in many ways to the Orange Order,

has organised those parades and acted as a focus for the Siege culture. Numerous, books, pamphlets, songs and poems have been written on the theme of the Siege. For two hundred years and more, Ulster Protestants have identified themselves and their politics through the imagery of the Siege story.

The battle of the Boyne, annually celebrated in Orange parades on July 12th, may at first appear a more significant historical touchstone for Ulster Protestants. However, the story of the Boyne lacks the depth of the more developed tale of the Siege. Ultimately the Boyne Myth is reducible to a single triumphalist image, the picture of William III crossing the river to victory. The Siege Myth is never a single image, it is a cycle. The story of the Derry Siege encapsulates the various ideas central to Ulster Unionism and to the collective identity of Ulster Protestants: betrayal and loyalty, threat and defence, struggle and salvation.

Expressing itself through such ideas Ulster Unionism, and Ulster Unionists, often appear to others as both perplexing and contradictory. Indeed, two contradictory ideas lie at the heart of Ulster Protestant political culture: the twinning of "loyalty" and rebellion and of "liberty" with anti-Catholicism.[1] Loyalty to the constitution, and political and religious libertarianism, have been used as justification for violent political rebellion and anti-Catholic discrimination. To many this is simply proof that Ulster Unionism and Ulster Protestants act and think irrationally. Yet, if the ideas and actions of Ulster Unionists often appear contradictory and inexplicable to others, then this is not the case for those Ulster Protestants who support the Union of Britain and Northern Ireland. Unionism has an internal rationale, and any analysis of

Unionism, however critical, needs to grasp this fact. Similarly, the contradiction of ideas in Ulster Protestant politics may, to some degree, reflect the contradictions of the world that faces Ulster Protestants.

Nowhere are the contradictions inherent in Protestant political culture more vividly reconciled and rationalised than through the images of the past. It is in the Myth of the Derry Siege that such mutually exclusive concepts as liberty and anti-Catholicism can be wedded to each other. Perhaps this is because the actual Siege of Derry was, itself, riddled with contradictions. The Siege was, after all, an act of rebellion against a legitimate monarch, justified at the time on the grounds of fidelity to the constitution. The incongruous marriage between rebellion and loyalty was intrinsic to the story of the Derry Siege in 1689. The Siege story has proved so evocative to many Ulster Protestants exactly because it seems to encapsulate the contradictions of their situation.

Certainly, the Siege story has also proved to be an enduring political myth. This is not because, as is often supposed, the Siege has been a mirror reflecting back an unchanging self-image to the Ulster Protestant community. On the contrary, that image has changed through time, as the Siege has been interpreted and understood in different ways, at different times, in different circumstances by different people. The meaning of the Siege story has changed over time, and at any one time, the Siege has not meant the same thing to all classes, groups and communities. Ulster Protestant politics has always had more than one internal rationale, and such ideas as liberty and loyalty have never been static or uncontested.

To suggest that the meaning of the Siege Myth has not always been the same is not, however, a readily accepted proposition. Certainly there would be many who would disagree among the thousands who march in Derry, each year, in the "Siege" parades. To assume that the Siege Myth has not always meant the same thing poses several questions. How have the concepts central to the Siege story altered over time, and why? Similarly, what can any changes in the meaning of the Siege story tell us about the nature of Ulster Protestant political culture and, in particular, about the role of history as a "justification" for sectarianism? How can the central contradictions of Unionist ideology, the ideas of "loyalty" and "rebellion", be reconciled through images of the past? How, too, can such images also reconcile material differences, particularly of class, within the Ulster Protestant community?

The best way to answer some of these questions is to examine the historical development of the Siege parades, and the culture which surrounds them, from the early 1700s to the 1930s. The logic for this historical approach is also dictated by the inherent loyalty-rebellion contradiction of the Siege Myth. To analyse the Siege culture from the early eighteenth century to the early twentieth century is to see it transformed from a small-scale and localised political phenomenon, which initially acted as a vehicle for popular unease, into a myth used to legitimise the wholesale rejection of the authority of the British government, and then into a prop of Unionist power in the state of Northern Ireland.

However, before embarking on this analysis, it is necessary to briefly map out the framework to be used. To do so, three questions may be posed. What importance

have earlier analysts of Ulster Unionism given to the Siege story, in what sense is that story a "myth", and how can such myths change their meaning over time?

The "Most Memorable" Siege: The Historical Importance of the Siege Myth

The symbolic importance of the Derry Siege has a long history, as well as a recent past. Certainly students of Irish history have long seen the Siege as having great political and cultural significance. Ever since Lord Macaulay called the Siege of Derry the "most memorable in the annals of the British Isles" and suggested that the walls of the city were to the "Protestants of Ulster what the trophy of Marathon was to the Athenians", historians have argued that the Siege constitutes not only one of the most important events in the history of Ireland, but also a central element in an Ulster Protestant sense of the past.[2] This continues to the case among contemporary academics, many of whom come from diverse political and theoretical perspectives.

Because of the Siege, Michael Farrell suggests, "Derry has a central place in Orange mythology" and Liam de Paor argues that,

> Derry has a special mythical and emotional significance for Protestants and loyalists... Ulster Protestants are a people of Siege, at least so they have long seen themselves, and Derry was the city of Siege.[3]

A.T.Q. Stewart writes that the Siege is "enshrined in Protestant tradition, not so much as the record of one event, but as a set of historical tableaux... depicting with vivid symbolism the courageous resistance of the Protestant settlement".[4]

Roy Foster agrees, and argues that, in the wake of Macaulay's "pyrotechnical *tour de force*", the Siege became both an "historiographical highpoint" and a "story and a myth" significant because of its "images of Siege and delivery, treachery and self-reliance".[5] Oliver MacDonagh, writing in a similar vein, believes that "the Siege of Derry is their [Ulster Protestants] most enduring myth"[6] and Terence Brown concludes that,

> That the Siege was, in the telling of the tale, self-imposed by the Apprentice Boys, the temporising Lundy forced to flee the city, seems metaphorically appropriate to the emotionally exclusive quality of the Northern Protestants historical self-vision.[7]

Nor is this general consensus on the political importance of the Derry Siege restricted to the school of history. The journalist, David McKittrick, one of the foremost authorities on Unionist and loyalist politics, pinpointed the political role of the Siege parades during the Tercentenary celebrations of the Siege in 1988:

> The Siege has been commemorated... since 1688, not so much as a pleasant piece of folklore, but as an event of continuing political significance. It is the great symbol used to pass on to each new generation the secret of Protestant survival in Ireland: to an extraordinary extent the men of 1688 still continue to provide the political role model for their descendants. An understanding of what happened at the Siege of Derry - and of what Protestants think happened - is essential for a real understanding of the Unionist psyche.[8]

While there are many episodes of the past which are important in Ulster Protestant political culture, as Anthony Buckley writes, "of all these historical events, this Siege [of Derry] has the greatest symbolic significance".[9] The story of the Derry Siege has

always had a bearing on the political identity of Ulster Protestants. The sociologist Desmond Bell argues that the "Siege of 1688-89 has become lodged in the Loyalist popular memory", the story of the Siege emerging in the process as, "a key political myth within Ulster Loyalism... a tale told about the past to legitimise or discredit a regime".[10] In Bell's view the Siege of Derry represents for Ulster loyalists, a narrative of "encirclement, collective endurance and heroism" which is "appropriated... as myth [to]... make sense of present experience".

The Siege Story as "Myth": Constructing Identity and Legitimating Action through the Derry Siege

There is, then, a general academic consensus that the Siege of Derry has had a special place in Ulster Protestant political culture. What that place was and continues to be is, however, not generally agreed upon, and perhaps not even very widely understood. The best way of understanding the social and ideological role of the Siege is to examine it as a "Political Myth". As a Myth, the main function of the Siege cycle has been to allow a sense of identity of the Ulster Protestant community, to be developed, and for that identity to legitimate social and political activity.

To understand the Siege as a "Myth" is not, of course, to imply that it did not occur. Rather, it is to understand the Siege as an episode of the past which has taken on political and social significance beyond its place in history. A Myth is, according to Richard Kearney, "a collective act of symbolic narration", a story through which a society, as Liam de Paor puts it, "tells itself about itself in order to describe itself to

itself and others".[11] A Myth is an historical moment which helps to construct identity and meaning, to "make sense" of the world, and to justify action in the present. Anthony Buckley has suggested that history is used in three ways within Ulster Protestant political culture, as a "rhetorical commentary that either justifies or condemns", a "charter for action", and a "focus of allegiance". In this vein he concludes that the Siege Myth is constituted,

> in a Levi-Straussian manner as a structure of opposites, in which the wicked, uncivilised, tyrannical and 'rough' people outside the walls confront the good, civilised, freedom-loving 'religious' people within.[12]

The Derry Siege matters for Ulster Protestants because it is the starkest way in which a "focus of allegiance" and a "charter for action" are created. As a "focus for allegiance", the Siege Myth constructs a sense of identity for Ulster Protestants by providing a series of symbols and signs through which their collective identity can be expressed. In this sense, Ulster Protestants can be understood to constitute an "imagined community", whose "ethnicity", as Desmond Bell has suggested, is founded, "not in an ideology of nationalism" but on "an antediluvian religious discourse" and the "ethico-political notion of "loyalty". Religious distinctiveness and "loyalty" are both central to the story of the Derry Siege.[13]

"Community", in this regard, is understood as "a cluster of symbolic and ideological map references with which the individual is socially oriented".[14] The Siege Myth acts as a means through which Ulster Protestants are socialised into certain beliefs and actions. Through the Siege Myth, political and social actions in the present are

legitimated by being compared to an episode of the past which is seen to enshrine all that is best and meaningful to the community. The Siege Myth is also, therefore, "a-historical", in that it is not merely its actual place in history that counts, but the way in which that history is understood to encapsulate values that stand "beyond time". Events and actions which occur in the real world, and in real time, if understood through such a myth, become, in some sense, "sacred":

> Myth is though to express the absolute truth because it narrates a sacred history... by imitating the exemplary acts of mythic deities and heroes man detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the Sacred Time".[15]

The Siege Myth conveys upon the mundane struggles of the world an almost metaphysical importance, and the story of the Siege enshrines values that are seen as both ageless and universal.

The Siege Myth does not enshrine certain values, and denounce others, in a political vacuum. The Myth is not merely the product of "folklore", nor are the values within it simply certain "common sense" moral imperatives. The Siege operates in relation to the organisation of power and the conflict of interests within Irish society. The Siege Myth is, in this sense, ideological. As Richard Kearney argues, "Myths are not neutral as romantic ethnology would have us believe. They become authentic or unauthentic according to the interests which they serve".[16]

Terry Eagleton has defined ideology as "the struggle of antagonistic social interests at the level of the sign", and the Siege Myth provides a series of recognisable signs and symbols through which a variety of social interests in Irish society, and

particularly within Derry itself, have struggled for power during the last three hundred years.[17] The concept of ideology is, for Eagleton, a way to conceptualise

> the relation between an utterance and its material conditions of possibility, when those conditions of possibility are viewed in the light of certain power relations central to the reproduction of social life.[18]

Divisions of class, religion and gender have all impacted upon the form and meaning of the Siege Myth. The "utterance" of the Siege imagery is dependent upon the "material conditions of possibility" that such divisions involve.

The past is, therefore, a cultural and ideological resource, which places events of the present in relation to a collective history, imagined through myths, and confers upon those events "the sanctity which enshrouds tradition and lore".[19] The Siege Myth thus becomes a story, taken from an Ulster Protestant collective past, which defines and legitimates action, identity and values in the present.

Meaning and Performance: Changes in Meaning, and the Demonstration of Identity, in the Siege Myth

This study focuses on the changing nature of the Siege parades from the eighteenth century to the early twentieth century. Two assumptions underpin this approach: that the meaning of the Siege Myth has changed through time, and that the best way to explore those changes is by looking at the Siege culture. If the story of the Derry Siege has been a means to express a sense of identity for Ulster Protestants, that identity, it is being argued, has not remained the same over time, nor has the Siege

meant the same thing to all Ulster Protestants at any one moment in history. The most obvious way in which that identity has found expression, it is also being suggested, is through the street parades associated with the Siege.

There have been certain constant themes within the Siege Myth, such as the battle of loyalty and betrayal. However, the way in which those themes have been defined and articulated, what they have been understood to mean, has not been constant. As Anthony Buckley suggests, the Ulster Protestant past can be interpreted in various ways, and through those different interpretations different groups or classes within the Protestant community have competed to achieve social and political leadership:

> It is not useful to think of Ulster Protestants as somehow 'trapped by their history', for their history provides them with not one 'historical charter', but a whole range of operational models for dealing with their opponents.[20]

The Siege Myth is made up of a series of symbols which have always appeared in the telling of the Siege. Certain characters and actions have come to personify and crystallise what the Siege represents. The "Apprentice Boys", the "City Walls", "Governor Walker", "Lundy", the "Shutting of the Gates", the "Relief of the City", these and other symbols are what make up the Siege cycle. However, such symbols should be understood as "mental constructs" which "provide people with the means to make meaning", and although the form of the symbol may remain the same, the content of it does not.[21] Thus, while the Apprentice Boys may appear as the embodiment of loyalty, to whom that loyalty is owed, what such loyalty involves, and what actions should be taken to show loyalty, will not always be seen in the same

way.

Similarly, the "message" of the Siege Myth as a "defence of liberty", which is how many Ulster Protestants describe the Siege in virtually all historical periods, will depend upon the definition given to "liberty" at any particular time. Such definitions will in turn determine the nature of communal identity and action. The Siege symbols will represent who belongs to the "community", what the "community" is supposed to believe in, and how it is supposed to act. Appropriating the symbols through which a sense of the community is constituted is therefore a fundamental way of struggling for power. To lay claim to the Siege inheritance by identifying with the symbols of the Siege, and, in the process, to re-define what those symbols mean, is to struggle for communal leadership.

Appropriating the symbols of the Siege also gives the appearance of historical continuity. Similarly, diverse versions of the Siege story can seem to be saying the same thing because they are expressed in the same forms. Such uniformity may not, however, necessarily exist. The sense of continuity and the sense of unity are, in fact, ideological functions of historical myths. As Anthony Cohen argues, differences within a given culture,

> can be glossed over in a commonly accepted symbol precisely because it allows its adherents to attach their own meanings to it. They share the symbol but do not necessarily share its meanings.

The sharing of certain cultural symbols therefore subverts differences and allows the community to appear unified, coherent and in a seamless line with the past.

Employing the same symbols "continually transforms the reality of difference into the appearance of similarity with such efficacy that people can still invest community with ideological integrity".[22]

The appearance of continuity and unity has certainly always been a high priority for many Ulster Protestants, and the fallacy of continuity and unity has been the subject of study for more than one analyst. As Desmond Bell suggests, although Loyalism "presents itself to the outside world as a united front of Protestants, the unity is deceptive", but it "masks the differentiation within itself by imposing a common set of symbols".[23] Terence Brown also argues that the idea of "the whole Protestant community" has been a politically powerful "myth" throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[24]

If the Siege Myth has changed through time, then the best way to chart the shifts in its meaning is through an examination of the rites and rituals of the Siege parades. Here again, Desmond Bell's analysis is enlightening:

> In reality the Loyalist sense of identity achieves its positive valency...in being actively paraded. That identity is dependent on the rehearsed myths, ritualised practices, and confrontations of the marching season....It is the sound of the Lambeg drum rather than the resonance of political ideology which brings tears to the eyes of a loyalist...The province of this cultural identity is that of the street confrontation and communal celebration.

The Siege parades have allowed Derry Protestants to demonstrate a communal identity, to assert collective solidarity and to express a sense of difference from the Catholic community of the city for hundreds of years. The parades have also been

a way for Derry Protestants to ritually display their power, to express anger with authority and to formulate political programmes. They have been an intrinsic element of the social and political life of the city for centuries.

The Relief of Derry parade, which takes place on August 12 each year, has developed from a relatively small and local affair in the late eighteenth century into one of the most important dates of the "marching season", the annual round of Orange parades and festivals that take place during the summer months, which form the main focus for Ulster Protestant political culture. The growth of the Siege parades in Derry charts not only the changing nature of the Siege Myth, but also the social and political development of the Derry Protestant community. The Siege parades are a mirror which reflects the changing position, structure and outlook of the Derry Protestant community.

"Liberty" and "Loyalty", the "Crowd" and the "Cabal": Ideologies and Social Forces in the Siege Myth

The importance of the Siege Myth, its changing nature and the performance of that changing nature through the Siege parades, provides the logic for this study. This analysis is also, however, designed to explore the relationship between ideology and class in the Siege Myth, and in particular, the way in which the core concepts of Protestant political culture have expressed class relations within the Protestant community. The portrayal of the Catholic community is a theme running throughout the work, and the sectarianism of the Siege Myth is, of course, important, but the

Catholic community is examined only inasmuch as it impacts on the attitudes and actions of the Protestant community. There would certainly be scope for a further work looking at how Catholic attitudes to the Siege Myth may, or may not, have changed in the last three hundred years. Similarly, while the construction of gender relations through the imagery of the Siege is a subject touched on at various points throughout the text, the "rich intermingling of gender, religious and historico-political themes" within the Siege Myth is deserving of a study in its own right.[25]

The relationship of certain ideas central to Protestant political culture, and the construction of class relations through the Siege Myth is a concern throughout the thesis, and provides the basis for the organisation of chapters. Four chapters take the relationship of class, power and cultural reproduction as the main theme: on the nature of allegiances during the seventeenth century and the role of the Crowd in the Siege itself; popular culture and disillusionment with authority in the early eighteenth century; on class and party politics in the late nineteenth century; and on state authority and Unionist party hegemony in the early twentieth century. Three chapters focus more upon the core concepts enshrined within the Siege Myth: on the contest of "liberty" in the late eighteenth century; the development of politicised Protestantism in the early nineteenth century; and of imperial patriotism in the late nineteenth century. It may be useful to provide a brief introduction to each of these chapters in turn.

The first chapter examines the Siege in the context of the seventeenth century, and explores some of the reasons why the struggles of the seventeenth century have

emerged as the great myths of Protestant political culture. The chapter aims to counter some of the assumptions made about the period by looking at the complexity of social and political conflicts which defined the development of Derry from its foundation as a colonial city in 1609 up to the eve of the Siege. The analysis of the actual Siege in 1689 explores the characters and events, which become important in the Siege Myth, within their historical context. The influences and actions of the popular Crowd, which was a distinct and powerful force throughout the Siege, are examined in depth.

The second chapter examines the experiences of the survivors of the Siege in the aftermath of 1689 and how their experiences influenced the first manifestations of the Siege Myth. For most survivors of the Siege the relief of the city did not usher in a period of peace and prosperity, many became deeply disillusioned as a result. Not unconnected to this air of disillusion, the early eighteenth century saw an embryonic Siege culture emerge, popular in origin and plebian in orientation.[26] The little celebration there was of the Siege Myth was also largely limited to Derry itself.

Chapter three argues that the Siege Myth of the late eighteenth century was, to all intents and purposes, an "invented tradition".[27] The first organised and regular celebration of the Siege anniversaries took place in the early 1770s, largely as a means by which sections of the city elite could demonstrate their power and prestige. The invented tradition of the Siege was, therefore, a product of, what might be called, a theatre of civic culture, or a "theatre of patronage". During the 1780s and 1790s the Siege parades became well-established in the city and, for the first time, the Siege

Myth became truly politically significant. The centenary celebrations of 1788-89 certainly acted as a catalyst for the growth of the Siege parades. The political environment of the period was even more vital. Laying claim to the memory of the Siege became one way that political struggles took place, largely within the Protestant community itself. These struggles revolved around the idea of "liberty", and what form "liberty" should take in Irish society.

Since the seventeenth century the difference of religion has mattered in Irish society, and religious division has always been an important part of the Siege Myth, but the way in which religion and religious difference have mattered has not always stayed the same. In the early nineteenth century the nature of Protestantism changed and so did its role in Irish society. The emergence, particularly after 1820, of the evangelical movement, the close identification of Protestantism with the Constitution and the drive for the political unity of all Protestants, as Protestants, in the campaign for "All-Protestant Union", profoundly affected the nature of politics and society in Ireland. Such shifts were also reflected in the Siege Myth. Chapter four explores the changing place of Protestantism in the Siege Myth and in Derry itself during the early nineteenth century.

Chapter five analyses the development of party politics and class in the later nineteenth century and the impact this had upon the Siege culture. The rise of industrial capitalism and the development of mass democracy conditioned the political confrontation of nationalism and unionism in late nineteenth century Ireland and also gave birth to new forms of political mobilisation. The Apprentice Boys Clubs and the

Siege parades altered considerably in this period and became the primary vehicle of Protestant working class political mobilisation in Derry. The Siege parades also saw, for the first time, an influx of marchers from outside the city and the Siege Myth grew from a local cultural phenomenon, into one of the foundational elements of Unionist ideology. This chapter examines the rise of the parades in the context of mass political mobilisation and analyses the symbolism of the Apprentice Boys as the personification of the Protestant working class.

If the geographical appeal of the Siege Myth was expanding through the latter half of the nineteenth century, so too was the "imagined community" it was supposed to represent. A local identity was always important in the Siege Myth, but in the late nineteenth century this local identity was married to the "imagination of empire". The Siege became a myth of empire. The discourse of loyalty was, in this sense, identified with loyalty to the British empire, and the Siege was seen as an expression of imperial patriotism. Chapter six examines the role of imperial patriotism in the Siege Myth, and the way in which imperial patriotism conditioned the development of Ulster Unionism as a political ideology. By the early twentieth century Unionism faced a crisis of identity as the prospect of Irish Home Rule threatened not only the material interests of Ulster Unionists but also the imperial patriotism through which those interests were expressed. The crisis facing Unionism was reflected in the Siege Myth, and the loyalty-liberty contradiction of the Siege story was pivotal in the way Unionism legitimised its armed and quasi-legal (if not unconstitutional) opposition to Home Rule.

The final chapter examines the way the Siege Myth became an integral part of Unionist party hegemony during the partition crisis and after the creation of the Northern Ireland state. After partition, from a myth legitimating political opposition, the Siege became, instead, a story of obedience, of loyalty to "true leaders" and of support for the status quo. The walls of the city are identified with the border of the new state and the defence of Derry in 1689 becomes synonymous with the "defence" of Northern Ireland. The Siege provided a metaphor for the new Stormont regime. In this process the "threat" of the Catholic community, as an "alien cabal" is very much to the fore. The strategies of Unionism in power were underwritten by the sectarianism of Northern Irish society, and that sectarianism was expressed, in the Siege Myth, through the imagery of the Catholic community as the "enemy at the gate". Ultimately the various symbols of the Siege articulated the secure hold Unionism achieved as a party of power through the 1920s and 1930s.

The Unionist hold on power slowly began to slip in the 1950s and 1960s, until it was irretrievably wrenched away after the eruption of the current conflict in 1968. As a result the nature of the Siege Myth changed utterly once more. The conclusion of the thesis briefly sketches out the place of the Siege Myth today in the context of its development over the last three hundred years. While the meaning of the Siege is as deeply contested today as it has ever been, in some senses the Siege Myth has returned to its roots. For many Derry Protestants the Siege Myth expresses nothing so much as disillusionment and betrayal, reflecting the alienation felt by large sections of the Protestant community, and in particular, of the Derry Protestant working class. The causes of this alienation may be a mixture of economic marginalisation and

political change that have little, if anything, to do with the confrontations enshrined in the Siege Myth. Some of these changes may, too, be no more than the righting of some wrongs that were long overdue. However, seen through the vision of the Siege Myth, change merges with the symbols of the past, and is understood as nothing more than the latest episode of a Siege that has never ended.

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CHAPTER I

THE DERRY SIEGE OF 1689:

THE SIEGE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

On December 7th, 1688 the gates of the city of Derry were shut by a group of "Apprentice Boys" in the face of an advancing detachment of troops loyal to King James II. Four months later the city had declared loyalty to the recently crowned King William and found itself placed under a state of Siege. The Siege was to last for 105 days, with anything up to 10,000 of the besieged dying in that time, mostly of disease and starvation. While a relief force had been sent months before, not until July 28 did three ships from this fleet bring the Siege to an end by breaking through a boom which had been placed across the Foyle to prevent access to the city from the sea. That, in short, is the history of the Siege of Derry in 1689.

However, rather than writing another blow by blow account of the Siege, the aim of this chapter is to examine those elements of the Siege story which became celebrated in the Siege Myth. The myth of the Siege has hidden many of the rough and uncomfortable realities that accompanied such a desperate and unpredictable human event. The Siege as history cannot simply be constructed in terms of the rarefied tableaux of which the Siege as myth consists. In particular, the role of the Crowd within the city must be looked at closely. A volatile and spasmodic force, though by no means either irrational or lacking direction, the Crowd, and its often crucial antagonism toward the city's leadership, forms an often overlooked dimension of the

Siege history. Similarly, the themes that would be enshrined in the folklore of the Siege need to be examined in relation to the actual passage of events. Threat and solidarity, betrayal and loyalty, sacrifice and salvation; ideas with which the Siege would be defined and which would in turn come to symbolise the predicament of subsequent generations, should be placed against the evidence of the past and examined in depth. First, however, it is useful to very briefly place the Siege in the context of seventeenth century history.

The Siege in Context: The Siege of Derry in the Seventeenth Century

The events of the Siege of Derry were not determined by forces outside of history and if the Protestants of Derry acted in defence of "Faith and Crown" in 1689, they were defending much else besides; land, status and power. The turbulent history of the seventeenth century, which was very much more confused and complex than is often supposed, produced a series of struggles that, by the last decade, reached a climax in the Williamite wars. Similarly, the issues which predominated in the minds of the Protestant settlers on the eve of the Siege, issues of economic well-being and political control, were the result of social changes, and the process of colonisation, that spanned back across the century. The grievances and the experiences of those involved in the Siege were expressed through ideas and images which held great sway in the seventeenth century. Denominational loyalty and political fidelity were closely interwoven, while losses and gains in material and temporal terms were, more likely than not, explained through a sense of spiritual suffering or spiritual salvation. The events, issues and ideas of the Siege of Derry were, in other words, were much a

product of the times.

The Siege of Derry also stands very much "out of time", as a myth of the past. In this symbolic timelessness the Siege reflects the symbolic importance of the seventeenth century as a whole for an Ulster Protestant sense of the past. It was during the seventeenth century, and the period from 1688 to 1691 in particular, that the great dramas remembered in Protestant political culture took place. The pattern of conflicts which marked that era of Irish history became both the model of political struggle for Unionist ideology and the historic process when the distinctiveness of the Ulster Protestant community was seen to emerge. The sociologist, Anthony Smith, has argued that all modern ethnic mythologies devise for themselves a "myth of ethnic origin", an epoch of "founding fathers" who heroically battle against both man and nature to give birth to "the people" and their principles.[1] For Irish nationalism, and most prosaically in the romantic visions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century Gaelic revival, this ancestral myth was enshrined in the sagas of the Tain and Ossian, in a pre-christian celtic dawn of epic encounters.

Ulster unionism on the other hand, then as now, rarely expressed itself in terms of a prehistorical mythology.[2] For Ulster unionism the "myth of origin in time" ("when" a community was born) is set during the period of the early Ulster plantation, when the "first" Ulster Protestant settlers are seen to establish their "frontier of civilisation". Here too the "myth of origin in space" (where a community was born) was imagined, though, as Jennifer Todd argues, the imagination of territory has only a limited role to play in Unionism, and loyalty "is primarily to people rather than to place".[3]

However, the mythic setting of place in the cycles of Protestant political culture are the well-tilled fields, well-planned villages and well-fortified towns (of which Derry was the most obvious example) of the early Protestant colonists. The popular vision of the century pictures theses settlers as a coherent, industrious and united community beset on all sides by barren hills and dark forests where the envious, and "backward", native "woodkerne schemed".[4] Within this scene, and through that fractious passage of time, the imagined character of the community is therefore forged. The dividing markers of belonging, with their unchanging and ever recurring power, are drawn; loyalty to the crown, all-Protestants together, the need of moral and political fidelity, the inevitable and all-consuming battle of liberty and modernity against despotism and the archaic. It is this image of the seventeenth century, and of the Siege of Derry, that must be the subject of scrutiny.

The settler city of London-Derry was established only in the first decades of the seventeenth century, on the site of an ancient monastic settlement.[5] Founded in 1609, the last walled city built in Europe, Derry (which even the charter of the city's foundation agreed was the name of "common usage") was designed at act as an urban focus for the new colony, as a "town of war, a town of merchandise", an essential part of the "Plan of Plantation" of Ulster, drawn up in 1608 and 1609.[6] A rash of tracts, published in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century defined the struggles (and subsequent colonisation) in Ulster as not only practically useful, in both economic and political terms, but also as morally, or ideologically, legitimate.[7] This was to be a contest of christian (English Protestant) progress against pagan (Irish Catholic) backwardness. In an era when regimes, throughout Europe, were invoking

religion as proof of loyalty to the state, being a Protestant, or not, was to become part and parcel of the settler-native division loyalty to the centre of power. From the beginning,then, religious difference was implicated in the process of Ulster colonisation.[8]

At first the settlement met with severe social and economic difficulties and such problems helped to define the interests and relationships of communities in the latter part of the century. The initial failure to attract well-heeled English settlers led to an influx of both English, and Scottish (who were even more numerous) colonists, many of whom had themselves been the victims of land clearance schemes.[9] Divisions of class, of culture and even of Protestant denomination within the colonial community had repercussions which profoundly influenced the events of the seventeenth century. Of all these repercussions none was more significant than the relative fragility of the settlers hold on the land they worked, and on which the economy of the port of Derry depended. The plantation plan had originally intended to completely remove the native population, but while the native Irish were certainly impoverished, disempowered and dispossessed, a significant number continued to live in close proximity to the land they had so recently lost. In the 1640s this situation led to rebellion, and a decade of crisis and war. It would do so again in the latter part of the 1680s. However, the idea that, throughout this period, all colonists inevitably saw the world in the same way is essentially misconceived.

Divisions which existed within the colonial community were particularly obvious during the upheavals of the 1640s and 1650s.[10] In 1649 this period of political chaos

led to a Siege of Derry which might be called the "forgotten Siege". The historical invisibility of this Siege of 1649 is illuminating. Our interest in the Siege of 1689 is not simply in the event as history, but also in the story as myth, as an heroic cycle imbued with symbolic and metaphysical importance. The Siege of 1689 is an historical episode which has been raised to the level of transhistorical significance, as such it stands in sharp contrast to the Siege of 1649.

It is, of course, arguable that the invisibility of the Derry Siege of 1649 from popular memory it was far less significant than the Siege of 1689. Well-supplied and well-stocked, the city in 1649 lost far fewer lives than would be the case forty years later. Similarly, a rather odd series of alliances forged at the Derry Siege of 1649 were of only a temporary and precarious nature. However, it is equally possible to argue that it is the uncomfortable incongruity of this event with traditional notions of social and political alignments that has rendered it invisible, the forgotten Siege, in the vision of collective pasts. The swirling, chaotic anarchy of politics in Ireland in the late 1640s was crystallised in this first Derry Siege. In the midst of the Siege, Republican Protestant colonists found themselves under attack from an army of Presbyterian settlers, Scottish highland Catholics and Irish Catholic royalists. They were, in turn, relieved by an army of local Gaels under the Ulster Rebel Owen Roe O'Neill, who far from putting the inhabitants to the sword, was entertained at some length by the city governor.

The Siege of 1649 was the result of the range of socio-economic and ideological variables that influenced the actions of settler and native, alike, during this period.

The position of many of the Ulster colonists was riven with contradictions. Economic grievance and political disenchantment led to rebellion, defended by the doctrine of the Covenant. Yet, ultimately, the colonial regime underpinned the whole of settler society, so any alliance with the indigenous population was fraught with difficulty.[11] The image of the defenders of Derry being saved from a Presbyterian army by a Gaelic chief was not, however, the stuff to which Orange mythology was to prove partial.

In the aftermath of the devastation of the 1640s and 1650s, Derry developed a more solid economic base and successfully attracted a new influx of settlers.[12] The long term demographic pattern pointed toward a growth in the Protestant proportion of the Irish population. By the 1660s Derry was the sixth largest town in Ireland and the most well-established port in Ulster. Although still anything but affluent, the city became the main route for exporting the produce of the surrounding plantation hinterland. However, this picture of relative security for the settlers needs to be qualified. The social, political and denominational divisions within the colonial community which were apparent during the 1640s, did not disappear during the latter part of the century, though their importance would fluctuate between the Restoration and the reign of James II. Divisions within the Protestant population, between dissenters and the Established church, were particularly significant. At the same time, while the years that separated the Siege of 1649 from that of 1689 saw the economic structure of the Ulster colony, including that of the north-west, experience long term growth, this was punctuated by periods of deep depression. These short term difficulties could, however, have severe social repercussions, and the emergence of

such problems in the late 1680s would feature in the crisis that led directly to the Siege.[13]

The possible reversal of the land settlements of the earlier part of the century also continued to figure as an underlying factor, if for long periods a largely dormant one, in determining the political allegiances of all groups in Irish society. Such a reversal represented the promise of possible betrayal to the colonist and of salvation to the remnants of the native Irish elite. These sleeping fears and slumbering hopes were both re-awakened in the mid-1680s, with the accession of James II, and the apparent rise in fortunes of a non-colonial, Catholic landlord class. Far from being an attempt to dismantle wholesale the colonial regime, nor primarily directed at the removal of all Protestants from positions of power, the thinking behind the administration's position, if not that of the Irish aristocracy, was the promotion of elements among the landowning class who would support the drive for state absolutism. The consequence was a redistribution of land, power and privilege. These various social and economic developments created the immediate political context for the events of the Siege of Derry in 1689.

The Siege Begins: The Crowd and the Shutting of the Gates, December 1688

Most accounts of the Siege of Derry concentrate upon the political and military manoeuvring which were, indeed, a vital influence on events in the city. Within the wider world the Siege formed an episode of the dynastic battle for the English crown and the power struggles of various European states. The constitutional settlement of

1688-89, the "Glorious Revolution", which the Siege helped to preserve, resulted in a new distribution of political authority in England that more closely reflected the economic realities of English society in the wake of its rise as a mercantile, and colonial, power. Williamite victory also resulted in a reversal of the Stuart strategy in Ireland, which had sought to integrate the Catholic Irish and old English landed elite into the body of the political nation and allied to the interest of the state.

The whole period from 1685 to 1691 was, in fact, a critical one for the colonial order in Ireland. Only after the military defeat of the Jacobite forces was the supremacy of that order secured, and the century long process of land appropriation consolidated. With the new regime ushered in by victory at Derry, the Boyne and Aughrim, the structure of power predicated on religious division was not just re-affirmed, but deepened. While these battles were not primarily fought out by warring communities, they resulted in a more clear definition of collective difference than ever before. In the aftermath of this colonial crisis an even more rigorous domination of land and resources by settler landlords was enshrined in the legal edifice of the penal laws.

What is less explored in histories of the Siege, and yet equally significant an influence on events, was the motivation of the mass of the population who lay within the walls, and the various influences which shaped their action. Undoubtedly, these wider political developments were somewhere in the minds of the small farmers and peasants who made up the bulk of the besieged. Such developments certainly conditioned the predicament, and the future prospects, of these lower class colonists. Yet, the way such colonists understood that future was not necessarily the same as their social

superiors, nor were they convinced that such leaders as they possessed had their best interests at heart. The story of the Siege shows a constant process of negotiation and struggle between the "patricians" and the "plebs", in a particularly volatile situation.[14] This situation led the "plebs" to take decisive, and independent, action, through the formation and activities of the Crowd. Nowhere was this better seen than in the "Shutting of the Gates", the events of the Siege in motion.
However, it is important to stress from the outset, that the Crowd never conceded total control to the leaders of the city at any time during the Siege. Even the figures later lionised in the Siege Myth were susceptible to suspicion, opposition and the accusation of betrayal. Of its nature the crowd operated as an episodic and volatile influence, an active social agent which exerted power in moments of crisis, but which surrendered long-term decision-making to the Corporation and, subsequently, to the Governors and the Council of War.[15] Surrender was never total.

Similarly, the mental world in which the Crowd lived may have been more influenced by belief systems, and popular visions, than by the intrigues of high European politics. In a sense this reflects the potency of the Siege Myth itself within Protestant political culture. The mythological quality of the Siege lies in its representation of past, present and future as an unchanging continuum, a never-ending cycle of trial and triumph. A mental outlook of triumph and trial was not wholly unfamiliar to those taking part in the Siege itself. A comparison might, therefore, be drawn between the Siege Myth and a work that would undoubtedly have been familiar, at least to the clerics of the city. John Bunyan's Puritan parable The Pilgrims Progress, written in the late seventeenth century and still a profound influence within Ulster Protestant

fundamentalism today, tells the tale of the Protestant Everyman, "Christian", travelling on his allegorical journey from degeneracy to salvation, from the "City of Destruction" to the gates of the "Celestial City".[16] The real landscape of seventeenth century England, and the real struggles of the English revolution, provided Bunyan with the walls, gates, castles and cities that supply the sustained metaphor of his redemptive myth. The Siege of Derry, which began only months after Bunyan's death in 1688, similarly contains the plot, props and cast of characters, through which the allegory of the City Besieged can signify the imagined collective journey of the Ulster Protestant community.

Bunyan's story interweaves biblical symbolism with contemporary speech and detail, to portray the lot of the dissenter as a life of Christian warfare; similarly the Ulster Protestant is represented in the imagery of the Siege as facing the inevitable and constant struggle between virtue and vice. Bunyan's vision of the world may more accurately depict the consciousness of a member of the Derry crowd in 1688-89 than an analysis of French foreign policy. As E.P. Thompson might have put it, we may not know if most of the crowd had read The Pilgrims Progress, but if they had read they are more likely to have read it than anything else (apart, perhaps, from the bible). Bunyan's world is that of a violent place epoch understood through the prism of religion; that certainly was a vision likely to make sense to the ordinary Protestant locked behind the walls of the Siege city. As the moral model of Bunyan's Calvinist hero informed the mental universe of the Siege protagonists, and has remained a potent allegorical tale within Protestant political culture, so the Siege of Derry would emerge as a symbolic narrative for future generations, an episode of sacred rather than

secular time that mapped the path from destruction to salvation.[17]

However, the events of the Siege were certainly triggered by the social and political tension of late 1688 and the immediate catalyst was the arrival, on December 7th, 1688, of a regiment of Lord Antrim's (largely Catholic) "Redshanks" regiment, which was to replace Lord Mountjoy's Protestant garrison forces in Derry. The tension of the period also produced a factory of rumours predicting imminent disaster; rumours that took definitive shape in the Comber letter, a copy of which also arrived in Derry on the morning of December 7th.

The original Comber letter had been found in the village of Comber in early December, 1688, and it purported to reveal the plans for an attack on the Protestant colonists by the native Irish on December 9. Even in the popular history of the Seige this letter is generally recognised as being a forgery, but the fear was real enough.[18] Here again the cyclical view of history dominates; the Comber letter, even if false, merely precipitates what was bound to be so, the past was invariably to recur and battle inevitably engaged. Although the local Catholic-Irish population had not in fact attacked the city in the past, the letter implied that it was the mass of the Catholic-Irish which represented the threat, and that not merely an element among the colonists, but the whole community, was in danger:

> All our Irishmen through Ireland is sworn that on the ninth day of this month they are to fall on to kill and murder man, wife and child...take care...all that are judged by our men to be heads, for whomsoever can kill any of you, they are to have a captains place.[19]

This was the "myth of massacre" in full cry.[20]

Within the narrow confines of the city this rumour quickly spread and an excitable and anxious crowd gathered to view the oncoming troops. There was a high degree of tension and uncertainty within the town on the morning of December 7th. Several members of the Corporation, along with the Episcopalian bishop Eziekiel Hopkins, actively tried to dampen these rising popular fears, disturbed at the prospect of taking any action that would blatantly oppose the Kings authority.[21] At the same time "little cabals...of the city youths" gathered to discuss what to do and there was, "muttering among the mobile about shutting the Gates".[22] It was, then, the immediate threat of the advancing troops, and the inaction of the civic authorities, that led several youthful members of the Crowd to seize control of the city keys as the first detachment of Antrim's force came within a few hundred yards of the city. They closed "Ferry Gate", fired shots at the soldiers, who quickly retreated, and took control of the three other gates and the magazine.[23]

This is the episode of the Siege annually commemorated on December 18th as the "Shutting of the Gates". This action has come to form a foundational element of the Seige Myth and of Unionist ideology. It is the moment when the imagined ever-present threat of the Catholic mass is seen to be realised and a vanguard of the Protestant community, the "Apprentice Boys", take swift and decisive action to defend that community. The force against which the city's inhabitants took such drastic action, and that which later laid Siege to Derry, was not, in fact, made up of the local Catholic-Irish population, enshrined in the mythology of the Siege as the "enemy without". The Siege as a parable of the Ulster Protestant condition would, however, identify the Gaelic peasantry with this threatening force.

The events of the "Shutting of the Gates" reveal the divisions within the city and illuminate the role of the Crowd during the Siege. The Crowd emerges here, for the first time, as a significant determinant of actions and decisions. Immediately after the Crowd closed the gates, members of the Corporation and bishop Hopkins tried to persuade them to reverse their action at a public meeting. The atmosphere was clearly tense:

> ...the bishop of Derry with others came to the market-place and made a speech to the multitude to dissuade them from so inconsiderate an undertaking, wherein he represented to them both the danger of it to themselves, and the unwarrantableness of it, as it was a disobedience to their sovereign; but the dangers they saw at present made a greater impression on them than any feared for the future; and their dull heads could not comprehend how it could be so great a crime to shut the gates against those whom they believed sent thither to cut their throats; and they were too much concerned to make good what they had now done to hear any long harangues about it: the Deputy Mayor also attempted once more to dissuade them, but to no purpose...The multitude acted without the least publick countenance from any of considerable note, or figure in the town.[24]

In his diary Thomas Ash, who captained a company during the Seige, claimed that the closing of the gates, "like magic, roused a unanimous spirit of defence", however, the attitude of the Corporation was conditioned by their inability to reverse the action of the Crowd.[25] Far from giving their unrestrained support to the events of December 7th in the days that followed the Corporation were at pains to stress that they were anything but rebellious or opposed to the authority of the state and that, conversely, they continued to give fealty to the crown. The letters and declarations

issued by the "prominent citizens" just after the Gates were shut referred to those who had closed them as "some of the meaner sort" and the "rabble" who

> in their heat found means to get into the magazine, and thence took some arms and ammunition; but we have caused it to be locked up, and a guard set thereon, and an account taken of what is taken thence and what left therein.[26]

The "Declaration of the Gentlemen of Derry", issued on December 9, best illustrates their position. The "Irish-Papists", the letter argued, were the problem, and a reconciliation with the state, the desired goal. However, rapprochement with the state was dependent on re-establishing the power of the Protestant colonists as the basis of the regime in Ireland. The letter called for the re-affirmation of the Crown's commitment to Protestantism as the ideological marker that underwrote colonial privilege. The Catholic-Irish were to be expelled from the city, including a "Convent of Dominican Friars", as the "Gentlemen" sought to reverse the policy of integrating the landed Catholic elite into the offices of political power:

> as we have resolved to stand upon our guards, and to defend our walls; and not to admit of any Papists whatsoever to quarter amongst us, so we have firmly and sincerely determined to persevere in our Duty and Loyalty to our Sovereign Lord the King without the least breach of Mutiny, or Seditious Opposition to his Royal Commands. And since no other Motives have prompt us to this Resolution, but to the Preservation of our Lives, and to prevent the Plots and Machinations of the enemies of the Protestant Religion; We are encouraged to hope that the Government will vouchsafe a candid and favourable Interpretation of our Proceedings, and that all his Majesties Protestant Subjects will interpose with their Prayers to God, their Solicitations to the King, and their Advice and Assistance to us on this so extraordinary and immergent an occasion, which not only have an Influence on the

rest of the Kingdom, but may have a probable aspect towards the Interest of the Protestant Religion.[27]

While the merchants and gentry who controlled the Corporation gave their retrospective support for the actions of the "meaner sort", they also sought to negotiate an assurance that such support would not be regarded as treasonable, and that both their immediate position, and their longer term privilege, would be secured. On December 21st they reached an agreement with Lord Mountjoy that two all-Protestant companies of his regiment should be admitted into the city, under the newly appointed Governor, Colonel Robert Lundy, and on January 2nd, 1689, the Protestant-only Corporation was revived.[28]

Loyalty and Betrayal: From the Shutting of the Gates to the onset of the Siege, December, 1688 - April, 1689

The emerging crisis produced a growing fear of betrayal. This fear became focused, in the first instance, upon the Governor of the city, Lundy. The actions of the civil and military leadership, and of Lundy in particular, were dictated by strategic concerns, but this was seen by the Crowd and those who opposed the Governor, as an issue of loyalty and betrayal. Loyalty, as an "ethico-political", or ideological, notion would become central to unionism and loyalism.[29] Lundy has similarly emerged as the antithesis of this ideal of moral, social and political fidelity within Protestant political culture; the symbolic representation of betrayal. In such a perspective loyalty is conceived as a basic characteristic of the Ulster Protestant

collective identity and a fundamental political platform, enshrined in the Union, upon which the preservation of that identity rests. The imagined need of collective commonality defines any divergence from internal norms of attitude and behaviour as a "threat of destruction" to the community, from within. In terms of the narrative framework of the Siege Myth that threat of betrayal is symbolised in the figure of Lundy.

Yet even in the context of the Siege itself the contradictions and inconsistencies of such notions were apparent. Loyalty at the time was very much expressed in relation to the constitution and the crown; a deeply problematic position when the city was in the process of denying the King's authority and engaging in what amounted to an act of rebellion. Similarly, while Lundy was publicly vilified as a traitor to the cause, even as he was being removed from power there was fear that this was to remove the last vestiges of legitimacy from the actions of the population. Some of those who acted against Lundy would also find themselves the object of popular anger. Holding onto loyalty and betrayal could prove a slippery affair.

Although traditionally celebrated as the start of the Siege the "Shutting of the Gates" was not when the actual Seige began. The agreement reached on December 21st, 1688, the admission of Lundy and his troops, and the recognition of King James' sovereignty, re-established a fragile equilibrium between the state and the colonists. The expulsion of the Catholic-Irish, both from the Corporation and from the town as a whole, was similarly seen as securing again the privileges of Protestants within Derry. The delicacy of the equilibrium was, however, dependent on wider political

developments. It was consequently short-lived.

Opposition to James' development of an absolutist state led a group of the lay and clerical aristocracy in England to organise a coup to remove him.[30] In June, 1688, this group sent a letter inviting his son-in-law, the Dutch Prince, William of Orange, to depose James and take the English throne. On November 5th William duly arrived in Torbay and by late December James, finding himself isolated and devoid of elite support fled to France. In February William and his wife, James' daughter Mary, were established as joint monarchs after giving their agreement to a Declaration of Rights, presented to them by the Convention Parliament, which placed constitutional limits on the power of the monarchy, designed to offset the threat of an absolutism.

However, the situation remained unresolved. James succeeded in enlisting to his cause the support of the French King Louis XIV, a long term political opponent of William. He similarly forged an alliance with the Irish Catholic aristocracy, who were aware that the new regime would be unlikely to support their claims to a new and favourable land settlement. It was within this context that James sought to regain his crown through establishing a foothold in Ireland, where he landed with an army of Irish, English, Scottish and continental supporters in March, 1689. James' intention was to re-secure the English monarchy.

The need to regain the necessary support in England that would enable James to regain the Crown limited the concessions he was willing to offer to the parliament in Dublin, which was dominated by Old English and Gaelic lords. However, their goals

complimented each other to the extent that the Catholic-Irish elite maintained their commitment to the Jacobite camp. Backed by his European allies, which included the Pope, the future icon of Ulster Protestantism prepared to fend off James' challenge. The "forces of two English political parties fighting for the possession of the powers of government" were coming to focus on a military confrontation in Ireland.[31] Dynastic and colonial crises were on converging courses.

In Derry, and throughout the Ulster plantation area, preparations were being made for the conflict to come. In January, 1689, the northern landowners had organised themselves into a "Council of the North", drafting their tenantry into regiments and requesting support from William.[32] The Derry Protestant gentry had already sent a deposition to London with a local merchant, David Cairnes. In the immediate aftermath of December 7th Cairns was the most active and prominent advocate of resistance. On his arrival in London, Cairns was given an audience with William, who despatched ammunition and supplies to the city. He also indicated in the "Instructions" sent with his newly issued commission for the Governor, that his administration regarded Derry as strategically vital.[33] Both supplies and commission duly arrived in late March and it was made clear to the inhabitants that the award of the former was conditional on declaring loyalty to William, through the oaths of allegiance that accompanied the latter.[34] The new commission was privately administered to Lundy on March 21st, followed, the day after, by public declarations of support for William which signalled the formal submission of the city to his authority.

As well as the primary military site for the Williamite cause in Ireland, Derry was increasingly becoming the focus of refuge for the colonists once again. Most colonists headed toward the fortified plantation towns, or left Ulster altogether. As the numbers of those within the walls of Derry rose doubts and suspicions, engendered by the surrounding social upheaval, were also growing. The colonists gathered at Coleraine, who had already taken action to prevent the withdrawal of troops from their area, feared that they would be denied access to Derry at a later date.[35] They therefore demanded assurances that this would not be the case from the Committee, then in control at Derry:

> Several sums of money were also raised for the garrison at Coleraine. And because it was suspected and given out by some, that in case the forces were beaten at Coleraine, the town of Derry would not let them into the gates; a paper was drawn up by the inhabitants and officers, both of the town and country, being an agreement to stand together, and succour each other, and this was proclaimed in the market-house.[36]

An army sent north by Tyrconnell inflicted a series of military defeats on the colonist forces in late March and early April. This created a sense of panic. The settlers, caught in this atmosphere of rising turmoil found signs of betrayal everywhere. The most immediate figure of authority became the focus of their fear, Colonel Lundy. However, the Derry Governor did little to lessen these suspicions, compounding them with his plan to stage a tactical withdrawal of his forces. Lundy and the Council of War, which were now in sole charge of the city, recommended that two recently arrived regiments, sent to bolster the garrison should return to England, signalling their decision to abandon the city as strategically untenable and their belief that the

colonists were better advised to make terms with James' army.[37] The regiments duly left, with the bulk of the military officers on board, and negotiations were begun with the advancing Jacobite force. These negotiations triggered a popular reaction that removed Lundy from power, and another pivotal component of the Siege Myth was born.

As James and the main body of his army drew toward the town, those within the walls were caught up in a whirl of hectic and chaotic activity. Floods of settlers were leaving and entering the city. Retreating troops and refugees, at times, found themselves locked outside the gates, as the town's military commanders tried to limit the numbers entering the city in order to preserve the stores for the garrison. Yet at other times the gates were left open and undefended, their keys apparently missing. Rumours of imminent surrender, added to the recent experience of defeat and the lack of provisions compounded the sense of insecurity among the tenant farmer refugees who now swelled the city population. In this confused and volatile situation the Crowd again emerged as the decisive force, ousting the civic and military leadership.

The swollen population of the city rioted, threatened to hang Lundy and his officers and dissolved the authority of the Council of War. The Council members either tried to escape or had to be confined to their rooms for their own safety. In response a new council was quickly established, and two new joint Governors, Rev. George Walker and Major Henry Baker, were appointed on April 19th.[38] However, before appointing the new Governors, the Council had not only asked Lundy to stay, but to continue in control. Lundy was still, after all, an appointee of the Crown, William's

representative in the city, and his removal was a radical, and potentially dangerous, act.

Despite the new council's offer, Lundy refused to sanction the continued defence of the city and was as a result given the opportunity to escape. Lundy returned by ship to Scotland and on his arrival he was arrested and imprisoned in the Tower of London. In the aftermath of the Siege he was questioned by a special commission in London but no charges were brought against him. Although there were calls for him to be returned to Derry to stand trial, this was opposed, notably by Walker, who argued that "he (Lundy) had a faction for him".[39] This would suggest that the accusation of treachery was not, at least, a unanimous opinion within the city. In later years Lundy went on to serve in William's armies in a number of military campaigns.

On April 18th James arrived at Derry. The new Council organised a deputation to discuss possible terms, but the Crowd would not permit them to leave the city. Instead, they sent a letter to James, rejecting overtures for surrender and celebrating William as their temporal, and profitable, salvation:

> We must let you know that King William is as capable of rewarding our Loyalty as King James; and an English Parliament can be just as bountiful to our Courage and Sufferings as an Irish one: And that in time we question not, but your lands will be confiscated rather than ours, and confiscated into our Possession, as a recompense for this signal Service to the Crown of England.[40]

In response James ordered that preparations for Seige should begin.

Sacrifice and Salvation: The Siege of Derry, April 18th - August 1st, 1689

Images of sacrifice and suffering pervade the Siege Myth. Certainly the suffering was great during the actual Siege. The Siege proper began on April 18th and lasted for over three months. A large, and almost equal number of people died, both within and outside the walls. As many as 10,000 people, or one-third of the besieged population, died during the Siege, mostly from either hunger or disease. Such huge losses left an indelible mark on subsequent generations and have remained an important sacrificial dimension of the Siege's mythic message. While a "sacrificial ethos" has generally been regarded as a particularly pronounced element within Irish nationalism, and all but absent from Ulster unionism and loyalism, there is a need to counter this perception.[41] The Siege Myth has a distinctive "redemptive" character and structure. Salvation, in through the "Relief" of the Siege, is only obtained after passage through the trial of the Siege and after the sacrifice of those who died.

This sacrificial dimension of the Siege Myth tends to appear only during periods of social and political crisis, when the position of the Protestant community is perceived to be under threat, or for groups within the community who feel most threatened, insecure and alienated. Such symbols of suffering "make sense" of actual suffering. What Max Weber called the "theodicy of suffering", the proof of divine sanction by enduring hardship, relates not only to forms of religiosity within Ulster but also to the nature of its political myths.[42] Images of sacrifice and triumph within nationalism and unionism have reflected the different experiences and positions of the two communities, rather than reflecting any inherent ethno-cultural difference. For most

of its existence Unionism has been an ideology of power; triumph, expressed in the imagery of salvation and the Relief of the Siege, is the natural corollary. Within unionism, sacrifice has tended either to sanctify the disempowerment of Catholics, or to rationalise the alienation felt by groups within the Protestant community. The promise of salvation, of relief and triumph may provide a "psychological reassurance of legitimacy" or a sense of dignity and status where little actual privilege exists.[43]

During the Siege itself both Episcopalians and Presbyterians used St. Columb's cathedral as their place of worship and large numbers attended daily services. The great majority of the besieged settlers were, in fact, Presbyterians, outnumbering Anglicans by as many as 15 to 1, although gentry members of the Anglican church dominated the upper echelons of the Council and offices within the militia. Religion, and the "theodicy of suffering" provided a means for the besieged to come to terms with their own experience and the precariousness of their own mortality. Biblical analogies of trial and sacrifice, and Old Testament texts on the theme of the "Chosen People", provided the main source of inspiration for preachers. Walker himself compared the condition of the besieged to that of the "Israelites at the Red Sea".[44] On the very eve of the lifting of the Siege, Walker preached to a large crowd gathered in the Cathedral:

> For let me tell you, that the soldier that fights for religion ought indeed to be a good christian. And then live he, or die, he is certainly happy...The greater and more grievous our crosses are in this life, the brighter and weightier shall our crown of glory be. he that suffers most in this world for his Saviour's sake shall one day sit the nearest to His throne in the presence of saints, angels and just men made perfect.[45]

The "community of the elect", suffering in a wilderness or surrounded by enemies, engaged on the path of christian warfare, while remaining faithful through their ordeals in the hope of divine salvation was the dominant theme of sermons given during the Siege.

The actual events can be sketched over quite quickly. Again, it is the elements which become icons that are important. The Siege began after the inhabitants refused to admit James to the city. The colonist militia within the walls was organised into eight regiments, each of which was given a section of the walls to defend and each regiment was placed under the authority of a "colonel". Small-scale battles throughout the next three months, but there were also long periods of inactivity and a relatively light prosecution of the Seige. The massive death toll inflicted on the ordinary male and female settlers, who made up the bulk of the besieged, was more the result of the mundane, almost casual brutality, of the Siege than from direct military action. The whole event was marked less by the sights and sounds of combat, than by painfully undramatic slow slide into starvation.

On April 21st and April 25th the city's defenders defeated a detachment of James' forces at Pennyburn, and ten days later a small battle to gain control of a fortified windmill, which overlooked the city, ended, again, in success for the colonists. Following these confrontations the besieging army concentrated on blockading the city, preventing any supplies from entering by land and constructing a boom across the river Foyle to stop provisions arriving by sea. In early June a second attempt by the Jacobite army to gain control of the windmill ended in their defeat. At the same

time, the besiegers were boosted by the arrival of reinforcements under the command of the French General Rosen, who attempted to intensify the Siege. But the possibility of relief was also growing. In the second week of June a small fleet of Williamite ships appeared in the mouth of the Foyle in full view of the city. However the boom built across the river blocked their path. Despite the increasing problems faced by those within the walls, and their urgent appeals for help, the commander of this force, Major-General Kirke, decided not to attempt to break the boom. Instead he sailed the small fleet to Lough Swilly, where they remained for several crucial weeks.

Kirke's reticence to break the boom and the delay of the relief of the city would emerge in the Siege Myth as a salutary lesson for Ulster Protestants to look sceptically upon English commitment. The notion of external loyalty to Britain within Unionist ideology has been conditional upon the willingness of the British state to support the perceived interests of the Ulster Protestant community. This "conditional" nature of Ulster loyalty has reflected the long-term relationship of asymmetrical inter-dependence between the British state and the Ulster Protestant population. The more one partner in this lop-sided arrangement finds the other a less compatible companion, so the imagined bonds of loyalty become increasingly strained. Episodes and images of the mythic past that suggest difference rather commonality, such as the limited vigour with which the lifting of the Seige was pursued, are focused upon during periods of strained relations. Far from being a Myth of inevitable loyalty to Britain, the Siege therefore emerges as a story reflecting the problematic relationship between Britain and Ulster Protestants, and the tensions of the coloniser and the colonial

centre.[46]

With Kirke anchored in lough Swilly, the Siege continued. In early July a large number of Protestant men, women and children were rounded up from the surrounding countryside and brought outside the walls, in the hope of forcing the besieged to take them in and so place further pressure on the city's scarce resources. While this did little to allay Protestant fears, it is an interesting episode in several other respects. Up to this point it is obvious that a significant number of settlers in the countryside had been left alone, and, with the swift reversal of this tactic, they were subsequently allowed to return safely to their homes.

However, even more significant in ideological terms, this episode is one of the few occasions when women appear in the Siege Myth. During the Siege the city's inhabitants numbered around 30,000, of whom approximately 7,500 were armed men, the remainder, women, children and the old. Family migration, and the family as a unit of farm labour and tenancy, was a dominant feature of the plantation and so, consequently, women constituted a large proportion of those involved in the Siege. Despite this the role of women within the Seige Myth has been very much marginalised.

If they appear at all women are usually presented as passive and stoic victims. Yet during the Siege women were, often, directly involved in the conflict. In addition of the 10,000 people who died during the Siege the overwhelming majority were casualties of hunger and disease. The Siege was fought less on the battlements than

on the tables and in the kitchens of the city, through the bodies and bellies of the besieged. At the heart of the resistance of the Siege was, therefore, the resolve of the whole community, a large, if not equal number, of whom were women. The sanctification of power through sacrifice has tended, however, to emphasise the martial, and definitively male, aspects of the Seige Myth, and to render women virtually invisible. Within the Siege Myth women therefore only enter the story, as with the episode of the Protestants forced to the walls, as hapless and helpless "sacrificial victims," rather than as active participants. While the nature of the conflict placed the community as a whole in struggle, the gender differentiation of "active" male and "passive" female has been a critical element in how the Siege has, subsequently, been told.

As the Siege entered its third month the position of the besieged worsened. Rations for the garrison were cut and prices for the available foodstuffs soared. Those unable to meet the cost of survival began to die in large numbers.[47] The pressures of a rising death toll and deteriorating conditions placed huge strains upon the community. Desertions were a regular occurrence and the Council had to invoke the death penalty for a prohibition on talk of surrender.[48] Divisions and active dissent did, however, increase and decisions taken by the Council had, of necessity, to take into account the likely reaction they would evoke from the wider population.

Despite draconian measures adopted by the Council, opposition and large-scale rioting were evident on several occasions. Ash noted that, as early as May 16th, "several of the citizens went without orders to parley with the enemy", that toward the end of

July the "rabble...went and took meal and what ever they could get without respect of persons" and the next day pulled down the Market House.[49] Most seriously of all a conspiracy was discovered on July 23rd:

> Some turbulent persons got together to raise a meeting in the garrison; their contrivance was to secure the gunners in the first place, and to nail up the guns, then to beat drums; they did not then question but that they should have assistance enough to make terms for themselves, and to give up the garrison.[50]

The plot was discovered and a total of "thirteen persons" were court martialled. Popular doubts and anxiety were also aimed directly at the Siege leadership. In mid-June, as a prelude to the riot that saw the destruction of the Market House, Walker's own house was ransacked by the crowd after he recommended the ransomed release of a Catholic prisoner. When they discovered a private stock of "beer, mum and butter" they pursued him, "some threatening to shoot him, others to send him to gaol".[51] Walker, as the overseer of the city's stores, was accused of hoarding and profiteering, and was only saved from physical harm by the intervention of Baker.[52] Not unlike food riots to be found elsewhere, though in this case accentuated by the particularly difficult circumstances, Walker became the object of an intense popular anger, reserved for the hoarders of food.

Factions and disputes within the ranks of the officers and officials in charge of the city were also evident, highlighted by the argument between Baker and Mitchelburne that ended in a duel and the temporary imprisonment of Mitchelburne.[53] Crowd, conspirators and the colonist citizenry were men and women, caught in a desperate situation and acted, not in the impossible manner of folk-icons, but with a human

mixture of fear, impulse and courage.

By late July the number of the besieged population had been greatly reduced. The mortality rate was highest among the non-combatant population, with less than 10% of the total killed dying as a result of battle.[54] The city defenders maintained a remarkable resolve in the face of such hardship, bearing stark testimony to the dire consequences the majority believed would be their fate if the city surrendered. Deliverance was, however, close to hand. On the evening of July 28th three of Kirke's ships sailed up the Foyle and the first of these, the "Mountjoy", broke through the boom. The "Breaking of the Boom", the symbolic moment of triumph and salvation within the narrative of the Siege Myth, allowed the ships to continue on to Derry and to deliver their load of supplies and provisions.

By the morning of July 30th, the besieging army recognised the futility of continuing their efforts, and retreated. It is this moment that is celebrated in the most important march of the Seige culture, the Apprentice Boys "Relief of Derry" parade. Within the myth of the Siege the relief is the closing of the circle, the end of the story begun with the "Shutting of the Gates". The imagined community emerges from its period of trial into a new golden era. As with the celebration of the Boyne, through the totemic veneration of the victory of William of Orange, the relief of the Seige, as a symbol, merges the religious discourse of redemption with the politics of sectarian division to produce a potent ideological brew. The breaking of the boom brought the actual Seige of Derry to a close, its cultural and mythic significance was, however, only just beginning.

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> While Republicans revere the graves of their martyred heroes (be it the 1916 leaders in Dublin, Wolfe Tone in Bodenstown, the Bloody Sunday victims if Derry, or the hunger strikers in the H-Block), the Loyalists tend more to identify with the triumphalist emblems of their historical victories: King Billy and Carson. The Apprentice Boys parade and the Orange Day marches celebrate political and military success, not failure. And when Loyalists stage an annual ritualistic burning of the Lundy simalcrum...it is not to sanctify the sacrificial victim but to pour scorn on him.

Far from being the "Sacrificial victim" Lundy is the very opposite of this, he is the antithesis of Collective redemption which is on the other hand a latent element in the icon of the Apprentice Boys and the Siege as a whole.

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CHAPTER II

DECADES OF DISILLUSIONMENT: POPULAR CULTURE AND THE EMERGENCE OF THE SIEGE MYTH IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

For the overwhelming majority of those who survived the Siege the expected triumphal golden era never dawned. Even as they celebrated relief the new military authorities, who took control of the city, introduced a number of measures which led to difficulty, disappointment and recrimination. In the longer term, such problems were only intensified as the denominational divisions within the colonial community, temporarily suspended during the period of emergency in the early 1690s, re-emerged. The re-assertion of the distinctly Anglican establishment left the largely Presbyterian community of the Derry area deeply resentful. This sense of growing disenchantment was not helped by the economic difficulties which dogged the city over the next two decades and disenchantment grew into disillusion with as the Siege survivors failed to secure meaningful recompense for the physical and financial sacrifices made during the Siege.

This disillusionment fed into the earliest celebrations of the Siege anniversaries. The Siege Myth did not emerge ready made in the immediate wake of the Siege, nor was its cultural celebration an established fact by the beginning of the eighteenth century. Rather it was during the course of the following century, and, in particular, during

the crucial last decades of the 1700s, that a recognisable series of rites and rituals became well-established around the anniversaries of the Siege. However, the parades of the 1770s and 1780s were not the first public marking of the Siege anniversaries.

In the late 1710s there was a brief flourishing of interest in the anniversary of the Relief of the Siege and the emergence of this interest was tied closely to the experience of those who had been involved in the actual Siege. Most of those prominent in promoting these fledgling Siege celebrations had also been prominent during 1689 and it seems that their sense of place and status continued to be intimately tied to their role at that time. Few, if any, were members of the city elite. The passing of this generation saw the practice of marking the Relief anniversary in any public manner discontinued and the "invented tradition" of the Siege parades would not develop for another half a century.

Yet, there continued to be some popular interest in the Siege, which emerged as a sort of folk tale within Protestant popular culture through the next few decades. Such interest, while extremely difficult to quantify, does seem to have been largely limited to the poorer sections of the settler community. For the Ascendancy elite, despite the important part the struggles of the late eighteenth century played in the sense of their own legitimacy, the Siege was less well celebrated than other events of the period.

This lack of elite interest reflects the essentially plebian nature of the Siege Myth, certainly as far as the early eighteenth century was concerned. The ordinary survivors of the Siege, for whom the moment of salvation and relief had proved both transitory

and illusory, celebrated the Siege as a nostalgic harking back to a moment when they had briefly realised a sense of their own power and importance; a time, when through the actions of the Crowd, they had directed the passage of events. For those who would subsequently know the Derry Siege as a folk tale, the plebian dimension of ridiculing authority would feature just as prominently as images of heroism and communal exclusivity.

Poverty, Pamphlets and Protestant Division: The Aftermath of the Siege, August 1689-1710

One of the first actions of the new military regime, that took control of Derry in the immediate wake of the Siege, was to deny protection to Protestant farms from bands of the retreating Irish army. Following this a proclamation, issued in the second week after the relief, demanded that all those "not in arms who had fled to that place" from the country should immediately return home "without taking any of their goods with them".[1] Cattle belonging to the colonists were brought to the city under military control and sold so that "few could recover their own again, that many families were deprived thereby of the considerable means of their subsistence".[2] Even more serious, the colonist militia was now disbanded with no pay or compensation. Most of the officers who served during the Siege were replaced by those of the relief force, colonists leaving the city were deprived of their arms and

> the weak and sick soldiers had nothing allowed them to subsist on out of the stores, whereby they were forced to travel and beg for their bread in the country, which being extremely depopulated, many of them perished for want.[3]

The product of military-thinking that prioritised strategic concerns over the needs of the settler population, these measures caused deep-seated rancour that would not quickly be dissipated. Arguments over payment for military service given during the Siege and compensation for the supply of provisions and arms continued not just for years but for decades. Depositions and petitions were sent regularly by the Corporation and other parties to Parliament for the next quarter of a century with no positive response. As late as 1721 an embittered William Hamill, who had served as a colonel during the Siege, wrote in a pamphlet from debtors prison of "the danger and folly of being public spirited and sincerely loving one's country" where he described the condition of:

> those of them unfortunate enough as to survive the flame, the pestilence and the sword of the enemy have been left by their fellow-subjects (for whom they suffered these hardships) to drop into their graves one after the other...We have lost all our estates, our blood and our friends in the service of our country and have nothing for it these thirty years but royal promises.[4]

Some fared better. Three days after the end of the Siege Walker left for London with an address from the city inhabitants for William and Mary. In the wake of the popularly received news of the conclusion of the Siege, Walker was publicly feted in a triumphal progress through Scotland and England and was awarded a personal grant of £5,000 by the House of Commons.[5] London publishers, conscious of a potentially large market, pressed for accounts of the Siege and Walker duly obliged with A True Account of the Siege of Londonderry.[6] The disappointments and acrimonious disagreements of the post-Siege period were, however, to rise to the surface in a flurry of published responses to Walker's interpretation of events.[7] The dispute was,

significantly, to centre on the personal role of Walker during the Siege and his attitude to the part played by Presbyterian ministers. One of those ministers was John Mackenzie who, in a number of pamphlets, questioned whether Walker had been a Governor at all and took deep offence at the absence in Walker's account of the names of the Dissenter ministers involved in the Siege, even though he listed all the Anglican clerics who had been present in Derry. Mackenzie also rejected Walker's claim that the Dissenter ministers had made nothing more than a passive contribution. "The seven non-conforming ministers", Walker had declared "were equally careful of their people and kept them obedient and quiet".[8]

This process of intra-Protestant division was witnessed, too, in the debate that raged through the late 1690s and early 1700s concerning the nature of Protestant worship. That such an issue was the subject of polemical public scrutiny had repercussions than went far beyond the realms of theological disputation. As in the 1640s, arguments over the form of religiosity were a way of demarcating avenues of political and cultural authority. This debate had a particular significance for Derry. The new Episcopalian bishop of Derry, Dr William King and the Presbyterian minister of Derry, Robert Craighead launched respectively vociferous attacks and defences of Presbyterianism.[9]

The ferocity of these polemical debates reflected not only the atmosphere of doubt and suspicion that typified the aftermath of the Seige but also longer term friction between Presbyterians and the Established Church. Briefly forgotten differences over the plight and future power of the two main Protestant denominations resurfaced. The

grievance expressed by Mackenzie in his Narrative of the Siege was soon accompanied by a growing sense of unease among Ulster Presbyterians that the new settlement in Ireland would increasingly reduce them to the margins of the colonial order. While the central platform of social stratification in the post-Siege era was the division of the native Catholic and settler Protestant, a structured inequality, only relatively less marked, was that between the Episcopalian landowning Ascendancy and the Presbyterian majority of the colonist tenantry.

A series of measures introduced by the Church of Ireland landowners, who dominated the Dublin Parliament, led to further land confiscations from Catholic proprietors. By 1707 Catholic landownership had been reduced from one-seventh to one-fifth of the total of Irish farm land, and this process would only be intensified as the eighteenth-century wore on. The penalisation of Catholics was deepened by the passing of an Irish Test Act in 1704. This Act drastically curtailed the economic and political rights of Catholics and dealt a death blow to the declining power of the Catholic elite. The stated aim of this measure, to "prevent the growth of Popery", legitimated a re-distribution of power and resources.

The scope of ethno-religious stratification was not, however, restricted to Catholics. The Test Act was also aimed against non-Episcopalian Protestants. The Test Act demanded that all holders of public office take communion within an Anglican church to qualify for their post. Effectively it represented a legalistic bar on all non-Anglicans. While the inclusion of Presbyterians in the prohibitive measures of the Act was initiated by the English Parliament, and while a pamphlet war was waged for

and against them for the next decade, little enough opposition was evident from within the ranks of the Irish ruling class.[10]

Denominational divisions within Derry, evidenced in the pamphlets published in the wake of the Siege, became even more acrimonious as the local Anglican gentry establishment re-asserted itself. In 1704 the Test Act formally established the landed Episcopalians as the Ascendancy elite in the area. The Derry Corporation, which would subsequently operate under the aegis of a few gentry families until the municipal reforms of the 1840's, was re-constituted after its twenty eight Presbyterian members were forced to resign.

The Williamite Settlement that followed the successful defence of Derry in 1689 therefore saw an entrenchment of landed colonial authority. The power of the Protestant Ascendancy took shape in the rigorous political and economic reduction of the Catholic elite and of Presbyterian tenants and merchants through legal barriers, their near monopoly of land and agricultural activity, the cumulative result of a century of confiscations, and their domination of a cultural-ideological milieu that underscored their apparent inviolability. It was within this environment that the mythological parable of the Siege of Derry would make its first appearance as a popular-cultural event.

That environment was also conditioned by economic difficulties. The economy of Derry and its hinterland recovered only slowly from the devastation of the Williamite Wars and the first years of the eighteenth century brought a wave of severe economic

problems. There was a substantial depression in the trade of the city during the first decade, followed by a series of poor harvests between 1714 and 1719. A further collapse in trade resulted from the widespread crisis the "South Sea Bubble" of 1720 brought in its wake and several more years of famine were the outcome of bad harvests between 1725 and 1728.[11]

Writing after a visit to the city in 1708, the author of "The Case of Ireland", William Molyneux noted that Derry was "a good, large, compact, well-built town...(but that)...since the siege...it does not seem to be a place of much business, riches, or trade.[12] The extent of the hardship this caused for the tenantry and peasants can be judged from an incident recorded by the Episcopalian bishop of Derry, William Nicholson (1718-27), in 1721. Nicholson reported that the body of one of his own coach horses, which had been accidentally killed in a field close to his house, was immediately set upon with axes by a crowd of about 50 to 60 cottagers who "divided the carcase: Every man carrying home his proper dividend for food to their respective families. We seem [continued Nicholson to be brought to the brink of a Famine. God defend us from this pestilence".[13] Times could, undoubtedly, be hard and disillusion with religious restrictions could only have been intensified by economic malaise.

Raising the "Bloody Flag": The Siege Celebrations of 1718-20

There is no record of any anniversary commemoration of the Siege taking place before 1718 and, even then, the sources are minimal. The extremely harsh and impoverished conditions which existed in the city through the 1690s and into the

1700s would certainly have worked against any inclination for organising civic festivities. Nor would the acrimonious relations between the Established church and Presbyterians within the city have done anything to engender a celebration of their shared experiences during the Siege. The antagonisms between the two main Protestant denominations were highlighted in the pamphlet wars of the period. William King, the Episcopalian bishop of Derry between 1691-1702 and later Archbishop of Dublin was one of the most influential figures in the re-assertion of the dominance of the established church. King published a number of important pamphlets that were not only profoundly anti-Catholic, but also highly critical of Dissenters.[14]

In 1718, however, a new bishop of Derry was installed. Bishop William Nicholson was, like King, an influential thinker and author, however his interest lay not in antagonistic theological disputation but in antiquarian study. Before taking up his post in Derry, Nicholson had complied two important works of antiquarian study, the English Historical Library and the Scottish Historical Library. During his time in Derry Nicholson completed one of the founding works of Gaelic antiquarian scholarship in Ireland, the Irish Historical Library, first published in 1720.[15]

The importance of Nicholson for the Siege Myth is that he provides the first real (if brief) source for the emergence of a Siege culture and the commemoration of a Siege anniversary. Shortly after his arrival in the city Nicholson noted, in his diary, for August 1st:

> I read prayers (first and second services) at Londonderry; Col. Mitchelburne's

Bloody Flag being hoisted ye first time, on ye steeple. 8 p.m. Great guns and volleys. Eveng. Splendid Treat in ye Tolset, Fireworks and illuminations.[16]

Exactly two years later Nicholson wrote that "Mr Ward preached and dined with me. Ditto Colonel Mitchelburne. Dr. Squire. Mr Blackhall etc...Bonfires".[17] Undoubtedly, Nicholson's interest in antiquarian scholarship would have made him more congenial than any of his predecessors to marking an historic date with a public display. Similarly, his political outlook, as one of the earliest proponents of a constitutional Union between Ireland and England, would hardly have made him averse to the celebration of, what could be regarded as, a key moment in securing the constitutional settlement of the Glorious Revolution.[18]

Nicholson's diary entry states that the 1718 celebrations involved a church service, the public firing of cannon, a banquet and fireworks; features which would, indeed, provide a model for the form of the rituals and customs adopted in Siege parades later in the century. However there is nothing to suggest that this was in any way an official civic event. No reference to the leading families or figures within the Corporation is made, nor to any sort of a gathering organised by the civic regime. There is, on the other hand, evidence to suggest that this early manifestation of the Siege culture was if anything likely to be antipathetic toward the civic elite.

Mitchelburne, whose "Bloody Flag" was raised on the Cathedral spire for the first time in 1718, was the same John Mitchelburne who had served as Governor in the latter stages of the Siege. Mitchleburne was the main organiser of the 1718 events and it was around him that the embryonic Siege Culture emerged.[19] It was

Mitchelburne, too, who first described the city flag as the "bloody", or "crimson", banner, in a play he wrote in 1705 entitled Ireland Preserv'd.[20] Even at this early stage the "crimson banner" was assuming the status of the city's colours. Originally flown to signal the Relief in 1689, the "Bloody" flag acted not only as an emblem of triumph but also sacrifice; the victory of Relief tainted, metaphorically at least, by the blood of those who had died in its attainment.

That dual sense of triumph and sacrifice was very real to the Siege generation and none more so than to Mitchelburne himself. During the Siege Mitchelburnes wife and children died and the treatment, meted out by the establishment, in the wake of the Siege, caused a deep sense of offence and grievance that was felt by Mitchelburne as well as many others.[21] The progress of his career following the Siege had been anything but smooth and was marked by a less than happy relationship with the city Corporation. An English-born professional soldier who had seen service on the continent and in Tangiers before joining Lord Mountjoy's regiment in Ireland, Mitchelburne took up permanent settlement in Derry only after the Siege.[22] As with several other survivors, his efforts to obtain compensation for expenses incurred during the Siege met with little success. His attempts to become Mayor and to secure the sinecurial office of Governor of Culmore Fort (with its annual income of £600) were both rebuffed.[23]

In 1699 Mitchelburne's campaign for material recompense took him to London, where he unsuccessfully lobbied parliament. To support his case Mitchelburne published a polemical tract The Case of the Governor and Officers and Soldiers actually concerned

in the Defence of the City of Londonderry.[24] The pamphlet was vociferously criticised by David Cairnes, amongst others, who had become a city Alderman and M.P. from 1692 onward (although in 1703 he was barred from both positions as a Presbyterian). Cairnes brought a charge against Mitchelburne before the Corporation arguing that,

> the said printed case did tend much to the prejudice of this city...considering that the said case contains very notorious falsehoods and untruths and misrepresentations of and against the city.[25]

The Common Council reacted by disenfranchising Mitchelburne and removing him from his position as alderman, a decision only reversed after Mitchelburne subsequently sued the Corporation.[26]

What most annoyed the members of the Common Council was the criticisms levelled by Mitchelburne of their own conduct during the Siege. In The Case of the Governor, Officers and Soldiers Mitchelburne asserted that, "Upon Colonel Lundy's abandoning the Town all the Aldermen of the Town left the Place, except three, two of which had been Officers under Colonel Lundy and refused to engage against the late King James and his Irish Army during the Siege".[27] The pamphlet went on to make a more general accusation, suggesting that it had been non-natives of the city who had played the most prominent part in its defence:

> The inhabitants and neighbours of the town, made one single Company, who were called the Company of Gunners. Those were all the inhabitants who acted in the Defence of that city. The other Defenders were persons from other parts of the country, who voluntarily came in...As to the provisions, the inhabitants of Derry were sustained by the Country provisions, as they were defended by the arms of the

Country.[28]

Though there is little in the Corporation minutes to suggest that this fractious relationship between Mitchelburne and his fellow Corporation members continued, nor is there anything to suggest that a rapprochement took place. Mitchelburne also continued to assert his own claims upon parliament, incurring considerable costs in the course of his campaign for compensation, to the point where he found himself in debtors prison in London between 1710 and 1711.[29] There is no real evidence to support the Siege historian, Patrick Macrory, in his supposition that by the time of his death Mitchelburne had "relieved his feelings by writing the play Ireland Preserv'd".[30]

Similarly, a largely anecdotal record that refers to the forming of an "Apprentice Boys" club between 1718 and 1720, describes Mitchelburne as the leading figure of this group, but of the other nineteen named among its members none held, had held or were to hold, the offices either of mayor, or sheriff, of the city, though a number were city burgesses.[31] On the other hand, several of those named could well have been survivors of the actual Siege. These names included a Thomas Ash (probably the author of Ash's Diary), Alexander Cunningham and Henry Campsie, both names which appeared among those attributed with having shut the gates in 1688.[32]

It seems clear, too, that the early commemorating activities were largely restricted to the private sphere. Nicholson refers to "Bonfires" in 1720, but the main event for him was clearly the gathering, at his own residence, of a visiting minister, "Mr

Ward", "Mitchelburne" and a "Mr. Blackhall", for dinner. Certainly the Siege societies formed in the 1780s and 1790s and commentators in the early nineteenth century tended to regard the first clubs as being essential non-public entities and organised principally among the artisans and tradespeople of the city. The Rev. John Graham, a deeply conservative author and highly active organiser of the Siege parades in the 1810s and 1820s, argued that "in the memory of some persons now living" there had been for "many years after his death" a society named in honour of Mitchelburne made up of a, "convivial association of tradesmen".[33]

When Mitchelburne died in 1721 the public commemoration of the Siege seems, in the main, to have died with him. Mitchelburne left funds in his will to provide for the distribution of money to the Anglican poor of the Waterside parish of Glendermott on August 1st each year. In a sense that marks the social and spatial context within which the memory of the Siege was likely to have some meaning.[34] In fact, however, even within this narrow scope, it is apparent that there were limits to the significance of the Siege Myth as a cultural phenomenon, once the generation who had taken part in the actual event had passed away. No record exists of the distribution of Mitchelburne's fund for the poor for any length of time after his death. Mitchelburne also set aside a sum to maintain "the flag on the Steeple of Derry" to be flown each year on the anniversary of the Relief, and yet this practice quickly fell into abeyance.[35]

"Ireland Preserv'd" as a "Folk Play": Popular Culture and the Siege in the Early Eighteenth Century

Mitchelburne's most significant contribution to the development of the Siege Myth may have been his play Ireland Preserv'd, and the part it played in making the Siege an integral element of Ulster Protestant popular culture. By their nature popular, or folk, celebrations tend to leave few historical traces, so that limits of source material make it difficult to assess how widespread they were in the early eighteenth century. Certainly the appearance of certain customs in the Siege parades of the 1780s would indicate that their practice (by then recorded due to the emergence of a local press) pre-dated that period. In particular the burning of an effigy of Lundy, which appears as a popular intrusion in the organised events of 1788, was clearly popular rather than civic in origin.[36] That the object of scorn in this activity was not only derided as a traitor to community, but was also a representative of the social and political elite, at least hints that this was as much a ritual of counter-theatre, common within pre-modern societies, as it was an expression of sectarian antagonism.[37] This aspect of the Siege culture would continue into the nineteenth century as the main opportunity for the popular element to vent their particular spleen.

Ireland Preserv'd portrayed the Siege not only as a struggle against "popery" and "tyranny" but also one in which the failure of the city elite to play their proper part was very much to the fore. The sort of allegations Mitchelburne had made in The Case of the Governors, Officers and Soldiers, that the leading citizens of the city had not played an edifying role during its period of direst need, were re-iterated in Ireland

Preserv'd. In the play the Corporation members, with whom Mitchelburne had such a turbulent relationship, were caricatured as "Alderman Buff" and "Alderman Stepstately", and portrayed as bumbling, pompous and self-seeking.[38]

What the play therefore involved was a mixture of plebian counter-theatre and a celebration of sectarian communalism, and it is perhaps this mixture which made Ireland Preserv'd far and away the most popular literary account of the Siege throughout the eighteenth century and, arguably, the authors most enduring legacy.[39] Described by J.R.R. Adams as one of a few genuine "folk plays" of eighteenth century Ulster society, there were well over twenty editions, of the part of Ireland Preserv'd which dealt with the Siege, published between 1705 and the end of the century.[40] At least three had been published by 1718 and editions were produced not only in the well-established printing centres of London and Dublin but also in Cork, Belfast (1774, 1750 and 1759), Newry (1774) and Strabane (1787). That none were printed in Derry during this period says more about the relatively late development of printing in the city than an indication of any unpopularity of the piece.

Such was the popularity of the play that in the numerous editions produced in the latter part of the eighteenth century it often appeared together with the "Ulster folk play par excellence", Robert Ashton's "The Battle of Aughrim", first published in 1756.[41] Recalling events of his early childhood in Co. Tyrone, the early nineteenth century author, William Carelton, wrote,

> the "Battle of Aughrim", bound with the "Siege of Londonderry", was one of the reading books in the hedge schools of the day and circulated largely among the

people of all religions; it indeed had a most extraordinary effect among the lower classes.[42]

Carleton also described how "the plays of 'The Siege of Londonderry' and 'The Battle of Aughrim' were acted out in barns and waste houses night after night, and were attended by multitudes". Both stories, it would seem, became the subject of a form of folk theatre, not unlike the "Sham fights" which had been performed since the late seventeenth century.[43] These performances formed part of a recreational culture that centred around markets, wakes, fairs and horse meetings in which "rough", often violent, behaviour was frequently apparent and which ultimately fed into the growth of Orangeism.[44]

A Plebian Myth: The Limits of Elite Interest in the Siege in the Early Eighteenth Century

Celebration of the Siege in such popular performances of Ireland Preserv'd as a folk play stood in marked contrast to the limited interest in the Siege within the culture of the Protestant elite. While the Siege featured, along with the other major events of the seventeenth century, in the sense of history that permeated the mind of the Ascendancy, it had no great political or cultural role to play in its own right in the early part of the eighteenth century. As David Miller has argued, interest in the Protestant victories of the 1680s and 1690s was a cultural necessity for the Irish Protestant ruling class.[45] Their ability to conceive a legitimacy of right to the ownership of their vast estates could not simply be grounded in the "state of nature" theories of John Locke, which were so central to the character of law as the

legitimising agency of the English eighteenth century gentry.[46] For the colonial landowning class in Ireland, a Lockean right to property by social contract had to be supplemented by a right by conquest, necessitating, in turn, a myth of native Irish barbarism.[47]

The more abrasive edges of this "myth of barbarism" were muted within the cultural synthesis of ancient Irish and Williamite traditions which marked the outlook of large sections of the Ascendancy by the middle of the century. Nevertheless the "barbarism myth" continued to have an underlying cultural presence. In any case, the Gaelic antiquarianism of the Ascendancy shared the common ethos of the European-wide Romantic movement that, while it celebrated the imagined cultural virtues of a "folk" tradition, it did so on the basis that the indigenous people no longer posed an evident threat to established authority.[48]

The Ascendancy celebrated its own existence through the supposed "civilising project", performed by a conquering and patrician elite. The vogue for Neo-Classicism blended with the particular condition of the Irish Georgian Ascendancy to create a vibrant cult of William III, that was clearly emerging by the middle decades of the century. Within this cultural celebration the hero of the Boyne was portrayed in statues and paintings as the embodiment of classical civility and martial prowess.[49] The statue of William erected in front of Trinity College in Dublin in 1701, became the focus for annual parades and the anniversary of his birthday was established, by the latter part of the eighteenth century, as a national festival.[50] Francis Wheatley's "View of College Green With a Meeting of the Volunteers, on May 4th, 1779" shows

the Dublin Volunteer companies drawn up in order before William's statue. Here, too, the meaning of public festivals was evidently open to a variety of political interpretations by the 1770s and 1780s.[51]

The characters of the Siege were, however, more plebian than patrician, and the Siege cycle contained few models conducive to the self-image of a landed aristocracy. Only a very small number of artistic works commemorating the Siege were produced for Ascendancy clients. The best known and most public of these was the "Siege of Derry" tapestry, designed by Jan Van Beaver in 1729, to accompany a depiction of the "Battle of the Boyne", both tapestries commissioned for the House of Lords of the planned Parliament House (1729-35) in College Green.[52] An untypical depiction, the "Siege of Derry" tapestry showed neither of the great mythic episodes of the "Shutting of the Gates" or the "Relief of the Siege" but a view of the city from behind the lines of the besieging army. The figures celebrated were also unusual. Though a portrait of Walker was included, he very much took second place to Henry Baker, and these two were joined by an idiosyncratic homage to "ye captain of ye Dartmouth".

The portrait of Walker in the tapestry was, in fact, based upon a painting the court artist Geoffrey Kneller made of Walker in the immediate aftermath of the Siege.[53] This painting, or an early copy of it, was one of the few paintings celebrating the Siege then in a private collection in Dublin. Sometime in the 1790s this painting was bought by a John Boyd, who immediately made it the focus for an annual ritual;

> it (Walker's painting), is annually carried on the 7th of December to Morrison's Hotel, in Dublin, where a numerous and highly respectable Society of the

> descendants of the defenders of Londonderry assemble to honour the glorious memory of their ancestors. Each of the members of this Irish Pitt Club, as it may be called, wears on his breast, for that night, a medal impressed with the likeness of Governor Walker.[54]

What is significant is that it was only in the 1790s that this public celebration of the painting occurred. Until that time it remained in private hands and was in no way incorporated into a public culture of the Siege Myth.

The evidence of any widespread celebration of the Siege outside of Derry in either popular or elite circles is, then, minimal. However, this points to more than the discontinuity of the Siege tradition, it also indicates the absence of any "national" cultural life in the early eighteenth century, a cultural life which was, rather, typified by parochialism. Within the context of this cultural parochialism it is arguable that if the Siege story operated as an integrative myth for sections of the Protestant community in this period, its influence extended little beyond the immediate locality of the city itself.

Even in this narrow sphere the Siege Myth had only a minor cultural impact in these early years. John Mitchelburne was clearly the main driving force behind such celebrations that existed in the embryonic Siege culture. In turn, Mitchelburne appears to have been something of a renegade within the clique that controlled the city at that time. While being financially secure, he was not a natural member of the local propertied or mercantile establishment. His temperamental character had been apparent during the Siege, when a sword fight with Henry Baker had led to his arrest and brief imprisonment. His deep sense of grievance at his treatment in the aftermath

of the Siege produced an, at times, extremely tense relationship with the local landlords and the ruling group of city burgesses. It also produced a situation where, like many of the "tradesmen" who supported him, his social status was bound up with the memory of the Siege, and the popular part played by the citizenry during it.

Through the first half of the eighteenth century there was little public commemoration of the Siege. Certainly the often harsh economic circumstances of the time would have done little to promote such events but this cannot provide a conclusive explanation. More significant is, perhaps, the absence of a need for such cultural practices, or the social and political environment in which they might occur. There was, essentially, no formal public domain within the city in which both an elite and popular culture could fuse to produce what would later take shape as the Siege Myth. However, for a brief period in the second decade of the century the public display of commemoration did take place within the city. The particular conditions of a generation who had themselves taken part in the Siege goes some way to explaining this development and the reason why this public display lasted for so short a time.

The earliest manifestations of the Siege Myth were, therefore, very limited in their scope and significance and dependent upon very particular circumstances. While the numerous editions of Mitchelburne's Ireland Preserv'd bears witness to a popular interest in the Siege, this was not apparently shared to any great degree among the Ascendancy. Even in Derry the Siege took on only the most nebulous of cultural forms and lacked any clear political implications. Similarly, there is no evidence to suggest that it formed part of any Corporation-led civic culture, as it most certainly

would, from the 1770s onward.

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29. Simpson, R., The Annals of Derry, 158.

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31. Milligan, C.D., The Walker Club Centenary 1844-1944: A History of the Apprentice Boys of Derry and Biographical Notes on Governor Walker (Sentinel,Londonderry,1944), 11-12, "Record of the Mayors and Sheriffs of the City of Londonderry", in Simpson, R., The Annals of Derry, 202-207.

32. Ash, Capt. T., "A Circumstantial Journal of The Siege of Londonderry", MacKenzie, J., "A Narrative of the Siege of Londonderry", in Hempton, J., The Siege and History of Londonderry, 161.

33. Graham, Rev. J., Derriana: Consisting of a History of the Siege of Londonderry and the Defence of Enniskillen in 1688 and 1689, with Historical Poetry and Biographical Notes (McCorkell,Londonderry,1823), 69.

34. Milligan, C.D., Colonel John Mitchelburne, 23.

35. Hempton, J., The Siege and History of Londonderry, 411.

36. Graham, J., Derriana, 151.

37. Thompson, E.P., Customs in Common, 16-96.

38. Mitchelburne, Col. J., Ireland Preserv'd, Part II, 119.

39. While it is distinctly likely, as a number of authors have suggested, that Mitchelburne, who showed little literary talent apart from this offering, was helped to a greater or less degree in the writing of Ireland Preserv'd, there is no evidence at all to support claims that have been put forward that this help was given by the dramatist George Farquar. Although Farquar was a native of Derry, who had been present as a youth during the Siege, he cannot either be linked to Mitchelburne, nor can his hand be seen in the style of the piece. Neither the Annals nor the Ordnance Survey Memoir make any reference to Farquar as a possible author nor do any of Farquars biographers. Similarly Sam Burnside, in his review of literary interpretations of the Siege makes no allusion to Farquar's involvement in Ireland Preserv'd. The originator of the idea seems to have been C.D. Milligan, editor of the Londonderry Sentinel, leading figure in local Orange circles and the Apprentice Boys and a Siege historian of the twentieth century. See Burnside, S., "No Temporising with the Foe: Literary Material Relating to the Siege and Relief of Derry", Linen Hall Review, August, 1989, 4-9, Simpson, R., The Annals of Derry, 256-7, Colby, Col.T., Ordnance Survey Memoir of Londonderry, 91-93, Milligan, C.D., Colonel John Mitchelburne, 21.

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CHAPTER III

"LIBERTY" AND THE THEATRE OF PATRONAGE:

THE SIEGE MYTH

IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Historians have tended to date the emergence of the Siege parades from the centenary anniversaries of 1788-89 and linked their origin to the radical politics of that era and the subsequent rise of sectarian tension. There is much to support this argument. The anniversary festivities were grander than anything that had gone before and the meaning given to the Siege Myth in the 1780s and 1790s revolved around the contest over Protestant political loyalties. However, it is from the 1770s that a recognisable Siege culture develops, under the auspices of factions within the city elite, and it does so as an aspect of local political struggles. In this sense the Siege emerges as a form of political theatre, a way for members of the elite to demonstrate their power and prestige and to identify both with the historical legacy of 1689. At the very time when "actual" paternalist social relations were being replaced by those of the market, the "performance" of paternalism was a crucial means of maintaining social cohesion. By the end of the eighteenth century the Siege Myth was part of a "theatre of patronage".

This was not a smooth process for the city elite. In the contest for Protestant political loyalties the form and extent that "liberty" should take was the most hotly disputed ideological battle. The meaning of the Siege Myth was one way in which the battle

for "liberty" was fought. The 1780s, and the early 1790s, saw various groups and classes within Derry challenge such elite proprietorship of the Siege Myth, building on the Siege as an aspect of popular culture, and attempting to re-define the notion of liberty which the Siege was taken to exemplify. Though, ultimately, such a contest was both unequal and limited, it nevertheless represented a very real political struggle that, in its most ardent phase, saw the Siege represented as a tale of popular libertarianism and Irish patriotism.

Such struggles were defined by Derry's changing social and economic character. The Derry economy expanded rapidly from the 1730s onward, and though, for the majority of the population, poverty was no stranger, the rise of the port as a major export outlet shifted the balance of elite power within the city. The north-west of Ulster formed a distinct economic area and that regional particularity goes some way to explaining the parochialism of the Siege culture in this period and the emphasis on local identity which was already emerging as a feature. Economic distinctiveness also helped to define the particularity of Derry's social structure in the second half of the eighteenth century and why, that too, was reflected in the political character of the Siege Myth through the 1770s and 1790s.

The Theatre of Patronage: The Siege Parades in the 1770s and 1780s

On the morning of August 1st, 1772, the inhabitants of Derry were woken by the sound of the cathedral bells being rung and the sight of the Siege flag being flown from its steeple. At midday Hugh Hill led a procession of the Corporation and

Freemen of the city from the Town Hall to St Columb's Cathedral. As well as the sitting MP and mayor of the city, Hill was also one of the largest landowners, and most powerful political figures, in the area, and a bastion of the Ascendancy. In the Cathedral a special service was given by the Rev. Clothworthy Snoden, who later served as archdeacon of Derry, from 1786 to 1795. After this ceremony the procession returned to the Town Hall to enjoy a lavish dinner reputed to consist of over one hundred dishes, provided, and paid for, by Hugh Hill himself. The meal was followed by a display of "illuminations" which rounded off the days proceedings.[1] In this event the civic celebration, and modern cult of the Siege Myth, was born.

The main record of these events is the local newspaper The Londonderry Journal and Donegal and Tyrone Advertiser, which had been established only two months before. This might suggest, of course, that the occasion was less innovative that it might at first appear, that the innovation was the presence of a written record. However, it appears that even at the time, the 1772 parade was regarded as a break with the past.[2] The Journal itself commented that it was with "uncommon demonstrations of joy" that the anniversary of the Relief of the Siege was celebrated.[3] It also published several notices that give the definite impression that these events were highly unusual. A body calling itself the "Liberty Annuity Company" took the opportunity to thank Hugh Hill for his "spirited attention to justice on all occasions" since he had become mayor and, similarly, thanked him for "reviving this ancient custom of going to church in form".[4]

A letter was also published on behalf of the "Master, Wardens, and Brethren of the Guild of Trades of the city of Londonderry", which similarly sought to express their gratitude to "our worshipful mayor and worthy representative" who, "revived, on Saturday last, the ancient custom of commemorating the equally glorious and memorable deliverance of this city".[5] That the public celebration of the Siege was considered to be the revival of an "ancient custom" would suggest that, at best, its practice had fallen into disuse for a considerable length of time, or that it was invented as a "traditional" cultural activity on this particular occasion.

Why, though, should such an event take place at this time? Two elements are crucial. First, the character of elite power within the city from the 1760s, and particularly in the 1770s, markedly changed. Second, an economic depression of the early 1770s brought severe social difficulties and had political repercussions. Since the 1760s the Derry Corporation had successfully combatted any real influence still exerted by the Irish Society, principally through the rejection of the candidates recommended by the Society for the city parliamentary seats. In their place the increasingly powerful mercantile families who controlled the Corporation had augmented their economic wealth with greater political representation. The main architect and beneficiary of this policy was Hugh Hill who had been elected to serve for the city in 1768 alongside the highly influential privy councillor, close confidant of the Lord Lieutenant, Provost of Trinity College and native of Derry, Francis Andrews.[6]

Following the death of Andrews in 1774 (and shortly after the "revival" of the Relief parade) he was replaced as a city MP by James Alexander, later created the 1st earl

of Caledon. This marked a significant shift in the balance of power among the personnel of the local ruling class. The Alexander family had made their fortune in the commercial expansion of Derry since the 1730s, largely through the markets found among British colonial possessions. They had accumulated vast wealth in the provisions trade with the plantations of the West Indies, where their interests in the herring fisheries found a suitable market in the feeding of slaves. James' brother Robert, who was Arthur Young's host and guide to the city in 1776, was a major shipowner and merchant who established a large fishery in Lough Swilly in 1773 and constructed a salting house on Inch island in 1776 that employed up to 90 men, women and children.[7] The commercial activities of the Alexander family, by the 1770s, were very wide-ranging. They were very powerful within the provisions trade, owned several ships employed in the passage of emigrants to North America and ran a Sugar House, built in the city in 1762, to process the sugar cane imported from their substantial property holdings in the Caribbean.[8] Such was the extent of the Alexander family wealth that they built one of the grandest houses in the area in 1770, a "large classical villa" which significantly they called "Boom Hall" because of its position near the site where the blockading boom of 1689 was believed to have been.[9]

To celebrate James' success in the parliamentary election of 1774 his brother Robert, himself an alderman on the Corporation, issued an advert in the Journal on November 7th, 1775 requesting the mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, burgesses and freemen of the city to,

> dine with him (Alderman Alexander) in the Town Hall, on Thursday 7th of

> December next, the anniversary of the day on which their gallant ancestors bolted their gates, bravely defending the city against the invaders of their liberty, the enemies of their religion, and of their country...to drink to the health of their representative, the declaration of whose political principals has so universally met with approbation.[10]

The universality of such "approbation" might, however, be questioned. During the early years of the 1770s Derry experienced the first significant economic depression it had encountered since the 1730s. Problems for the linen industry had produced significant unemployment amongst weavers in the area, difficulties for the mercantile community and a rise in emigration, that was to be particularly noticeable amongst Protestant artisans and small commodity farmers. Such problems would clearly, too, have had a damaging impact upon the tradesmen of the city. At the same time, and not unconnected, a "popular party" was formed in the city, an opposition group basing its politics on a form of Protestant libertarianism that challenged (albeit ineffectually) the small network of families who controlled the Corporation.[11]

The invented tradition, or "revived ancient custom" of the 1772 public demonstration, if seen in this social and political context, can be viewed as an act affirming the sense of a collective interdependence and solidarity and exhibiting a paternalistic concern for the welfare of the community, on the part of the local establishment, in the midst of an economic depression. That its appeal was particularly strongly felt by the tradesmen of the city Guild and the members of the "Liberty Annuity Company" would bear out the effectiveness of the parade in this regard. Similarly, the first ever evidence of an organised celebration of the "Shutting of the Gates", in 1775, was an

obvious means by which the Alexander family could both demonstrate their largesse and culturally identify their success with that of the Siege Myth.

However, economic problems continued, despite these performances, and gave impetus to a counter-theatre of the Siege which was identified with parliamentary reform. A year after the re-invention of the Siege culture in 1772 the local magistrates, of which Hill was one, "declined to assemble the citizens on First August". The mayor at this time was William Lecky. Lecky was a shipping merchant who emerged in the 1770s and 1780s as the leading figure in the Derry reform group.[12] The only commemoration of the Relief anniversary in 1773 was by a society calling itself the "Phoenix Club", which held a meeting and dinner in a local hotel. This event was announced in the Journal by "Eneas Murray". In 1778, Murray would be chosen as a lieutenant in the "'Prentice Boys of Derry" company of Volunteers.[13] The membership of the Phoenix Club seems to have consisted of Presbyterians, in the main, and would also become a major force of the liberal reform movement in the city.[14]

This reform movement came into its own with a meeting of the "free and independent electors of the city of Derry", held in October 1775, under the auspices of the Trades Guild. At this meeting a series of resolutions was passed in which the idea of "independence" was paramount. The meeting resolved that the electors were "free and independent", that their representatives should be the same, that MP's should be neither "placemen or pensioners" and declared the right of electors "at all times, to instruct their representatives with regard to their conduct in parliament, and that such

instructions should be adhered to".[15] The meeting ended with a call to support William Lecky in any future parliamentary election. Only three months earlier, a precursor of this stand for "independence" had been declared in the formation of an "Independent Mitchelburne Club" which announced, in an advert in the Journal, its intention to meet on August 1st and invited "all those Sons of Liberty who formerly met and commemorated that blessed day" to join them.[16]

Independence, and the imagery of the Siege, were to re-appear in tandem in November, 1775, in a radical response to Robert Alexander's proposed commemoration of the Shutting of the Gates. In an attack on the restrictions being placed upon any other form of demonstration, the author, using the clearly artisan title of "Leather Apron", issued a notice in the Journal for a meeting, to be held in "Mr Bradley's", the same hotel in which the Phoenix Club met. "Leather Apron" was violently opposed to the private appropriation of the Siege Myth by Alexander and proposed instead, an alternative role for the "liberty" that the Siege Myth was seen to encapsulate:

> *Quere:* Are the once and ere-to-be-revered Derry Boys, who gallantly opposed Popish tyranny and oppression, and now animated with that unparalleled quality - Independence - to be, by any premeditation or illegality deprived of commemorating that day on which their ancestors so bravely barred the Gates against a treacherous foe? No. Forbid it, Heaven! Forbid it, Independence! and forbid it, Derry's Sons! Let us, if no other than a shed can be found to keep us from the inclemency of the weather, in spite of an assuming multitude, whose only virtue, on this occasion, is the undue influence, celebrate that day - signalised by Derry boys and they only - the 7th of December. N.B. - Dinner bespoke in Mr. Bradley's, where the subscription

book for that purpose is to be had, and some honest Derry Boys subscribed.

Leather Apron.[17]

"Leather Apron's" day had not, however, yet arrived. The "assuming multitude" were still capable of exercising their "undue influence" to some effect. Lecky stood against Hill and Alexander at the election of 1776, but failed to secure anything more than a token support. Interest in parliamentary reform would, however, become a more widespread demand of the Protestant bourgeoisie in the city over the next decade, reflecting the general upsurge of political liberalism in this period to the point where the issue was taken up by the Corporation itself, in the early 1780s. The "popular party" would, similarly, soon find an organisation in which the drive for political liberalisation could take far more definite shape, and in which the Siege Myth would again be employed; the Volunteer Movement.

The first Volunteer Companies were formed in Derry, as elsewhere, in the summer of 1778, as a Protestant militia force created to compensate for the withdrawl of British troops from Ireland to fight in the American Revolution. As elsewhere, too, the Volunteers soon emerged as a major political force, agitating both for greater Irish legislative independence and greater parliamentary accountability. While demands for Catholic relief were voiced, and loudly so by the most progressive elements in the movement, they received little enough attention in comparison to demands on these other fronts. Certainly, the Derry Volunteer Companies fell far short of the radicalism of their Belfast, Antrim and Down counterparts in this regard.[18]

By June, 1778, three companies of Volunteers had been formed in Derry, along with a body known as the "Londonderry Fusiliers". The membership of each of these groups was distinguishable in both class, and denominational, terms and each, too, had a particular relationship to the Siege traditions. The Fusiliers and the Independent Volunteers were "mostly composed of young gentlemen". The "Independent company of Volunteers" was led by John Ferguson and John Coningham. Ferguson (who was mayor in 1778) had set up a "True Blue Society" in 1776, which resolved that it should meet on the December 7th and the July 12th each year, to celebrate the "Shutting of the Gates" and the Battle of the Boyne. From a Presbyterian background, Ferguson had earlier in life, conformed to the Church of Ireland and while he was a leading figure in the reform group of the 1780s, the increasing wealth of his mercantile family established them as one of the dominant elements within the local Protestant ruling elite in the early nineteenth century. Conningham was mayor on two occasions in the 1780s and, in 1783, proposed the support of the Corporation for the resolutions passed by the Ulster delegates to the Volunteer Convention, held in Dublin that year.[19]

The "Apprentice Boys of Derry company" was made up "chiefly of citizens" and was led by William Lecky, supported by Stephen Bennett and Eneas Murray, both of the Phoenix Club. An advert, posted by the "officers and soldiers of the Apprentice Boys company", to thank one of the city's two Presbyterian ministers, Rev. David Young for delivering an address to them on the July 12th, 1778, suggests that the company was predominantly Presbyterian. On August 1st, 1778 the Apprentice Boys Company marched to a separate service from the one held in the Cathedral attended by the other

Volunteer companies, to mark the Relief anniversary.[20] The Apprentice Boys Company was the most active in connection with the Siege and other parades during this period, and also provided the leading group of political reformers. During the high point of the popular party fortunes in the early 1790s Lecky, Murray and Bennett would all hold some sort of official office; Lecky as MP, Murray and Bennet, both as mayor for two terms.[21]

The last Company established, and the lowest in the social hierarchy, was the "Mitchelburne Volunteers" which was "formed entirely of tradesmen". The first meeting of this Company was held in the "Mitre", a public house in Bishop St, that was adjacent both to the Church of Ireland Cathedral and the Fountain area, already established as a site of Protestant artisan and working class settlement.[22] It, perhaps, says something of the popular memory of Mitchelburne that his name has was identified with the most populist elements and working class elements in the Derry Volunteers.

The development of the Volunteer movement saw an explosion of interest in parades and Protestant anniversaries. The Derry Volunteer Companies, and particularly the Apprentice Boys Company, took part in numerous processions that marked not only the "Shutting of the Gates" and the "Relief", but also, as occurred in other parts of Ireland, celebrating the Battle of the Boyne and the birthday of William III.[23] Such demonstrations usually involved a military parade, the firing of several volleys of musketry, a church service, held either in the Cathedral or a newly-constructed Presbyterian Meeting House, and usually finished with a dinner hosted, very often,

by the Volunteer Companies themselves.[24]

While the Derry companies took part in anniversaries that were celebrated elsewhere the parades of August 1st and December 7th were almost totally unique to the city, although not wholly so. David Miller has recorded a celebration of the "Shutting of the Gates" in Coleraine as early as 1778, probably modelled on the Derry parades. Here again the Volunteer companies were very much to the fore. Following a march through the town the Volunteers amused the watching crowd with "several evolutions and firings" and rounded off the day with a meal in a local tavern.[25] This expansion of the Siege celebrations to a location outside of the city was, however, very much the exception rather than the rule. To all intents and purposes the Derry Protestant anniversaries were a Derry Protestant affair.

The Apprentice Boys company was extremely active in promoting the invented tradition of the Siege. They took a leading part in almost all the parades and were instrumental in creating the "Ceremony of Shutting the Gates" on December 7th, establishing what thereafter became an annual practice. This Volunteer company was readily identifiable both in terms of its political complexion and social make up to contemporaries, suggesting that the sense of identity being invoked in this symbolism and invented ritual had a clear definition; libertarian, bourgeois and principally Presbyterian.

The manufacturing of these traditions and rituals took place against the backdrop of the rise of the Patriot party, through the 1770s and 1780s, the campaign for greater

legislative independence achieved in part with "Grattan's Parliament" in 1782, the growth in Protestant colonial nationalism and an increasing radical agenda, promoted by the Ulster Volunteer Companies. This Volunteer radicalism voiced a unique historical identity within an emerging public civil society, through such cultural activities as the Siege parades. The parades fused the identity of the Volunteers, with a radical, and potentially revolutionary, political outlook, that took its ideological lead from the principles of the enlightenment.[26]

The apogee of such Volunteer radicalism was the Dungannon Convention of 1782, and the Ulster delegation which went to the great Volunteer Convention in Dublin 1793. A major spokesperson for the radical group at the Dublin meeting was Frederick Hervey, the 4th Earl of Bristol, and Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry from 1768 to 1803. Hervey was a charismatic figure, who owed his position to the privilege, patronage and corruption that was the nature of eighteenth century aristocratic power, but who was also a man of relatively liberal political views. Hervey's influence within Derry, despite his long absences abroad, was an important support for the reform group in the 1780s, and he was also to play his part in the creation of the Siege culture.[27]

While Hervey viewed the growth of the Volunteers in the early 1780s with a degree of circumspection and concern, even while he supported the drive for greater Irish parliamentary independence, by 1782 he was congratulating the Derry Companies for their actions, and received an address of thanks from John Ferguson in return.[28] In early 1783, Hervey joined the movement and swiftly became Colonel of the Derry

Corps, using this position as a launch pad for his ambitions to a national leadership role. In November of that year he travelled to the National Volunteer Convention in Dublin in a celebrated public procession that took three days to complete, accompanied by the officers of the Derry Companies and at least twenty men.[29] Even in this action Hervey illustrates the growing role of public display as a means of political mobilisation. The ambitions of the Earl-bishop were easily denied by the conservative national leadership of the Volunteers and Hervey's direct involvement in the Derry Companies dissipated as swiftly as it had arisen. He was, however, to play a leading part in the great displays of the Siege Centenary celebrations, eight years later.

Such was the political environment of the day that by this time even the Derry Corporation had taken up the cause of parliamentary reform. They supported the resolutions of the Ulster Volunteer delegates to the 1783 Convention and issued a letter of thanks to Hervey following it.[30] This merchant oligarchy, realising the possibilities offered to an expanding commercial centre and class by the reform agenda, issued a petition in March 1784 complaining

> mean and decayed boroughs return a much greater number of members than the opulent and populous cities and counties...(and that)...the duration of parliament is such as renders members nearly independent of constituents.

They therefore called for, "the more equal representation of the people, and to shorten the duration of parliament".[31] Like Hervey, the members of the Corporation would find the Centenary of the Siege, only four years later, an ideal opportunity to publicly demonstrate their political credentials.

The Siege culture was thus well-established on the eve of the Siege Centenary in 1788-89, and was clearly involved in the political and ideological struggles of the 1770s and 1780s. Against the background of national political developments and economic circumstances it had become an integral element of an emerging civil society. In this civil society the contest of various groups, cliques and classes found a public forum and, the still highly problematic idea of a specifically Protestant, Ulster or Irish culture, a place to be defined.

The Tradition Invented: The Anniversary Parades, 1788-89

The high-point of both the Siege Culture of the late eighteenth century and the fortunes of the liberal group within Derry, coincided. The last years of the 1780s saw the Siege commemorated on a scale that made previous occasions pale by comparison. Less than a year after the centenary celebrations of 1788-89 the successful election of William Lecky, as a Derry member to the Irish parliament represented the greatest victory won by the popular party. Yet, only six years later, the Volunteer movement and the liberal group were all but invisible in the city and the Siege celebrations were dominated by the newly recruited yeomanry and the conservative figure of Sir George Hill. By 1800, the Union was welcomed with virtually no opposition in Derry, and the Siege parades were occasions for the display of an overtly sectarian Protestant triumphalism and political conservatism; a situation some, at least, would have found hard to imagine in December 1788. The significance of the Siege Myth during the years of 1788-89 merits an examination of the Centenary celebrations in some depth.

In the growth of a public civil society in Derry in the latter part of the eighteenth century two ideological elements were apparent throughout and, in turn, conditioned the political meaning of the parades of 1788-89. The first constant element was the disputed concept of what liberty meant, the second was the significance of the invented tradition of the Siege for the Derry Catholic community. That community had grown noticeably, though not spectacularly, in the environs of the city from the mid-eighteenth century onward. There had, however, been substantial Protestant opposition to the development of the Catholic community. Restrictions on the number of Catholics in the city had, several times, been invoked during the eighteenth century. In the 1740s and 1750s the Corporation had twice issued orders that Catholics be expelled from the city and William Alexander (the elder brother of Robert and James) commented with some pride in 1748 that no Catholics lived inside the walls and those who lived around it were, "chiefly common labourers and of the meaner sort of people".[32] Whatever liberalism emerged in Protestant politics through the 1770s and 1790s, the "Catholic question" was rarely tackled and anti-Catholicism was, at best, dormant.

A relaxation of such restrictions and attitudes was evident in the latter part of the century, as was a less explicitly anti-Catholic position in the politics of Derry Protestants. This was in line with general national political trends, marked by the introduction of several Catholic relief acts in the 1770s and 1780s. In part, the local rapprochement was due to the position adopted by the Derry Catholic hierarchy, and in particular by bishop MacDevitt. In 1782 leaders of the Volunteer companies had a meeting with a local Catholic priest and several months later MacDevitt and the

local clergy all took the Oath of Allegiance.[33] In 1784 a subscription was raised to fund the construction of the first modern Catholic building in the city area, the Long Tower chapel, completed in 1786 and situated just outside the walls. The list of subscribers was headed by Bishop Hervey who contributed £200 and included a donation from the Corporation.[34] The entry of several Catholic merchants onto the Corporation following the Catholic relief act of 1792 was the end result of this policy.

Support for granting Catholics varying degrees of civil and political rights was voiced by a number of groups within the city through the mid-1780s and this situation formed a backdrop to the involvement of Catholics in the Centenary celebrations. In the 1788-89 Centenary celebrations, MacDevitt led his diocesan priests in the parades. However, such apparently progressive, anti-sectarian views from progressive Protestant were invariably conditioned by, what Marianne Elliot has described, as a defining characteristic of an Ulster Protestant sense of liberty, "the incongruous association of liberty with a self-righteous elitism...the combination of anti-popery and libertarianism".[35]

The organisation of political, economic and social power in Ireland had been built around sectarian division since at least the early eighteenth century. This underwrote the nature of the Ascendancy. The ownership of land, the holding of civil, legal and military offices and the control of capital, were all conditioned by a sectarian division of social power. The Williamite Settlement and the Penal Code provided the legalistic framework for that sectarianised structure of authority. The fusion of anti-popery, libertarianism and the celebration of the struggles of 1641, 1689 and 1690, were the

cultural and ideological counterpart. This, of course, involved a power structure in which not only Catholics but Presbyterians too found themselves excluded. However, for Presbyterians unlike their Catholic counterparts, the Derry Siege and the Battle of the Boyne provided cultural models through which they could articulate their demands as a reclamation of an historical tradition. That model, while allowing for the possibility of separating Catholics from Catholicism, inextricably tied the notion of "popery" to the abuse of power.

It was in this vein that even the most radical definitions given to the Siege Myth through the 1770s and 1780s invariably involved a denunciation of "popery" as the antithesis of liberty and the embodiment of "tyranny". The Liberty Annuity Company address of 1772 argued that the Apprentice Boys had, "rescued this country from Popery and barbarism", while the Guild notice of the same year argued that the Apprentice Boys had, "sacrificed every consideration to the preservation of blessings so invaluable, and successfully opposed Popery and arbitrary power".[36] Even the radical "Leather Apron" writing in 1776 spoke of the "Derry Boys" as having "gallantly opposed Popish tyranny and oppression".[37]

In the era of the Volunteers such an emphasis on the iniquities of "popery" dissipated, although the role of Catholicism was essentially ignored rather than replaced by a positive role for Catholics within the Siege Culture. This marks a limit to the extent anti-sectarianism could be incorporated into, what remained, an essentially Protestant cultural narrative. The general absence of denouncing "popery" within the Siege Myth through the 1780s and early 1790s and the reappearance of Catholicism as a

primary target for abuse, in the period after 1796, does, however, reflect some significant sea-changes within Protestant politics through that period; a period ushered in with the Centenary celebrations of 1788-89.

In October 1788 plans were put forward on behalf of the Corporation by the mayor John Coningham), the city sheriffs and Stephen Bennett (of the Apprentice Boys Volunteers) for what was described as a "secular commemoration" of the Shutting of the Gates. To be held on December 18th, the political tone was set by the Corporation notice which described the actions of the original Apprentice Boys as an act "against a bigoted tyrant".[38] The full details of these events was decided upon by a large meeting held in the town hall on November 4th. The sense of invented tradition was evident here too. November 4th was the anniversary of William III's birthday and the eve of both William's landing at Torbay in 1688 and the anti-Catholic festival of the Gunpowder Plot of 1605.[39] All these had become important dates of a ritualised Williamite calendar.

An unprecedented series of processions, services and activities was planned for December and, in addition, a new "triumphal arch" was to be built as part of the city walls.[40] A poetry competition, established by the George Douglas the owner and editor of the Journal, offered a prize for the best poem written on the subject of the "Siege of Derry", with the winner to be chosen on the anniversary of the Shutting of the Gates.[41] All in all, the aim was to create a lavish politico-cultural civic festival, extended over two days, bringing together the various cultural practices that had built up, either through custom or invented tradition, in the preceding decades, and

combine these with some elements that were completely new.

On the morning of December 18th, a chorus of drums, bells and cannon announced the dawn, and "a red flag, emblem of the Virgin City" was hoisted on the Cathedral.[42] This heralded a grand procession which formed up on the "Ship Quay". Led by the mayor and the Corporation this procession was made up of the local clerical, military and mercantile establishment, including Protestant and Presbyterian churchmen, officers of the navy, the army and the Volunteer corps, a number of the leading merchants, several "Merchants Apprentices" and a body of "Tradesmens Apprentices".[43]

What was becoming a common practice in Williamite festivals, "the universal wearing of Orange ribbons", among the marchers and the crowd, was noted by a contemporary commentator, as visibly apparent as the procession moved toward the Cathedral.[44] A special service, that included the performance of "a selection of sacred music", was given in St Columb's, which was so full that a crowd of several hundred had to remain outside. A special sermon was preached by the English dean of the city, Rev. John Hume, on a text "adapted to the occasion...replete with just and elegant sentiments".[45] The concept of liberty was celebrated in the singing of "Tis Liberty, Dear Liberty Alone", which "seemed to give the highest satisfaction to the auditory".[46]

From the Cathedral the procession went to the Presbyterian meeting house where Rev. Robert Black, a Derry minister and leading conservative figure in the Ulster Synod,

gave a sermon which again chose as its major theme, the "ardent zeal for liberty", tied closely in this instance to "his knowledge of British history".[47] With the sacral dimension of the Siege rituals completed there then followed a series of secular symbolic re-enactments of different episodes of the Siege each of which reflected a different aspect of it's political significance.

Two naval vessels, then at anchor in Lough Foyle, travelled up to the Derry quay to be greeted with a twenty-one gun salute. This pageant display was designed to portray a positive role played by the state as the relieving force. Then, as the official civic procession terminated, the one event that was evidently not planned for by the Corporation took place; the burning of an effigy of Lundy:

> Some of the lower class of citizens had provided an effigy representing the well-known Lundy, executed in a very humorous style, with a bundle of matches on its back; with it they perambulated the streets, and having repeatedly exposed it to the insults of the zealous populace, they burned it in the Market-place with every circumstance of ignominy.

The message of this cultural performance was a warning to "traitors" who, acting through their own self-interest and their failure to serve the needs of the whole community, "become the everlasting objects of detestation even to the meanest people".

In the afternoon the, by then, well-established ceremony of the "Shutting of the Gates" was performed by the "citizens" of the Apprentice Boys Volunteer company, who had, by that time, come to monopolise that particular ritual as very much their own. Two hours later the Corporation held a banquet in the town hall. The hall was

decorated by an array of "illuminated paintings" depicting several episodes and symbols from the Siege narrative. These inevitably included the "Shutting of the Gates" and the "Relief" with a portrait of Walker and a painting which showed,

> The genius of Derry fixing the imperial crown upon the head of King William and trampling on a figure representing despotism.[48]

The Catholic clergy of the city were also invited to this gathering. Among those who attended were both bishop MacDevitt and the future bishop, Charles O'Donnell. O'Donnell's pro-Ascendancy attitudes would earn him the nickname "Orange Charlie" and on this occasion he reputedly wore an Orange Cross on his jacket. Under both MacDevitt and O'Donnell the local Catholic hierarchy, along with an emerging Catholic mercantile middle class attempted to carve out a role for themselves within the social authority structure of the city. The Centenary celebrations offered an opportunity for the local Catholic clerical and commercial interests to publicly demonstrate their co-operation with the civic elite. In this sense, the town hall dinner was the occasion for a variety of toasts to the "Constitution" being given in an atmosphere where,

> Religious dissention...(being)...buried in oblivion...(as)...Roman Catholic vied with Protestants in expressing, by every possible mark, their sense of blessings secured to them by the event they were commemorating.[49]

The civic reception taking place in the town hall was mirrored by a public festival and popular holiday taking place in the streets and taverns. "Many transparent pictures" were seen in various parts of the town while in the evening, as a fireworks display took place at Ship-Quay Gate, most houses were "splendidly illuminated".[50] The

sailors of the ships then in port found "several houses were opened for (their) accommodation...where they were plentifully regaled with beef, punch, etc..".[51] The public festivities continued on the following day and as a demonstration of patronage and support for the Siege Culture the Corporation paid for a charitable distribution to the "poorer classes", so that;

> every class of person might have some entertainment suited to their taste, an Ox decorated with Orange ribbons, and attended by a procession of butchers, (which) was drawn at noon through the principle streets to the Diamond. It was afterwards cut into pieces and distributed with bread and beer to poor housekeepers.[52]

The second evening concluded with a ball and supper when "the favourite song of the entertainment was sung in full chorus, 'God save the King'".[53]

Although less grandiose than the 1788 festival, August 12th 1789 witnessed the largest Relief parade yet seen. Once again the dual political themes of "loyalty" and "liberty" dominated. The leading role in these events was taken by Bishop Hervey, recently returned from one of his many tours of continental Europe. Hervey led a procession to the cathedral and on this occasion the parade also included both the Catholic bishop and clergy of the city as well as the Presbyterian ministers and elders. William Lecky led the "corporation of traders".[54] In the Cathedral Rev. Sampson delivered a conciliatory sermon, calling on the memory of the Siege defenders to be a lesson that their descendants "must not only be pious in your courage, but also humane in your opinions".[55]

Following the service at the Cathedral the crowd moved to Bishops Gate, where the foundation stone of the proposed "triumphal arch" was laid. Aside from its political-

cultural function this arch was also designed to be of considerable practical benefit to the city merchants. The growing volume of commercial traffic had rendered the layout of the old walls, because of the small number and the narrowness of the gates and entrance ways (whatever their historic status), a costly inconvenience to business. The decision of the Corporation that the new arch would act as a "permanent monument" to the Siege was, perhaps, not unaffected by this more mundane, but more profitable, early example of town planning.

The arch itself was a typical monument of its day. Dedicated to the cult of William it was neo-classical in composition, originally intended to include an equestrian statue of William in the garb of a Roman emperor, similar to that outside Trinity College, Dublin.[56] This statue was, however, never produced, though two sculptured heads were. Placed on either side of the keystone, and representing the Siege and the Boyne, these heads were designed and executed by the leading monumental sculptor of Georgian Dublin, Edward Smyth.[57] The laying of the foundation stone was the main event of the days proceedings. As with the earlier festival, the evening was rounded off with a banquet in the town hall and a display of fireworks.

Throughout these proceedings the historical memory of the "Glorious Revolution" and the Siege acted as a canvas on which a particular definition of Protestant political culture was painted. This is, perhaps, best illustrated in the fifteen poems submitted to Douglas for his competition, despite its late announcement, which were subsequently published collectively as The Poliorciad in 1789.[58] There is a marked absence of any derogatory reference to "papacy" and "popery" in these poems. In

most, and most noticeably in the winning entry, "The Siege of Derry", by Leonidas, the concept of liberty is tied to a notion of patriotism and the image of William, as the symbol of a just, as well as a sovereign, authority. In "The Siege of Derry", it is the Siege defenders alone who "supported Freedom and the British Throne", while their descendants, as another of the poems suggests, should "cherish Fair Liberty, that gift divine, Extend its influence, and unfold its beauty". Even still the author of this second piece does also place definite limits on the definition of liberty, arguing that it needs to be guarded from "the poison of licentious zealots".[59]

The duty of those in 1788, according to the words of a song sung in the Town Hall on December 18, was to emulate the actions of 1688, when "The Gates were shut with patriotic zeal, By the dauntless 'Prentice Boys". It was "Frenchmen" who were slain, the "British colours" that flew above the relief ships, and the message was a constitutional rather than religious one,

> Ye Sons of Derry, in Freedom's cause,
>
> Firmly support your fathers fame;
>
> Like them defend your country's laws.[60]

The political definition given the Siege Myth in these poems combined a limited, but evident, tolerance toward Catholics (manifest in the absence of references to "popery") with an embryonic sense of patriotic identity that was, in some senses, Irish and also ultimately, and invariably, operated within a loudly expressed loyalty to the imperial link. It was a classic example of the (often contradictory) character of late eighteenth century Protestant liberalism and colonial nationalism. The vagueness and

space for interpretation, that the cultural performance and iconographic representation of such themes allowed, certainly helped create a sense of commonality within Protestant political culture that the turbulent events of the latter 1790s would prove wholly illusory.

The Disputed Tradition: Liberty and Sectarianism in the 1790s

The passing of the Siege Centenary did nothing to dampen the growing strength of the radical Protestant party in the city and, if anything, the Siege Myth became an evermore apparent feature of their political and popular profile. This is highlighted with the electoral victory of William Lecky in 1790. This victory saw the most libertarian definition given to the cultural practice of the Siege inheritance. Following this success the Derry radicals continued to voice support for political reform, citing as their primary models the contemporaneous events in both France and America and the historical tradition of the "Glorious Revolution". Mixed in, too, was the still ill-defined sense of an Irish nationalist identity. Their radicalism did, however, have definite limits; concern for legislative independence and greater Irish parliamentary economic and fiscal control was one thing, but the growing campaign for Catholic rights in 1792-93 was received with little enthusiasm.

Shifts in the political environment, by the mid-1790s, and the drift toward war with France, signalled a retreat by all but the most committed from radical political positions and augured in an era of Government repression of radical clubs, societies and opinions throughout Britain as well as in Ireland. In Derry this led to the virtual

withdrawl of the reform group from politics and their total eclipse, not only from political power, but also from the Siege parades, which through the previous decade they had been instrumental in developing. By the end of the 1790s political allegiances had been re-drawn and the control of a conservative local ascendancy elite re-affirmed; so much so that little United Irishmen activity was evident within the Derry and the city was noticeable by it's virtual absence from involvement in the rebellion of 1798.

The success of the old elite in re-imposing their dominance by the end of the century was such that Lecky's electoral success of 1790, and the manner in which its celebration conjured up a particular definition of the Siege tradition, must already, by the turn of the decade, have appeared a distant memory. It stood too in sharp contrast to the distinctly Conservative and Protestant definition the Siege Myth had by that stage already acquired. The cultural and political expression of the Siege legacy by the radical group in the early 1790s does, however, illustrate the discursive character of the Siege Myth and the lengths to which the notion of liberty could be taken within it.

The creation of James Alexander as the 1st Earl of Caledon at the end of the parliamentary session in 1789 left the way open for Lecky to contest the vacant Derry seat. A meeting of the freemen of the city in March 1790 resolved that they should be represented by "two resident independent citizens" and re-iterated the criticism of candidates holding place or pension from the crown and their desire that MPs should be accountable to their constituents.[61] This was a thinly veiled attack on Hugh Hill

as well as a comment on the corrupt condition of the Ascendancy parliament. Lecky stood along with the other popular party candidate, Henry Alexander, a younger member of the Boom Hall clan, and, in the election on April 29th, 1790, topped the poll, with Hugh Hill pressed hard to maintain the second seat.[62]

Lecky's victory was due to a variety of factors. A brief downturn in the local economy was undoubtedly an influence, as was the relatively disorganised state of the Alexander family's political and patronage network. Similarly, the growing wealth of Lecky himself increased his own influence, and certainly his position as an important shipping merchant, and his desire to promote local economic interests, would not have deterred support. But his political message was developed on much more besides and is, perhaps, most vividly illustrated in the celebrations with which his victory was greeted.

While Hill was chaired by his sons to celebrate his victory, Lecky was raised aloft in a chair made from oak reputedly taken from one of the gates of the city closed in 1688. The chair was then placed on a pedestal that was surmounted by four green pillars, standing six feet high, which supported a canopy festooned with green curtains and a gold fringe. The canopy was richly decorated,

> on the front were the City Arms, with the motto, "The Relief of Derry, 1790", on the top was a green flag, displaying the Irish Harp and a wreath of shamrocks and this inscription, *"Por Patria Semper"*.[63]

Lecky's chair was an extraordinary display. In the most explicit terms it made a link between an emerging identity of Irish nationalism and the Siege Myth. The symbols

of the harp and the shamrock, the green and gold colour of the triumphal canopy and the political patriotism of the inscription leave no doubt that the Relief of the Siege in 1790 was to be understood as a victory for the Irish *patrie* as well as for Protestant libertarianism. Of course this symbolic assertion of Irish independence did not necessarily imply a total break with Britain. In even the most advanced circles of Irish radical thought total independence was not on the agenda at this stage, nor did it in anyway imply a revolutionary approach to political change; such positions were phenomena of the latter, rather than the early, 1790s.

It does, though, represent the way in which the cultural model of the Siege could be used to express a radical political message and one in which a "nationalist" political culture was not only present, but crucial. This was not a unique or isolated phenomenon. Such a political and cultural alignment was very much in step with the most progressive movements and thinkers in Ireland at that time. The shock waves of the French Revolution encouraged a growing popularity for libertarian politics and for their expression through a celebration and allegiance to the nation. Under the influence of both the American and French revolutions the nation or *patrie* was understood less as an ethnic group defined in terms of language, culture or history, than as a definitively political community. The patriot of the 1780s and 1790s was, as Eric Hobsbawm has argued, not someone who owed an allegiance to an ethnic community, but those

> who showed the love of their country by wishing to renew it by reform or revolution. And the patrie to which their loyalty lay, was the opposite of an existential, pre-existing unit, but a nation created by the political choice of its members who, in doing so, broke with or at least demoted their former loyalties.[64]

It was just such a conscious idea of nation-building that lay behind the project of the Society of the United Irishmen, established in Belfast in late 1791. The romantic intellectual interest in Gaelic antiquity that had prevailed through much of the century found echoes within such radical circles, where the promotion of the Irish language and of Gaelic music were clearly evident in the 1790s. However, this cultural activity provided less the basis for identifying membership of the nation as a series of symbols through which the political community belonging to the *patrie* could be represented. It was in this vein that the United Irishmen, most of whom were only marginally interested in Gaelicism for its own sake, used the, by then, widely recognisable symbol of the harp on their seal, with the motto "I am newly strung, and will be heard". They thereby invoked a symbolic representation of the Irish nation in the service of a political project of nation-building, rather than the celebration of an existing community.

This same concept of the *patrie*, as an entity around which a new identity could be conceived, defined the use of the harp and the shamrock in Lecky's chair. The desire to create the nation as a sovereign unit, rather than an ethnic group. That framework allowed for the cultural fusion of the symbols of the harp and the shamrock with a, similarly, non-ethnically defined, Siege narrative. Both the reform movement of 1790 and the Siege of 1689 could therefore be understood as historical moments when liberty and political sovereignty were established, not on behalf of the group or nation, but as means by which the group or nation were created.

Collective membership was, therefore, dependent upon the willingness and ability to

exercise political sovereignty according to enlightened principles. As essentially a bourgeois ideology promoting the demands of a growing middle class against the ancien regimes of early modern Europe, such definitions of sovereignty would not generally allow that either the urban or rural poor, or in the Irish instance (and often the same thing) the mass of Catholics, fulfilled this criteria for collective political inclusion. It was this ultimate ability to contrast Catholic barbarism with Protestant civility that allowed not only Derry Protestant reformers but also the majority of Protestant reformers elsewhere, to fly the icon of the harp and shamrock, while at the same time denying Catholics political rights.[65] Less than two years after the display of his electoral victory, Lecky and the other reformers would support the elite families, and the stand of the Derry Corporation, against the campaign for Catholic equality.[66]

For sections of the Derry reform movement there was also no contradiction in fusing their politics of liberty, with support for the French and American revolutionaries, and an adherence to the Protestant Constitution. Here, again, the combination of these apparently disparate elements was witnessed through the Siege practices. Under John Ferguson's leadership the Independent Volunteers had resolved, following the Centenary celebrations, to commemorate all future Siege anniversaries. As was, by now, the well-established practice, such events always concluded with a town hall dinner in which various toasts were drunk.

The subject of these toasts reflects the political and cultural affiliations of those involved. In August, 1790, such toasts included not only the obligatory homages to

the "Apprentice Boys" and "the Glorious Revolution of 1688" but also to "the Whig Club of Ireland", "the President of the United States" and "the French Revolutionists and the liberty of all mankind". At the same meeting the gathering also drank to ""the Fleet", "the Army", and "the perpetual unanimity between Great Britain and Ireland". At the banquet in August, 1791, the success of the French Revolution was tied to a hoped for change in the nature of Catholicism; "may the walls of the Inquisition be speedily levelled, with those of the Bastille"; while a year later "the Independence of the Irish Legislature" and "the memory of William Molyneux" happily coexisted with "Magna Carta and the Memory of the Barons". This was a fragile cultural balance, born from the very particular condition of the Irish Protestant bourgeoisie at the end of the eighteenth century. Lines were about to be drawn far more clearly.

As early as 1795, against the background of a gathering conservative backlash, it was clear that the reform group in Derry was in swift retreat. Both John Ferguson and another popular party candidate withdrew from the election occasioned by the death of Hugh Hill, leaving the uncontested victory to Hill's son, George. The Derry Volunteer Corps disappeared, to be replaced by the Londonderry Yeomanry, not only in the material duties of a standing militia but also in the ceremonial performances of the Siege Parades. At the "Shutting of the Gates" in 1796 the "usual marks of commemoration" were performed by the Royal Manx Fencibles, the Tipperary Militia and the Corps of the Londonderry Cavalry.[67] A month earlier a festival had been held to mark the birthday of William III, organised by the Phoenix Club, which had however now added the prefix "Ancient and Loyal" to its name.

George Hill, as the commander of the local Yeomanry, embarked on a series of punitive attacks and raids for arms in 1796 and 1797, in areas of the hinterland where turbulent political activity was increasingly turning toward revolutionary action. However, there was little Protestant participation in this opposition. Presbyterian farmers in the countryside, as well as the merchants in Derry itself, were mindful of their propertied status and slid into political passivity as the choice became one of conformity or rebellion. Rumours of French intervention in support of the, now thoroughly revolutionary, United Irishmen and their allies in the Defenders, combined with an evident desire on the part of the mercantile elite to proclaim a loyalty their former support for reform might have called into question. So much so that the Derry Corporation felt the need to publicly announce in late 1796;

> We the inhabitants of the city and liberties of London-Derry, viewing with concern the spirit of difference which prevails in some parts of this Province, feel ourselves called upon to declare in this public and solemn manner that we will use our best efforts in conjunction with the Civil power to preserve the peace and tranquilly of our city and neighbourhood; and that should a foreign enemy make the rash and impotent attempt to invade our coasts, we will unite in opposing by every means in our power the progress of an evil, which if not firmly and zealously resisted, must necessarily involve the destruction of property and the ruin of the country.[68]

In July 1797 almost 1,000 people, including many of those whose loyalty to the state would have been most suspect, publicly took the oath of allegiance in the Diamond, several of them handing in pikes and admitting to previous membership of the United Irishmen.[69] Yet, the situation remained highly volatile in late 1797 and 1798. A core of revolutionary artisan activists continued to operate within the city, while

reports of United Irish penetration of militia ranks caused the local military commanders to use regular troops in all searches for a period in late 1797.[70] The reform leadership had, however, retreated completely. William Lecky failed to stand for election in 1797, when Henry Alexander was selected, and he declined to do so again when Andrew Ferguson took over Hill's seat on the latter's appointment to a government office in early 1798. Ferguson was not only a rich merchant in the city, he was also second in command to Hill in the yeomanry.[71]

Ultimately, the 1798 rebellion received almost no support for the United Irishmen within Derry and the prison provided the city's only significant contribution to the momentous events of that year. What had also become clear by 1798 was that the space for interpreting the Siege Myth as anything other than a victory for a definitively Protestant Constitutional status quo had completely evaporated. The August 12th commemoration of 1798 was organised by the troops of the garrison and in the December parade the Londonderry Legion, under the command of Hill and Ferguson, were presented with colours by the Corporation. On the same occasion the mayor John Darcus, whose family would become very much involved in the Apprentice Boys over the next few decades, delivered a speech defining his meaning of the Siege. The concept of liberty was necessarily tied to the concept of loyalty, and that loyalty implied an obedience to the Crown. Patriotism, far from being a popular-revolutionary concept of reforming the political community implied faith in the imperial link and the status quo;

> the same loyalty, for our king and love of our happy constitution, which glowed in the bosoms of our ancestors, is still ready to burst forth, on every occasion, at the

> call of danger. The sparks of liberty, loyalty and patriotism have been kept alive in this our MAIDEN CITY.[72]

It was the shape of things to come.

The Rise of Derry: The Economic Context of the Siege Myth, 1720-1800

The roots of such struggles over the Siege Myth lay in the changing social and economic character of Derry in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Economic activity in and around Derry during this period bore all the hallmarks of wider trends, though under very particular conditions. Derry, like other areas of eighteenth century Ulster, experienced sustained commercial expansion from the 1730s onward, but it did so in a different manner from that which prevailed elsewhere. Commercial development in Derry was dependent, in no small part, upon the growth of the linen industry, that had such wide-ranging and long term repercussions for the nature of the Ulster economy and Irish society. However, the impact of linen in Derry was limited in certain key ways and the city was never an integral part of the Ulster "linen triangle". As W.H. Crawford has argued the north-west area of East Donegal, North Tyrone and Co. Londonderry, with Derry city as its commercial hub, formed "a distinct and independent economic and social region with its own rhythm of economic activity".[73]

If the Derry economy showed signs of successful growth from the 1730s as the centre of a distinct economic region, problems of poverty and occasional dearth continued to be the reality of most peoples lives. A precarious food supply, so typical of a pre-

modern society, was a phenomenon that was to result in periodic depressions and famines within Derry's hinterland through into the middle of the century.[74] Severe weather conditions in 1739 and crop failures in 1741 caused widespread distress and during a famine in 1745 the starvation of thousands of inhabitants of the Foyle valley was only offset by the importation of tons of oatmeal via the newly built Newry canal, an event which, one commentator described, as "the second relief of Derry".[75]

This general level of economic hardship was witnessed in the steady stream of migrants that passed through Derry throughout the century and that built up into a lucrative trade for the city's developing mercantile elite.[76] Following the poor harvests of 1725 and 1727 a Derry merchant noted in, July of 1729, that twenty five ships had embarked from the city that summer, each carrying at least forty passengers bound for America. An estimate in 1759 suggested that, in a single six month period of that year, 3,000 people had left from Derry, most heading for Nova Scotia and Pennsylvania.[77]

Poverty was, however, only part of this migration story and certainly the civil and religious restrictions placed upon non-Episcopalians encouraged migration amongst Presbyterians who (unlike their Catholic neighbours) tended also to have the resources necessary to do so. In 1718 11 Presbyterian ministers of the north-west area, with as many as 300 members of their combined congregations, successfully petitioned the governor of New England for a grant of land and, that summer, left Derry in five ships to establish communities in New Hampshire. One of the ministers wrote that their new town would be called Londonderry, in remembrance of Ulster Protestants'

"finest hour".[78]

Although such social and political considerations cannot be ignored, it is clear that economic factors were the single most important determinant behind a decision to leave. Emigration tended to swell considerably during periods of cyclical depression and was highest among social and occupational groups who were both most badly hit and who also had sufficient capital to finance such a move. Putting the number of emigrants who had passed through Derry during 1772 and 1773 as high as 6,0000, a report given by the "principal linen-drapers of Londonderry and Limavady" to an Irish parliamentary committee, established in 1774 to inquire into the poor state of the linen industry, reveals the impact depression had and who it encouraged to migrate to the New World:

> As to the exact number of looms now idle in this county, it is no easy matter to ascertain...but it is our opinion...that about one third of our weavers have been idle these twelve months past, some have gone to labouring work, others to America, and the rest to begging...a revival of the linen manufacture and that alone can prevent further migration, for without it people must either go abroad or the landlords lower their rents...Of the numbers which throng the quays of Derry from April to July, awaiting embarkation in some of the numerous foreign vessels, which, among other causes, the certainty of an emigrant cargo attracts to this port, about four-fifths are said to be of the middling class of farmers, who usually convert into money their moveable property. The great majority too seem to be in juvenile vigour...[79]

This marks wider trends. While Arthur Young argued that emigrants from the Derry area were in general of "idle, loose, disorderly people", he also commented that there

were some who were "industrious...and carried great sums with them".[80] A report in the Journal, in 1773, suggested that it was amongst "industrious Protestants" that the tendency to migrate was most prevalent and calculated that the "North of Ireland" had lost up to a quarter of its "manufacturing people" in the previous five or six years.[81]

Yet, in spite of the poverty and economic hardship experienced by many within Derry and its hinterland throughout the eighteenth century, the city enjoyed a sustained commercial expansion from the 1730s onward (not least due to its role as an emigration port) which was particularly marked in the period after 1775. This expansion was the occasion of changes in the economic infrastructure of the city. Substantial improvements to the quays were made during the early 1760s and 1790s and a bridge was constructed across the Foyle between 1786 and 1791.[82] Expansion also encouraged a gradual growth in the population of the city that rose from 2,848 in 1706 to around 10,000 in 1792 and roughly 14,000 by 1814.[83]

The prosperity such commercial expansion brought in its wake secured financial benefit principally for the small group of merchant families which controlled the trade that passed through the port. Prosperity was evident in the changing physical appearance of the city and the comments of several authors and visitors to Derry throughout the century, on the architectural development of the city, bears witness to the genteel lifestyle and growing wealth of many of its more well-heeled citizens. One such author was the philosopher, George Berkeley. Berkeley was Dean of Derry from 1724 to 1732, a position which allowed him a, not inconsiderable, yearly

income of £1,100. Berkeley visited Derry for the first (and, in fact, only) time shortly after his appointment, a mere three years after the scenes of dearth and desperation witnessed by bishop Nicholson, but the city made a very different impression upon him:

> My house is a fashionable thing, not five years old, and cost eleven hundred pounds. The Corporation are all good Churchmen, a civil people and throughout English...I have hardly seen a more agreeable situation...The city of Londonderry is the most compact, regular, well-built town, that I have seen in the King's Dominions, the town house (no mean structure) stands in the midst of a square piazza ...it is a walled town, and has walks all round on the walls planted with trees, as in Padua.[84]

John Bush, the English author of Hibernia Curiosa, who visited Derry in 1764, described it as the "cleanest, best built and most beautifully situated of any town in Ireland", and Arthur Young on his tour of 1776 remarked that "the view of Derry, at a distance of a mile or two, is the most picturesque of any place I have seen".[85] The French traveller, de Latocnaye, writing in 1796, also commented on the apparent elegance of the city's appearance and went on to attribute this to the vitality of it's economic life:

> The approaches to Londonderry are charming and indicate the wealth of a great city...The city enclosure proper is not very much, but the suburbs are very fine...Londonderry has not the air of an Irish town. There is an activity and an industry which are not to be found in other parts of the country.[86]

As de Latocnaye argued, the physical well-being of the city by the close of the eighteenth century was a mark of mercantile wealth built upon the "principal trade"

of linen. From the 1730s Derry thrived as one of the major market and port towns of Ulster and linen was the primary product of change. A combination of legislative restrictions and prevailing market conditions led to a collapse of the Irish woollen industry at the end of the seventeenth century and the stimulation of linen production, concentrated in Ulster. Exports of linen to Britain from Ireland rose by almost twenty five-fold from 1710 to 1771.[87] Derry shared in this substantial increase of the linen trade. A committee of the Irish House of Commons reported in 1767 that,

> it appears to this committee that 67 ships belonging to the merchants of Derry are now being employed in the trade of that port, besides foreigners, and the trade of that city has increased so greatly within these 38 years that the receipt of revenue is thereby augmented from £7,000 or thereabouts yearly to £30,000.[88]

The bulk of this business, it was noted, was in the export of linen yarn and unfinished brown linen cloth.

By 1782 Derry was exporting almost 300,000 yards of linen to Britain every year, by 1788 this had risen to over 500,000 and by 1791 to 1,000,000 yards. Aside from short term fluctuations, this growth continued to a peak in 1822 when over 4,500,000 yards of linen cloth were exported from the quays of Derry.[89] While the volume of this exported cloth far exceeded that traded in the city's linen market during this boom period, the linen hall constructed in 1759 was still a crucial component of the Derry economy.[90] De Latocnaye noted that a linen market was held in the town once or twice a week and vividly described the speed and manner in which business was transacted:

> It is surprising to note the speed with which the linen merchants examine the cloth. They stand on a sort of platform with a little desk before them, while the peasants

carry their webs past and stop just for a moment. the merchant looks, and immediately mentions a price, if it accepted, he marks it on the cloth, and the peasant goes to the office for payment. There is one merchant who, on every market day, buys in a single hour cloth to the value of three or four hundred pounds sterling.[91]

Equally important was the substantial export of linen yarn and flax, both of which were prominent trading commodities throughout the same period. Flax was a major export to America and as the century drew to a close, increasingly so to the mills of Northern England. By 1813 25% of all flax exported from Ireland passed though Derry.[92] However from its peak in the early 1820s the linen trade in Derry declined rapidly and in the longer term both flax and yarn proved unviable alternatives. Affected particularly by the increasing and encroaching expanse of Belfast's influence, linen exports from the port fell to the point of virtual extinction by the late 1830s.

The particular character of the linen trade had significant economic and social repercussions. Spinning and weaving in the eighteenth century were still conducted by hand and remained domestic industrial activities, supplementing the incomes of small farmers and weavers in the rural hinterland who then brought their flax, yarn and unfinished cloth to Derry, which acted as the regional market centre. Similarly, prohibitive costs meant that the linen trade in Derry was almost wholly in brown linen, and almost none of the cloth was worked up, bleached and finished in the city; the sectors of linen manufacturing in which the application of water power, the introduction of factory production and the injection of capital were to prove such crucial economic factors.[93] Judge Willes, another visitor to the city in 1759, commented:

> though they make a great deal of linen cloth about Derry yet they do not work up into cloth so much as they might do, but principally supply Manchester with linen yarn which is exported to Liverpool: and a Manchester factor is one of the best trades in Derry.[94]

This continued to be the case throughout the century.

The lack of cloth being "worked up" in Derry meant that the city did not develop a large workforce, a significant manufacturing base nor a build up of substantial capital. Likewise, the introduction of power spinning and weaving and of factory capitalism, were initially devastating to Derry's textile trade, and only the increased specialisation, introduced with the development of the shirt industry from the 1830s onward, and the ability to make the continuation of the "outworker system" economically viable, prevented the complete collapse of textile production in the Derry area.[95]

Similarly, although the volume of linen traded through Derry rose steadily from the 1730s and accelerated from the 1780s, as a proportion of the total of linen traded in Ulster markets and of Irish linen exports Derry's share never exceeded 15%.[96] Allied to this, while a major component of the Derry economy, linen was never as large a percentage of the city's trade as it was elsewhere. Derry, as an eighteenth century Ulster linen town, was far from being the most important, but nor was it that alone.

Trade in other commodities and other economic activities was just as crucial in determining the structure of the Derry economy and consequently, of its social and

political character as was linen. Whoever controlled American trade had a great deal of control within the city. The geographical location of Derry in relation to the West Indies and America was regarded by English, as well as Irish, capitalists as a highly advantageous and potentially profitable attraction. An entry in the 1776 Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce commented:

> Londonderry...is the centre of trade for this part of the country and is a good port...(with)...an abundance of shipping belonging to the city, where merchants not only drive a great trade in the herring fishery, but have considerable share in many other branches of foreign trade, especially to the West Indies...with regard to the city of London itself 'tis judged, that Londonderry is more than halfway on the voyage to the West Indies, but especially to Newfoundland or New England.[97]

This North Atlantic trade had been of great importance to Derry throughout the century; one commentator in the 1750s claimed that it was this, quite as much as the traffic in linen to Britain, which had been the source of the city's growing wealth.[98] Emigration provided the foundation of Atlantic commercial expansion along with a significant trade in provisions.[99] Through the 1790s there was also a burgeoning exportation of foodstuffs for the provisions market in Britain. These activities, combined with an important coastal trade in agricultural produce and fisheries, provided Derry merchants with a significant source of income.[100] Significantly, it also tied the interests of such merchants very closely to the producers of such commodities, the farmers and landlords of the Derry agricultural hinterland.

While the Derry trade in linen was very important it did not produce the large number of independent artisans and weavers created in Antrim and Down, the backbone of

United Irishmen radicalism in the 1790s.[101] While there were a significant numbers of weavers in the rural hinterland there was a far larger proportion of small-scale commodity farms (particularly in county Londonderry) worked by Protestant farmers of some substance who geared their output toward both the production of flax and the provisions market to be found in Derry. Far from being antagonistic, the interests of such farmers and the dominant clique of local landlords were highly conducive to the growth of the city as a major exporter of the areas agricultural produce. At the same time, the poorer farmers of the hinterland were mostly to be found to the west in Donegal, where subsistence farming was very much the norm and were, overwhelmingly, Catholic.[102]

Similarly, the linen trade created little in the way of large scale urban employment or a manufacturing base within Derry. Nor did the trade either in foodstuffs, or migrants. Certainly the growth of the port produced a degree of labouring employment and a range of supply and service activities that stimulated a rise in the city's population and proved particularly attractive to an expanding Catholic community. But all contemporary accounts note the almost total absence of any manufacturing within the city, even as late as the 1830s.[103]

The minimal growth in skilled employment and the growing market orientation of the city's economic life limited the strength and size of guilds, whose earlier influence in parliamentary elections was slowly undermined by the loss of a commercial monopoly. A guild of thirty six tradesmen was established and granted a charter of incorporation by the city as early as 1735, and included among others several smiths,

surgeon-barbers, bakers, carpenters, coopers, tanners, ropemakers and a mason. Up until the end of the last decades of the 1700s such tradesmen provided one of the few clear sources of political opposition, though their relatively minimal economic leverage restricted their political influence.[104] However, such power as they were able to exercise came under increasing pressure and fell into abeyance by the end of the century.

Although the Derry economy diversified, the market and the port played the central role.[105] This produced a social elite dominated by merchants, who built up considerable commercial power through trade in linen, provisions and migrants. Certain Presbyterian merchants would constitute an important oppositional group to the city elite but, unlike Belfast, the character of Derry's local political structure allowed the more affluent among the rising commercial class entry into, and increasing influence over, local political power. Following the Catholic Relief Act of 1793 this process even included a small number of Catholic businessmen.[106]

Potential tension between a mercantile bourgeoisie and the local landed gentry was offset by the confluence of interest that trade in both linen and provisions helped engender, and the relatively limited reforms that the local bourgeoisie required. The marginal growth of an independent artisan class and the weakness of local tradesmen and guilds undermined any radical political potential from this direction. At the same time the growing presence of a Catholic population, even in the late eighteenth century, was increasingly viewed and articulated as a threat to the position of Protestants of all classes.

The result was a confused political environment that combined conservatism with political and social radicalism. The liberal group in the city espoused radical ideas, but less forcefully than their counterparts elsewhere. The focus for such forces was the goal of parliamentary reform. At certain points this reform movement showed signs of a radicalism more commonly found in the strongholds of the United Irishmen in the east of Ulster, but in the main and, in the longer run, such radicalism tended to ebb away quickly. Growing economic prosperity produced a city in which the interests of commerce provided the dominant ethos and where there were few sources of cohesive opposition. However, commercial expansion also produced a changing social order and local political elite in which a sense of continuity, and the maintenance of social authority, had, more and more, to be publicly demonstrated and culturally invented. It was within this economic and social context that the Siege Myth of the late eighteenth century took shape.

Inventing the Immutable: History, Politics and the Siege in the Late Eighteenth Century

If a singular Ulster Protestant sense of history exists it is, argues Oliver MacDonagh, exemplified in a telling of the Derry Siege story that involves, "an historical self vision ...of the endless repetition of repelled assaults without hope of absolute finality or fundamental change".[107] Such a conception of history provides a vision of past events which are neither progressive, nor even cyclical, but where, according to Terence Brown, they "are seen as expressing perennial aspects of an ineluctable condition".[108]

Several authors have commented upon this sense of historical immutability as a defining characteristic of Ulster Protestant, and, in particular, of loyalist and fundamentalist world views.[109] What is interesting in MacDonagh's thesis is that he attempts to place the emergence of such historical assumptions in a very definite timescale, seeing it as a product of Irish historiography from the beginning of the nineteenth century onward. MacDonagh makes this case by analysing both nationalist and unionist histories written in the aftermath of the Act of Union and sees in their reflection an intellectual project that mirrored wider cultural, political and economic developments. Of Protestant perspectives, in particular, MacDonagh contends that there is a marked reversal of trends apparent in the late eighteenth century when "even Ulster Presbyterians tended to disassociate the present from the distant age of dark passions and bestial ferocity", toward what he describes as "a seventeenth-century cast of mind".[110]

Taking up this point Jacqueline Hill has argued that, while English historiography was increasingly adopting a progressive and developmental model, which achieved its definitive form in the Whig histories of the nineteenth century and which reflected the changing nature of an industrialised and capitalist English society, historians in Ireland, even in the 1780s and 1790s, tended to gravitate toward a framework that was both timeless and repetitive.[111] There was also a tendency to investigate a select number of principle themes, each of which illuminates the outlook and interests of the Protestant political nation during this period. Three central concerns dominated.

First, a growing interest in Gaelic antiquity, culture and language flourished within

certain sections of the Ascendancy as well as among the Catholic intellectuals of "hidden Ireland".[112] This intellectual and political tradition developed throughout the century and achieved its most pronounced form in the Volunteer movement, republican societies and "Celtic revival" of the 1770s and 1790s. Second, and linked to the first theme, a long term debate took place concerning the state and nature of the early Irish christian church. Like the analysis of Gaelic antiquity, this area provided a source of competing claims as to the value of a distinct island inheritance that focused upon the life and legacy of St.Patrick.[113]

The third, and, in many ways, most crucial element, was the religious and political conflicts of the sixteenth and seventeenth century. While writings on all three of these areas voiced various political and social outlooks from within the Ascendancy and from groups and classes who were emerging to challenge it, most contentious of all was the exact nature of the legacy left by the "Glorious Revolution". Amongst almost all Protestant scholars of the period there was a general acceptance and approval of the Williamite Revolution and of a constitutional framework advocating the principles of "liberty", " civic virtue" and an opposition to "tyranny". However, two controversial aspects emerged.

The first question was, what form should "liberty" take? This debate revolved around both the civil and political rights that should exist within the island and what the relationship of Ireland and England, and the relative powers of their legislatures, should be. Second, and essentially part of the debate of what "liberty" entailed, there was a growing focus at the end of the century on what the correct role of religion and

religious division should be. While a stance against "popery" was an inevitable component of this analysis, there was a question over whether this should be taken as a system of politics, or just a system of faith.[114] Whether a distinction was made between "Catholics" and "Catholicism", while undoubtedly and understandably arcane in the eyes of Catholics, did have certain important ramifications within Protestant political circles.

Competing interpretations of "liberty" articulated the class and sectional struggles of eighteenth century Ireland.[115] The gradual growth of both a Catholic and a Protestant (and predominantly Presbyterian) middle class, particularly strong in areas of Ulster where the production and transportation of textiles was rapidly expanding, produced new tensions that were to undermine the long term stability of the landowning Ascendancy.[116] In the struggle to achieve a political power equal to a rising economic status tenant farmers and independent artisans in the countryside, and manufacturers and merchants of the towns, turned to events of the past, as well as examples from France and America, to plead their case.

The political and social tensions of the latter eighteenth century therefore became enmeshed with the contested legacy of seventeenth century battles and nowhere was this more clearly the case, than in Ulster. For example, in the aftermath of the French Revolution the tune of the popular song "The Boyne Water" was used for the radical anthem "Freedom Triumphant" written in Belfast.[117] In July, 1792, the radical Volunteer Companies of Belfast marched to celebrate the Fall of the Bastille and associated it with the events of the "Glorious Revolution" by carrying banners of

William III.[118] As David Miller has commented, "for several years the Williamite festivals would be regularly enlivened by organised Volunteer display".[119] This was the face of political struggles in the reflection of cultural forms.

The mixture of ideas that made up the body of late eighteenth century radical and republican thought in Belfast was, in part at least, composed through a particular understanding of seventeenth century struggles. Certainly the reforming, never mind the revolutionary, potential of the legacy of Derry and the Boyne was limited, and was undoubtedly so in the far from revolutionary circles of liberal Protestant opinion in Derry in the 1780s and 1790s. But such a potential did exist. Although the Siege tradition could not wholly escape the identification of "liberty" with "Protestantism" and "popery" with "tyranny", it was not inevitable that such symbols became tied into the deeply sectarian culture of Orangeism.[120] If, by the beginning of the nineteenth century, assumptions of Irish history within Protestant political culture were bound by a "repetitive framework" and a "seventeenth century cast of mind", this was a reflection of the re-assertion of sectarian power relations and a deepening intensity of sectarian tensions. The legacy of the seventeenth century would continue to be contested, but increasingly the social conflict produced in the new urban industrial centres of Belfast and Derry would take on a predominantly sectarian character and one in which a massive expansion of Orange ideology played a pivotal role.[121] Yet, this growth of sectarianism was a matter of historical process, not of historical inevitability, borne out of the material conditions of Irish society.

That the struggles of the 1680s and 1690s should find ideological resonances in Irish

political life a century later was seen no where better than in Derry. To culturally contest a definition of "liberty" within the Protestant political circles of the "Maiden City" meant laying claim to the Siege inheritance. Similarly, the rise of a distinctly sectarian Orange, conservative sectionalism within the city can be traced by seeing the progress of what, at that time, was still of relatively recent invention, the celebration of the Siege Myth in a public and organised guise.

It was during the latter part of the eighteenth century, and particularly from the 1770s onward, that a culture of the Siege emerged in a highly visible form. The timing of this is important to stress for several reasons. The search for immutable truths that is part of the "closed system" of Orange ideology has often led partisans of the Siege Myth to suggest a sense of continuity, not only in the events of the Siege, but also through an unbroken chain of their celebration.[122] Anthony Buckley has argued that one role of Orange celebrations is that they provide a set of archetypical situations and, as Anthony Cohen suggests, they, "bridge the gap between the sacred rhetorical world of legitimated and unquestioned values and the mundane world of questionable behaviour and problematic experience".[123]

A major means of bridging such a gap is to establish the sense of a seamless and unchanging tradition in the Orange cultural practices and parades themselves, stretching back to the actual events they are organised to commemorate. It is in this vein that several Siege historians have argued that a model of latter day parades was provided for at the very moment of relief when, "spontaneous celebrations by the starving but unconquerable garrison" took place and that these were followed by "the

first organised celebrations which took place four days later" concluding that this "celebration has provided a pattern for those which have ever since followed".[124]

However, the regular, organised and public practice of the Siege Myth did not emerge until the 1770s and 1780s, most obviously manifest in the centenary celebrations of 1788-89. The timing of these processes reflects two significant trends. The first was the emergence and growth of a civic public life in the city. The processes of modernisation and industrialisation produced a degree of discontinuity, unknown in pre-modern societies, and uncertainties over the nature and extent of social authority which, paradoxically, created an ever-increasing need for the public performance of both status and power through a sense of tradition. The forces unleashed by the onset of modernity, therefore, gave birth to a more diffuse and publicly displayed fabric to civil society in which history would play a more important part.

Similarly, those same forces created new class interests that challenged (or at least requested entry into) the "political nation" of the Ascendancy. In Derry the position of the small coterie of powerful families was being contested by the rising class of merchants and tradesmen, whose demands for parliamentary and corporation reform reflected the limits of their access to formal avenues of political power.[125] While the radicalism of such groups was muted, they did represent a significant political force in the last quarter of the century and the success of local Ascendancy families in maintaining a firm control over local political affairs was partly due to their willingness and ability to find common cause with new social forces. The Siege parades would form one means of defining that common cause, particularly under the

influence of sir George Hill, who was not only intimately concerned with the promotion of a Siege culture by the late 1790s, but who was also the most politically dominant, local, landed figure in the same period.

Although certain historians of the Siege have argued for the continuity of the Siege parades there have been a number who have recognised their essentially invented character. Yet even in such cases there has been a tendency to see the centenary parades of 1788 and 1789 as the crucial landmark events. A.T.Q. Stewart suggested in The Narrow Ground that the formal celebration of the Siege did not begin until 1788.[126] Roy Foster has suggested that the "annual ritual" of the Derry parades only became established after 1790;

> Thus the invention of this tradition coincided, not only with the high point of Protestant Ireland's colonial nationalism, but also with the revival of sectarian tension.[127]

Foster's analysis is both perceptive and in large part correct. Those dual influences of colonial nationalism and anti-Catholicism were, indeed, major forces acting upon the form and meaning the invented tradition of the Siege Myth took in this period. Certainly, too, the centenary events of 1788-89 were extremely important in establishing the annual performance of the Siege parades, and made a far greater impact than any which had gone before. Yet there were celebrations which proceeded these centenary events, and the invention of the Siege tradition really began in the early 1770s. Similarly, while sectarian animosity and a variety of nationalist identity within Protestant political culture did shape the Siege Myth of the late eighteenth

century, these forces, and their impact, cannot be explained simply in their own terms, nor were they the only factors at work.

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Lecky,	328
Hill,	273
Alexander,	253
Richardson,	23

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CHAPTER IV

WE HAVE A STRONG CITY:[1]

PROTESTANTISM AND THE SIEGE MYTH

IN THE EARLY NINETEENTH CENTURY

A "distinctly Protestant political culture" emerged in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century.[2] Of course, Protestantism had been a significant social and political factor in Irish society before this, but between 1800-50 a definitively Protestant sense of collective identity came to play a major role in Irish political life. To examine the relationship between Protestantism, this Protestant political culture and the Siege Myth in Derry during the early nineteenth century it is necessary to explore four elements. First, how exactly this politicised Protestantism developed and what the importance of Protestantism was in Ireland in this period. Second, how support for the "Protestant Constitution" was expressed within the Siege culture. Linked to this is the growth of the "moral machinery" of early nineteenth century Protestantism and the way in Protestant evangelicalism came to define the meaning of the Siege mentality. Lastly, these various aspects were drawn together in the policy of "All-Protestant Union" which, by the middle of the century, had become a central aspect of the Siege Myth.

This last point is of particular importance as, in a sense, it involved a synthesis of the other elements and defined the overall development of the Siege culture through to the second half of the 1800s. Intrinsic to the Siege Myth from this point onward was the

notion of Protestant solidarity. The imagery of the Siege became a means to root, historically, this idea of Protestant solidarity in the face of Catholic opposition. This period also saw the foundation of the Apprentice Boys of Derry Clubs, the institution which continues to this day to be the main organisational focus of the Siege Myth. Not only did the rhetoric of the Siege offer a series of symbols to establish intra-Protestant unity but the practices and organisations of the parades and the Apprentice Boys Clubs were means of combatting the schismatic tendency of Ulster Protestantism. Unlike the Catholic community, where the single edifice of the Catholic church helped to consolidate a sense of collective identity, Ulster Protestantism was structurally divided into two main churches, Episcopalian and Presbyterian. In addition, there were dozens other sects and factions, which were far smaller but still far from negligible in size and, in fact, multiplied in number during the nineteenth century in particular. As with the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys Clubs acted as an organisational arena in which intra-Protestant cohesion could be established. That the leadership of the Apprentice Boys Clubs was dominated by members of the Church of Ireland but the membership was mostly Presbyterian, emphasises the cohesive function the Clubs performed within the Derry Protestant community.

In his study of Protestant politics in early nineteenth century Cork, Ian D'Alton has argued that the slow decline of the Ascendancy, which made the term all but redundant by the third quarter of the century, resulted from changes in the Irish economic and political structure that created a new concept, "a specific political Protestantism which used the sectarian bond to create a political identity".[3] That

identity projected the imagery of besiegement as defining the position of the Protestant population. Even in relation to the Siege Myth this was a significant shift. Perceptions of the Derry Siege throughout the eighteenth century tended to imagine it as an example of a triumph already achieved, or as one that would be secured in the victory of that contentious concept "liberty". It was a reflection of the relative security and confidence of the Protestant political nation and the limited challenge presented to it by the mass of the population that such a sense of the Siege should exist.

However, the political crisis of the 1790s and the rise of an insurgent peasantry shattered confidence within the Irish ruling class persuading them (initially with some reluctance) to support the restructuring of colonial authority through the Act of Union. Moreover, despite their undoubted continued influence throughout the century, that sense of confidence was never restored in quite the same way again. Through the drawn-out struggles of the nineteenth century the material domination of the landed aristocracy was broken down while, at the same time, those struggles saw a new pattern of social and political alignments take shape. It was in the context of those new alignments, in the formation of new hegemonic political blocs, that the "siege mentality" came very much to the fore and in which the Siege Myth played an increasingly important part.

What conditioned the growth of this definitively Protestant political culture was the fact that most Irish non-Catholics experienced social change as a threat, or challenge, to their position, or status, in some sense or another. This was clearly not the case

for all Irish Protestants and the differences were reflected in the diversity of their political loyalties. There was substantial Protestant involvement in various nationalist movements. The activities of tenant rights agitators were aimed specifically against landlords, irrespective of their religion, and various tenant rights groups included large numbers of Protestants. The adherents of liberal Presbyterianism attempted to make common cause with any who were opposed to the power of Irish Toryism.[4] Nevertheless, such political alignments were ultimately more the exception than the rule.

It is true, too, that the notion of "threat" was experienced and acted upon very differently by working, middle and upper class Protestants. "Threat", for working class Protestants, could represent a challenge to their position in the labour market, or even simply to the physical domination of certain areas. For Protestant businessmen in Derry and Belfast or landlords in the Ulster countryside, "threat" meant something quite different again. Yet the imagery of besiegement could allow Protestant workers, businessmen and landlords to see their plights as being interwoven, and their call to defence, as necessitating inter-dependence. For the majority of Irish Protestants during the early nineteenth century this idea of a "threat from without" fused with their Protestantism. Whether real or not the perception of "threat", and the accompanying language of besiegement, materially affected the attitudes and actions of Ulster Protestants and conditioned the growing consciousness of the Protestant community as a group distinct specifically because of religious difference. The Derry Siege Myth was an increasingly crucial component of that world view and for Derry Protestants the Siege emerged as a symbol of their

Protestantism.

The Siege culture became a firmly established element of Derry Protestant politics in this period. The traditions and practices established in the last quarter of the eighteenth century were consolidated in a regularised form and, during the 1810s and 1820s, the patronage of the local elite ensured that the Siege parades were important local political events. Although the transformation of the Apprentice Boys organisation into a mass political institution occurred after 1860, it was in the early part of the century that many of the clubs still in existence today were first formed.

Similarly, while the Siege parades became politically far more significant and of a far greater scale in the second half of the century, the period up to 1860 saw them become clearly established as annual occasions on which the balance of political power within the city was demonstrated and, at times, contested. It became understood by all parties concerned that if the face of the emergent Protestant political culture was to be found in Derry, it was in the mirror of the Siege parades in which that face could be seen.

The Siege parades of the first three decades of the nineteenth century became much more organised and substantial affairs, highlighted by the establishment of the first Apprentice Boys Club in 1814. Increasingly dominated by a local conservative elite the parades were marked by the greater use of the signs and symbols of the emerging culture of Orangeism. By the 1810s, and in part as a result of this increasing Orange orientation, the anniversary events were also the focus for growing Catholic

antagonism against their political exclusion.

The development of politicised Protestantism in Ulster during this period has been noted and discussed by a variety of authors.[5] Several reasons have been given as to why this should have developed in the way it did at this time. While disagreeing on the causes, effects and the relative significance of various factors, most analyses have agreed that three things were of particular importance in this process; a changing socio-economic context, the growth of popular political mobilisation through denominational ties and transformations in the form and character of Protestantism itself. Each of these, in their turn, had a significant impact on the nature of the Siege Myth in the period 1800-1850.

Protestant Culture in a Catholic City: Expansion in the Early Nineteenth Century

The increasing importance of both industrial capitalism and market relations in the organisation of agriculture transformed the nature of the Ulster economy and society in the first half of the nineteenth century. The north east of Ireland experienced an industrial revolution unparalleled elsewhere in the island that made Belfast the only truly nineteenth century industrial city in Ireland.[6] This process of economic change accelerated rapidly from the 1850s onward but had already had a significant impact by the mid-century. While the expansion of Belfast far out-stripped that of Derry, the latter, too, was deeply affected by modernisation and the rise of factory production. In Derry, however, expansion occurred under very particular circumstances.

As Liam Kennedy has argued, the industrialisation of Ulster can be viewed as a peripheral case of a European-wide process, while the case of Derry "is a good example of partial industrialisation at the periphery of a periphery".[7] The relative autonomy of the north west as an economic area continued to promote a sense of localism that found its clearest form in the culture of the Siege. Yet the dependence of the local economy upon external trade ensured that the local elite was anything but equivocal in their support for the introduction of the Union in 1800; a position they maintained afterwards as the vociferous advocates of the link with Britain and the "Protestant Constitution".

In the thirty years between the 1798 Rebellion and the introduction of Catholic Emancipation the dominant conservative sections of the Protestant ruling class saw themselves principally in the guise of the defenders of the "Protestant Constitution". In Derry, the phrase the "Protestant Constitution" was faithfully conjured up for approbation at every public gathering in which the mercantile elite took part and virtually came to mean the same thing as the power and prestige of the local Corporate order. Nor did the granting of Catholic political rights in 1829 dismantle this perception, for, while the phrase itself largely disappeared, the identification of the establishment with Protestantism was, if anything, intensified. It was a potent political slogan because the existing constitutional arrangement did indeed legitimate the distinctly Protestant structure of social authority that prevailed in Derry as elsewhere in Ireland. However, that such constitutional loyalty was so actively (and regularly) proclaimed in Derry was also dependent on two local factors.

The first was the realisation, by the mercantile elite, that both their economic well-being and their political power were heavily dependent upon their relationship with Britain. Support within Protestant political circles for the liberalism and desire for legislative independence of the 1780s and 1790s had largely collapsed by 1800. Those who were at least open to suggestions of political change in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, conformed to the reactionary conservative atmosphere of the post-rebellion period. Changes in trade re-enforced this trend. The development of trade with the industrial cities of Britain ensured that access to British markets, rather than the protection of Irish manufacturing or even of trade with America, became the dominant concern of the Derry ruling group.[8]

A deepening fissure within the structure of the Irish economy saw the north east become economically and financially distinct from the rest of Ireland and enmeshed far more closely with British capital. What therefore emerged was a wealthy, and generally secure, business community whose interests were directly bound up and dominated by their trading links with Britain. Protecting advantages in that trading relationship was therefore of paramount importance to the ruling elite in the city. Similarly their experience of economic ties with the great industrial cities of Liverpool, Glasgow and Manchester enhanced a sense of political and cultural affinity with Britain that was then projected through their participation in, or, at least, support for, the Siege culture.

The second trend (and essentially a result of the first), was the growth in Derry of a substantial Catholic community. That the Constitution was considered as

intrinsically "Protestant", and that the Siege Culture was identified with Protestantism also, therefore, had a socio-economic dimension. Industrial growth encouraged an influx of poor rural migrants, primarily from Donegal, that shifted the denominational balance of the city population from a clear Protestant majority to a narrow Catholic one through this period. In 1814 a population survey, undertaken by the Irish Society found there was a total of 14,087 people in the city and liberties, of whom only 4,814 Protestants, though Protestants were overwhelmingly concentrated in the city.[9] In 1834 the population had risen to 18,933. Within the walls there were 663 Episcopalians, 790 Presbyterians and 689 Catholics, giving a Protestant majority of over 2:1. However, Catholics were in a substantial majority "Without the Walls", numbering 6,409, as compared to a mere 1,909 members of the Church of Ireland and 2,151 Presbyterians. In the whole area, the large Presbyterian farmer presence in the hinterland meant that the denominational balance was extremely fine. There were 9,864 Catholics as against 9,069 non-Catholics. By the middle of the century a clear Catholic majority had been established in the city and by 1861, there were 12,036 Catholics and only 8,839 Protestants of various denominations.[10] By the mid-nineteenth century the Protestant culture of the Siege existed in a Catholic city.

Social tensions and struggles arose, not only because the rise in the number of Catholics produced a new and distinctive urban community, but also because it represented the emergence of a large, and impoverished, working class population. If commercial wealth brought prosperity to the merchant elite it brought little but abject poverty to the burgeoning working class of the city. Certainly the influx of rural migrants that came into Derry in great numbers from the 1820s onward found

harsh conditions awaiting them. To an extent this was due to the fact that their migration was more a result of push factors in the rural economy than the promise of a good life to be had in the town. Most of rural migrants to Derry in the early nineteenth century were from Donegal where landlords were shifting from tillage to pasture farming which, combined with the decline of an illicit poteen industry, was driving the peasantry off the land.

What the migrants found in the city was little better than what they had left. The main sources of employment in Derry were the port and the construction industry, both of which involved high levels of casual and unskilled labour, producing a workforce that was underemployed, poorly paid and with little or no security. These conditions created working class communities for whom any economic downturn could have the direst consequences. While in his appreciation of the "manly air of prosperity" William Thackeray could find "few beggars" on his visit to Derry in 1842, a report published only five years before gave a harsh, and graphic, illustration of working class life:

> Among the labourers of Derry great poverty prevails from the want of steady employment, and their consequent exposure to dissipation, together with the total absence of employment for their children. The better class inhabit huts, which let for about £3 a year; but the poorer frequently lodge in garrets, or outhouses, chiefly in the Bogside...and yet even in these hovels they contrive to let shares of their rooms. A great number of the labourers are from the mountains of Donegal. The majority are employed in serving masons etc., from May to November, the rest in provision-yards and in casual work during the export season, from November to May. Their only resources, when unemployed, are the pawnbrokers, and in some

> instances, small potato patches. When enfeebled by age or disease their condition is such as it would be painful to describe, but which is only the epitome of the wretchedness that prevails among the lower orders throughout Ireland.[11]

As this record suggests, the majority of the new urban poor lived in the working class ghetto of the Bogside. Overwhelmingly, too, this population was Catholic. The Bogside lay to the south and west of the city walls. It was an area of small scale industrial development and threw up a confusion of poorly planned and executed workers houses. Although the Bogside had been an area of Catholic settlement since the seventeenth century, it was not until the first quarter of the nineteenth century that a substantial, and rapidly increasing, community began to develop there. Originally an area of low-lying marshy ground, or the "bog" from which its name derived, it also stood next to and below the hill on which the walled city was situated and which therefore overlooked it. Catholics had never been permitted to live within the walls and the walled city could only be entered from the Bogside by a single route, through Butcher's Gate, which opened out onto the Diamond.

As the 1834 population figures illustrated, the walled city was home not only to the business and commercial centre but also to a residential population that was both predominantly Protestant and almost wholly middle class. Roughly equal numbers of Episcopalians and Presbyterians also lived outside the walls. Middle class Protestant suburbs developed through the first thirty years of the century, built both to the north of the city and on the east bank of the Foyle, the Waterside area.[12] Most of the Protestant working class lived in the shadow of the Cathedral and the East Wall, in

the Fountain, an area which was already established as the main location for Protestant working class political and cultural activity.

What therefore emerged within the expanding city was a pattern of sectarian, as well as class, residential segregation, similar to the system of "confessional villages" that characterised nineteenth century Belfast.[13] The Bogside and the Fountain remained, respectively, areas of concentrated Catholic and Protestant working class residence throughout the nineteenth century. Again as in Belfast, this topographical arrangement, which physically replicated the social separation of the two communities, made certain areas, or "shatter zones", the regular site. Such clashes erupted, periodically, from the 1810s onward.

Unlike Belfast, however, the commercial centre of the city was not a "confessionally indifferent zone", but was, in fact, confessionally distinct, situated between the two main working class areas and symbolically significant. As a result the centre of the city itself became a sort of shatter zone and a regular site of rioting and political demonstrations.[14] Allied to this the ritualistic demonstration of territorial control, that became a feature of Orange marches throughout Ulster (born out of this pattern of segregated settlement), made the walls of the city, not only a metaphor for Protestant power, but also the site for the physical and public demonstration of that power.

In the early nineteenth century, for the first time, the route of the Siege parades included a circuit of the walls, which meant that at one point the marchers looked

down upon the Bogside, from the Royal Bastion. Showing control of the walls through marching around them became a way of demonstrating a belief that Protestant power still held sway in the city and that even if the Catholic community "without" was expanding rapidly, privilege would continue to be held by those "within".[15]

These demographic changes were even more important as the early decades of the century witnessed the rise of a new kind of politics.[16] Organised, popular, mass campaigns, in support of Catholic demands for more equitable civil and political treatment represented, a new form of political mobilisation. These campaigns culminated in the winning of Catholic emancipation in 1829 and helped to create a political consciousness amongst the Irish Catholic population which had profound political repercussions. In Derry the rise of this new political consciousness, combined with the growing size of the Catholic community, produced a challenge to the local Protestant establishment and the conservatism of the local Catholic political and clerical leadership.

The rise in antagonism amongst Catholics to the Siege parades, evident from the first decade of the century onward, was born out of this new consciousness and Catholic working class rejection of political submissiveness. The first outbreak of rioting during the Siege parades occurred as early as 1809. The same year saw both O'Connellite political activity and the re-emergence of Ribbonism in the Derry area. By the 1830s the local Catholic population was willing, and able, to physically oppose the public demonstration of Protestant supremacy, through the Siege Culture, with some success.

Increasingly, then, Derry Catholics saw the Siege parades as the cultural performance of their own disempowerment. While advocates of the Siege culture disavowed this intention, the fact that the parade celebrated a political structure and Corporate regime where the exclusion of Catholics was a fundamental basis of power and that, more and more, the parades incorporated the symbolism of Orangeism, made such claims sound, at least to Derry Catholic ears, more than a little hollow. There was a coarse political logic to the Siege parades as a display of Catholic disempowerment. The mercantile elite derived much of their political authority from the support of city freemen, who were exclusively Protestant. The main political goal of this mercantile elite was therefore to secure and maintain local systems of patronage, which rested upon the continued exclusion of Catholics. As a result the city had a political environment ripe for "sectarian-orientated political warfare".[17]

The "Elect" and the "Damned": Protestant Religiosity in Derry the Early Nineteenth Century

The growth of sectarian political warfare was also, in part, dependent upon the changing nature of Protestantism between 1820 and 1860. During this period, what Peter Gibbons has described as "enthusiastic Protestantism", or what David Miller calls the "conversionist" ethos, established itself as a dominant (though by no means the only) theological model of Protestant religiosity.[18] Both Gibbon and Miller have argued that the rise of evangelicalism was linked to the "structural shifts", or the onset of "modernisation", in Ulster society. Gibbon has suggested that "enthusiastic Protestantism" had two main effects on the nature of Protestant identity and ideology.

First it promoted an "ethnocentrism" whereby, "holiness was lived as an external state, accessible to perception and standing in opposition to profanity".[19] Such a concept established a society divided along definite lines, between the "elect" and the "damned". It therefore implied that those who were not saved did so by choice and were as a consequence responsible for their non-election. The public manifestation of this division would, in turn, be seen in their actions. This was a recipe for a sectarianised world view, and one which be could be imagined through the model of an "elect besieged" in the Siege Myth. Revivalism also gave rise to "enthusiasm":

> the urbanising Protestant population appreciated the call for greater expression of popular feeling, the provision of an exciting religion and of enthusiastic leaders.[20]

The role of "enthusiastic leaders" would become an increasing feature of Protestant politics in the middle and late nineteenth century and was played by popular evangelical preachers. Here again the imagery of the Siege Myth would provide a model for social action, particularly as the cult of George Walker provided a suitable icon celebrating the role of the "pastor-politician".

Yet, as studies of Methodism in English society have noted, the emotive character of religious evangelicalism was combined with a strict moral code, which found profane emotion abhorrent. Citing John Wesley in the claim that Methodism was above all else a "religion of the heart", E.P. Thompson has argued that, in fact,

> what must be stressed is the intermittent character of Wesleyan emotionalism. Nothing was more often remarked on by contemporaries of the workaday Methodist character than its methodical, disciplined, and repressed disposition. It is the paradox of a "religion of the heart" that it should be notorious for the inhibition of all spontaneity...Energies and emotions which were dangerous to the social order, or

which were merely unproductive were released in the harmless form of...band-meetings or revivalist campaigns.[21]

Methodism was far from insignificant in Ulster Protestantism during this period and grew particularly rapidly between 1790-1810.[22] John Wesley visited and preached in Derry, on no fewer than ten separate occasions, between 1765 and 1789.[23] However, in comparison to both mainstream Anglicanism and Presbyterianism, Methodist congregations continued to form a small section of the Ulster Protestant community. But the form of religiosity that Methodism introduced had an impact far beyond the relatively small number of Methodists in Ulster. As David Hempton has suggested, it was the stimulus Methodism gave to the wider evangelical movement in which it made its "most important contribution to Irish Society".[24]

The social role of Methodism was to provide outlets for emotional release while, at the same time, socialising the believer into a strict moral value system. It was a role shared by the evangelical religiosity of the "Second Reformation" in Ireland, the Protestant religious revival and proselytising campaign of the 1820s. A whole series of institutions, activities and attitudes were involved in the "Second Reformation", from the educational and bible groups which sprang up throughout Ireland, to the rise of teetotalism. When, in the 1840s and 1850s, the official gatherings and activities of the Apprentice Boys became increasingly "respectable", it was against this background of rising evangelical fervour, that culminated in the Ulster revival of 1859.

The character of Protestant evangelicalism in early nineteenth century Ireland, and the role of All-Protestant Union as a politico-religious policy, each reflect a key element of religions ideological role in society. While there is an obvious danger in attempting to reduce the complexity of religion and its social functions to short and simple prescriptions, it is possible to suggest a framework for analysing the role Protestantism played in the Siege Myth during the early nineteenth century. Anthony Giddens has suggested that religion has two primary ideological functions, "the transmuted representation of values which are in fact created by man in society, and the provision of principled support for an existing social and political order".[25]

If religious belief systems can serve to legitimate power relations and define social values, they will necessarily do so by taking on specific forms at a particular time and in a particular place. The variation of such forms will operate within certain parameters set, in part, by the overarching tradition within which they occur, in this instance the Judaeo-Christian tradition and, more specifically, the text-orientated, salvationary strand of Reformation Protestantism. However, the rapid social change initiated by rural modernisation and the rise of industrial capital in Ulster during the nineteenth century also conditioned the form of the "sacred" and the social values which it incorporated.[26] The onset of modernity in Ulster gave rise to a particular pattern of religious norms and practices through which both individuals and collectives could comprehend their experience. The cultural representation of those values was partly performed though the Siege Myth.

The evangelical movement developed strongly in both Ulster Presbyterianism and the

Church of Ireland in Derry during the first half of the nineteenth century and deeply affected the nature of the Siege Myth. Although the influence of evangelical Protestantism was anything but total within the practices of the Siege, the Siege story proved an attractive cultural model to evangelicals. That attraction lay in two aspects of the Siege's symbolic construction. The Siege Myth was a "structure of opposites".[27] Within it the besieged Protestant population, "inside the walls" could be construed as the "good" or "godly" community standing in moral and spiritual, as well as physical, contrast to the "other", the "threatening" Catholic "without". This was a rich vein of imagery for evangelicals committed to a conception of religiosity that drew a sharp distinction between the "saved" and the "damned".[28]

Just as attractive to Evangelicals was the narrative development of the Myth, with it's "sacrificial ethos", its story of a community, faced with a challenge or threat, transported through sacrifice and trial, to salvation or "Relief". In this the story of the Siege followed a classic mythological structure that "transforms the determinist world in which we live into a magical world".[29] The transformation, in this case, involved the passage of the individual religious devotee, psychologically released from a rationally defined social existence through conversion into a state of grace. In this sense, the Siege narrative could act as a cultural model for the imagined spiritual biography of the individual evangelical.

However, equally important was the growing routinisation of social life and the growing importance of "respectable" behaviour". The rise of social puritanism reflected the impact of modernisation and a modern industrial urban order upon the

lives of the inhabitants of the city. Modern capitalism acquired "rational structures of law and administration", and the growth of institutional forums for municipal, judicial, medical, educational and social provision, reflected the changing character of social life in Derry.[30] Religion was, similarly, influenced by industrial capitalism and urbanisation. The need to view the external world as both rationally and consistently explicable, the basic ideological framework of modernity, led to the apparently paradoxical emphasis on a form of Protestantism that emphasised the internal emotional experience of spirituality. Advocates of Evangelical religion could, however, at the same time, promote the call for rationally-structured, regulatory organisations that could establish a clear framework of social norms.

Within this context a variety of organisations, including both the Catholic and Protestant churches, began to have a role in the everyday lives of their congregations. Though they never had such an all-encompassing role, the greater regulation of moral norms promoted by the Apprentice Boys clubs from the 1840s onward, suggests that the clubs became socialising institutions in much the same vein. The growing importance of evangelicalism upon the Siege Myth reflected the expansion of evangelical groups within the city and the changing role religion played in the lives of the Derry Protestant population in the first half of the nineteenth century.

As had been the case since the late seventeenth century, the Derry Protestant population in the period 1800 to 1850 was made up of around 60% Presbyterians and 40% members of the Church of Ireland. Consequently, both churches had a significant presence and played a major role in Derry Protestantism.[31] Not

surprisingly, given the place of the Established Church as an organisational foundation of the Ascendancy, it was the more influential, and had a greater share of adherents, among the local elite.[32] Similarly, the episcopal see of Derry was one of the wealthiest (and so most attractive) and politically powerful within the Church of Ireland. As a result, Anglican bishops of Derry tended to be English-born, rich and extremely well-connected.[33] While Frederick Hervey was both the most famous holder of that office and one of the leading liberal figures of his day, most of his successors were politically conservative, and identified with the conservative orientation of the Siege Culture.[34] Though the bishops and deans of Derry were seldom to the fore in the Siege parades, the high profile involvement of ordinary clerics was never discouraged. Similarly, St. Columb's, the "Siege Cathedral", was used for a variety of rituals connected with the Siege Culture, and was the usual site for the holding of church services on the Siege anniversaries. The Cathedral was, in many ways, the focus for the display of local Episcopalian pride and power and its substantial renovation between the 1770s and the 1820s physically demonstrated the wealth and prestige of the Derry Episcopalian civic and landed elite.[35]

The main Presbyterian building in the city was the First Derry Presbyterian meeting house, built in Meeting House Row in 1780. The construction of this large and prestigious church, capable of holding anything up to 2,000 people, on the site of a former, far less grand, structure marked the growing prestige and confidence of a local Presbyterian community that included a large proportion of the mercantile class.[36] It also marked the extent to which local Presbyterianism had become accepted and relatively well-integrated with the local Episcopalian elite by the latter

part of the eighteenth century; a relationship which grew only closer in the post-Union period. The ministers of the First Derry congregation provided local Presbyterianism with its leadership. Several were influential figures within the Synod of Ulster in the early nineteenth century, including Rev. Robert Black, Rev. William Mitchel and Rev. William McClure, all of whom were, at one time or another, Moderators of the Synod. Both Protestant denominations were, therefore, catered for by well-established, well-funded and well-placed ecclesiastical structures.

To some extent the expansion of buildings and organisations linked to both strands of Protestantism between 1800 and 1850 was merely a result of the growth in the size of the city. However, it was also indicative of the rising fortunes of evangelicalism and the impact of the Second Reformation. While the significance of religious practice and thought in the lives of the Derry Protestant communities in the eighteenth century is difficult to gauge, what is easier to establish is that the wave of religious enthusiasm in the early nineteenth century increased the importance of Protestantism in the city.

Protestant evangelical and proselytising organisations had developed in Derry from the late eighteenth century onward, and by the 1830s a large number had become well-established in the city. Methodism had been introduced by John Wesley himself in 1765, when he preached "to the largest congregation I have seen in the North of Ireland...near all the inhabitants of the city". On a return visit in 1789 Wesley found "a neat convenient preaching house just finished, a society increasing and well united and the whole city prejudiced in favour of it".[37] Though the Methodist Society of

Ireland split, in 1816, into two separate organisations, both these had a sizeable, if still marginal, presence in Derry. A Primitive Wesleyan chapel was established in Magazine street with room for 200 people and a New Wesleyan Methodist Chapel in Linen-Hall street, built in 1835, could hold up to 650.[38] Both branches of Methodism ran very active bible missionary societies from the early 1800s onward.

Methodists were not alone in this regard. The early nineteenth century saw the formation of numerous Protestant bible and missionary societies which provided the main organisational impetus of religious revivalism in the 1820s and 1830s. Most of these societies had branches in Derry including the "Association for Discounting Vice", the "Hibernian Society", the "Church Missionary Society" and a small local proselytizing organisation called the "Londonderry auxiliary to the Irish Society for Promoting the Education of the Native Irish through the medium of their own Language".[39] Their central aim was the propagation of evangelical Protestantism among the working class.[40] For example, the Londonderry City Mission, which was established in 1830 and held its meetings in the Independent chapel, built six years previously, declared that it's main aim was

> to extend the knowledge of the Gospel, irrespective of peculiar tenets in regard to church government among the poor of the city...by stimulating the poor to a regular attendance upon the preaching of the gospel.[41]

Significantly, a high proportion of both the Presbyterian and Church of Ireland evangelical bodies were centred in the Protestant working class Fountain area. Several new church buildings were also erected there in this period. The expansion of the working class population also encouraged the Episcopalian bishop of Derry to

construct the Free-Church in Great James St in 1830, which was originally designed for "the convenience of the lower classes".[42]

As well as the various bible societies, the Sunday School movement had been active in Derry since the 1780s, promoted in particular by local Presbyterians. In the late eighteenth century the Phoenix Society, which had been so influential in the liberal political orientation of the Siege parades, had supported the setting up of a sunday school for upward of "300 poor children".[43] By the mid-1830s there were numerous sunday schools in the city, Fourteen of which were Episcopalian, four were Presbyterian, one a Seceder school, one, Independent and one, Methodist. There was even a Catholic sunday school.[44] A "Londonderry Sunday School Union" was established in 1832, the main aim of which was the "communicating of scriptural instruction" and which had as many as 2,500 pupils enroled within two years. The rules of the Union suggest an avowedly conversionist approach, as it denied entry to anybody who held "professedly Arian, or Socinian principles".[45]

By the 1830s Arianism was closely identified both with Old Light, or intellectualist, Presbyterianism and with anti-Tory politics. Arianism was, however, little in evidence among the various Presbyterian organisations in Derry. In the schism of the Synod of Ulster in 1830 only one minister who had any connection with Derry Presbyterianism joined the Arian Remonstrant Synod, and he had left the city in 1823.[46] However as the Synod of Ulster became increasingly influenced by Henry Cooke and the fundamentalist wing during the 1830s and 1840s there was opposition within the Derry ministry to this fundamentalist and pro-Tory drift. The leading

figure of Derry Presbyterianism, William McClure, was anything but a close ally of Cooke and went to some lengths, in the late 1830s, to promote the distinctions between Presbyterian and Episcopalian theology. Yet, McClure also favoured Evangelical Protestantism and was among those who readily welcomed the great upsurge of religious enthusiasm occasioned by the Ulster Revival of 1859.[47]

There was also a significant expansion of a Presbyterian presence in the city. The First Derry Presbyterian Meeting House was joined by the "Scotch Church", built in Great James Street in 1837. One of the schismatic strands of Ulster Presbyterianism, the Seceders, had founded a meeting house in Fountain Street, in 1783, that could accommodate a congregation of 500 people and it, too, was joined by a second Seceder congregation, in the late 1830s. This brand of Presbyterianism was both "evangelical and orthodox" in character and it was the increasingly evangelical orientation of the Ulster Synod that encouraged the union of the Ulster and Seceder Synods in the formation of the General Assembly in 1840, producing four mainstream Presbyterian congregations in Derry by the middle of the century.[48] In addition, there was a Covenanters Meeting House, again situated in Fountain Street, built in 1810, with a second founded in the Waterside in the late 1840s.[49]

The extent of interest in Protestantism can also be judged from the popularity of religious publications. In 1834 a list of the most widely sold periodicals in Derry was topped by the Orthodox Presbyterian and the Christian Freeman, the journals of the Synod of Ulster and the Seceders respectively.[50] Similarly, by the 1830s it was estimated that approximately 50% of Episcopalians, and 35% of Presbyterians,

attended religious services every week in the three Church of Ireland, two Methodist, and five Presbyterian places of worship then established in Derry.[51] The congregations of all the Protestant churches were on the increase as, it would seem, was the influence of Protestantism on the lives of Derry Protestants.

Fighting for the "Protestant Constitution": The Siege Parades and the Founding of the Apprentice Boys, 1800-1835

Through the early decades of the nineteenth century the Siege parades became firmly established as annual events. Apprentice Boys clubs were also set up with the express purpose of organising the Siege marches. Both the parades and the early Apprentice Boys clubs became identified with the fight for the "Protestant Constitution" and with opposition to extending political rights to Catholics. Politicised Protestantism therefore became a key dimension of the Siege Myth and was tied to a definition of the constitutional link with Britain, reinforced by the Act of Union in 1801, which emphasised the sectarian divide.

Although Protestant approval for the introduction of the Act of Union was anything but unanimous throughout Ireland, dissention was hard to find in Derry.[52] The collapse of Protestant radicalism, the desire to exhibit loyalty and the buoyant state of the local economy combined to diminish any opposition to the government's policy in the city. The sitting MP, Henry Alexander, wrote to the Lord Castlereagh, in March 1799, and described an atmosphere in the city of mercantile prosperity and political passivity:

> Here everything is more prosperous than could be expected by the most sanguine mind, Even in this last week, cloth and yarn have risen considerably, and I really have not found a single man, in the day or two I have been here, who objects to the Union on any other principle than thinking themselves so well off, that their situation is not improvable by any legislation, however composed.[53]

In fact, certain Derry Protestants played a key role in securing the passage of the Act of Union. Castlereagh was the architect of the Union and his private secretary between 1799 and 1803 was the Derry-born, and highly influential, Alexander Knox, a "conservative publicist of considerable intellectual ability", who later also became a leading evangelical theological writer.[54] Knox was heavily involved in Derry politics throughout the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and also published a pamphlet on the Centenary Parade of 1788 reflecting on the significance of the event as an important moment in a Protestant, and British, past.[55]

Castlereagh was also helped by the senior minister of the First Derry Presbyterian congregation, the Rev. Robert Black. Black had played a leading part in the Centenary celebrations and had, like Knox, published an account of the events soon after. He was also the leading conservative figure in the Ulster Synod and a very close confidante of Castlereagh. It was Black who led the efforts to ostracise political radicals from the Synod in the aftermath of 1798 and who implemented Castlereagh's Plan for strengthening the connection between the government and the Presbyterian Synod of Ulster, by securing changes to the distribution of the "Regium Donum".[56] An Arian and a non-evangelical, Black's theological position was, nevertheless, one that encouraged a close relationship with the Established church and certainly the First

Presbyterian Congregation, which included the overwhelming majority of upwardly mobile Presbyterian merchants, was often a stepping stone toward socially advantageous conformity.[57] For a brief time, between 1803 and 1805, the Presbyterian meeting house was even used for Episcopalian services while the spire of the Cathedral was being replaced.[58]

Black had been involved in the Volunteer movement and, in the elections of 1783, when minister for Dromore, he had supported the independent candidate, Robert Stewart, along with a number of radical Co. Down ministers.[59] Even in 1812, when he was moving against one of these former allies, Black still contended that he was a supporter of Catholic relief,

> (I am) a sincere well-wisher to the abolition of the penal code affecting Catholics of the United Kingdom, which I have ever considered as a measure dictated alike by justice and sound policy.[60]

Yet Black "lamented every act of intemperance by which its accomplishment might be considered endangered or retarded" and it was the search for a rapprochement between the social elite and the Presbyterian community that remained his central political goal. Within the Synod he was instrumental in consolidating a conservative bloc, though, following a series of setbacks Black suffered in the Synod, he committed suicide in 1817. In both his theological and political position Black therefore foreshadowed the later work of Henry Cooke and All-Protestant Union. In fact, Black was highly active in promoting the early career of Cooke. While neither Knox, or Black, took any significant role in the Siege anniversaries after 1800, their political positions, and particularly the shift in perspective Robert Black personifies,

were indicative of the trends reflected in the parades.

The parades had become dominated by the figure and influence of Sir George Hill. Hill, who received a huge annuity from the Irish parliament before it voted itself out of existence, remained a Derry representative at Westminster from 1801 to 1830 and took a leading part in the Siege parades as they became increasingly conservative, Orange and sectarian.[61] From 1800 onward the parades were organised by Hill as commander of the local Yeomanry, and the yeomanry became so identified with the Siege culture that by 1814 they were referred to as "the modern Apprentice Boys".[62] Numbering anything up to 400 men the Yeomanry regularly marched, fired volleys and ritually closed the gates on December 12th each year, a practice they now performed not only at Ferry quay gate but also repeated with all the gates of the city.[63] From 1804 the route of the marches also began to include a parade of the walls, which were substantially renovated between 1806 and 1808. The parades were, as a result, becoming simply more visible to the Catholic population of the Bogside. The identification of the parades with the established order was also emphasised by the use of the Yeomanry and regiments of the regular army. These military units were also often accompanied by military bands playing tunes recognisable as political declarations, as this account from December 1806 illustrates:

> The Derry Infantry and Rifle Companies under the command of Captain Boyd, paraded on the Mall Wall, and preceded by the Meath band, playing loyal tunes, they marched to the gates which they shut and fired over.[64]

If the intention of such displays was to symbolise the power of the establishment and

their exercise of authority via the rule of law, this was nowhere better demonstrated than in December, 1813. In the midst of what was a politically tense period, the "Shutting of the Gates" anniversary was marked by a more substantial parade than usual and used as the occasion for laying the foundation stone of the new Court house. The whole event emphasised the power of the local elite and identified it with the symbols of Orangeism:

> (There was a) salute of twenty-one guns from the gates (and the) beating of drums and peals from the bells, ushered in the day. An immense Orange flag waved over a small French ensign. The Yeomanry lined Bishop Street. The Corporation in their robes and attended by a vast concourse of principal citizens, decorated with Orange ribbons and led by a band playing the revived tune of "Derry the First of August", went in procession to the site of the new court house, the foundation stone of which was laid by the Mayor, John Curry.

The symbols and culture of Orangeism had become totally enmeshed in the Siege practices. In 1814 the Journal noted that,

> An Orange Flag, having the figure of KING WILLIAM on horseback, was seen waving majestically from the steeple, while the Virgin Flag graced the eastern battlement of the church. Above each of the principle gates was painted in large capitals on an Orange background: NO SURRENDER 1688.[65]

In 1813 the Corporation had actually re-named the Diamond, "King William's Square", though they were forced to revert to the original title by the Irish Society in 1819.[66] The Rev. John Graham (the cleric who, more than any other, was involved with the promotion of the Siege culture) regularly joined Hill at the head of the Siege processions riding a white horse.[67] The figure of a white horse had become

synonymous with the cult of William, blending the political significance of a militarily powerful establishment, personified by William, with the biblical imagery of Christ as the saviour astride the "pale horse of Revelations".[68] From the beginning of the nineteenth century the Siege parades had become occasions for demonstrating the prestige of the Ascendancy, and by the second decade of the century that prestige, the symbolism of Orangeism and the Siege were inextricably bound up together.

The political significance of this was not lost on contemporaries and particularly on the expanding Catholic population. Such an identification of the parades with politicised Protestantism also coincided with a period of growing politicisation among sections of the local Catholic community, inspired by the early campaigns of Daniel O'Connell, which made them increasingly unwilling to accept the conciliatory and co-operative approach toward the Derry Protestant elite adopted by "Orange Charlie" O'Donnell. This politicisation combined with a growing militancy of local Ribbonism, which was also becoming more influential in the city as migrants came into it from the strong Ribbon centres of east and west Donegal.

It was in this context that communal skirmishes broke out during the Siege parades for the first time, in 1809. A Catholic Committee was established in the city and, in September 1811, a large demonstration was held in support of O'Connell. At the same time, a major row broke out over the wearing of Orange ribbons by the Yeomanry on the Siege marches. In the same month as the Catholic demonstration, the Londonderry Legion were summoned to parade in the Diamond and were addressed by Hill:

> He (Hill) must pursue the line he had adopted or the efficiency of the Corps was at an end, For the first time, a spirit of insubordination manifested itself on the 1st August (O.S.) last. Fortunately however it was confined to a single company, the rifle company. The Corps had been assembled for the purpose of commemorating the Relief of Derry, and, as had been always the custom, on that day, most of the men appeared with Orange lilies in their caps. This it seems gave offence to seven of the rifle company and they thought it proper to leave the ranks and the parade in defiance of the command of their officers.

These seven men who objected to the wearing of Orange lilies were subsequently dismissed from the yeomanry by Hill, and Hill argued that their obvious anger at the use of Orange symbolism in the Siege parades was misplaced. Rather than intending to identify with sectarianism, Hill suggested, wearing Orange lilies was "actuated solely by a desire to commemorate the day in the usual manner, without any regard to religion or party". Catholics, Hill commented at the time, far from finding offence in the wearing of lilies, had occasion to do so themselves, and that the practice was well-established long before the formation of the Orange order:

> in the other companies several Roman Catholics had Orange lilies in their caps, while some Protestants were without them...Wearing of Orange lilies on the 1st of August had been a uniform practice of the corps, it had been customary with the old Volunteers...it appeared to him, when a schoolboy, to have been a custom of an old standing and he believed it to have existed since the Siege; whereas the system of Orangeism, so obnoxious to the Roman Catholics of Ireland, was no more than of about 14 years standing. Was it to be believed that a practice which had originated more than a century before, was for a moment to be supposed that it indulged in, in the year 1811, for the purpose of offending a sect or party? The thing was absurd.[69]

This episode reveals several things. The argument put forward by Hill, who was personally regarded as being the most conservative, reactionary and "Orange" member of the local elite is one that re-occurs many times: that the Siege parades were a celebration of a cultural tradition, and not intended to have any other significance. That case was often put on the basis that, far from being "invented", the tradition was both well-established and unchanging in its meaning. However, the incident also reveals that the assumption of political neutrality was not one shared by all and that even some of those involved with the Yeomanry were concerned enough about the political implications of wearing Orange lilies that they were willing to disobey orders. Having said that, it should be added that they all subsequently re-applied for membership to the Corps.[70] It is clear that whatever meaning may or may not have been given to the wearing of an Orange lily in the past, it was an increasingly contentious political symbol by the second decade of the nineteenth century.

As with the other symbols and signs linked to the Siege culture the meaning behind the Orange lily could change given different circumstances, it was a sign defined by its social context. A letter published in the Journal shortly after this dispute in 1811, supported Hill's position and also argued that on the anniversaries most clearly identified with Orangeism, November 4th and July 1st,

> the Officers of the Corps forbade the wearing of the Orange as then tending to denote a party distinction, and not merely to celebrate a glorious event in the history of our city.[71]

The suggestion was that the same symbol worn by the same person in the same way could mean something quite different on different occasions.

Given the opposition by Catholics to the Siege parades it can be safely be assumed that they certainly found the line of this distinction a little too fine. If the Orange lily had any essential meaning then sectarian division was part and parcel of it. Similarly, though Hill and others might argue that the meaning of the lily was unchanged, events in Derry, as elsewhere, would suggest otherwise. For Derry Catholics, by the second decade of the nineteenth century, the Orange lily was recognised as a sectarian symbol and the Siege culture was synonymous with Orangeism. Derry Catholics were also, for the first time, in a position to voice and demonstrate their growing opposition to the parades.[72]

Between 1812 and 1815 tensions and clashes surrounding the Siege demonstrations intensified. Political differences within the Catholic community came to focus on a dispute between the conservative O'Donnell and Fr Cornelieus O'Mullan, a local priest active on the Catholic Committee and with strong support within local Ribbonism. In order to deflect Catholic middle class support from the radicals, O'Donnell had successfully lobbied Hill to reduce extra dues placed upon their Catholic mercantile transactions.[73] However, the result of this was that he was identified even more with the interests of Hill and the Corporation.

In 1813 O'Mullan attacked Hill, arguing that he had promised to support the Catholic petition before parliament at his election banquet in 1812, but had failed to do so. Hill denied he had ever made such a promise and was supported in this denial by O'Donnell and a local Catholic merchant, Richard O'Doherty. Matters came to a head at a heated meeting held in the Long Tower Church in November, 1813, when

O'Donnell and his supporters were ejected from the building by O'Mullan, who was backed by a number of armed Ribbonmen. After this O'Mullan gave a speech denouncing the Corporation as Orangemen, and the Bishop as an "Orange-Papist".[74]

A meeting of the city freeholders denounced this action as "riotous and seditious", condemned what they termed the "inflammatory speeches and seditious practices" of the Catholic Board, and declared their "unalterable attachment to his Majesty's sacred person and government, and to those principles which placed the illustrious House of Brunswick on the throne".[75] They also drew up an address to the Prince of Wales, criticising the Catholic Board for "assuming jesuitical humility...but exercising the authority of dictators", and reiterated the platform of their political beliefs, "a Constitution, happily established and wisely administered...In attachment to the same Monarch and piety to the same God, all minor feelings were forgotten or lost".[76]

In the aftermath of the Long Tower Church meeting O'Mullan was not only excommunicated by O'Donnell but also arrested and tried by Hill and sentenced to one month in prison, for incitement to riot and assault. At the trial Hill argued that O'Mullan was wrong to have implied that the Corporation was Orange, and again used the case of the Siege parades to make his point;

> You frequently used the epithets of Orange Banditti, Orange ruffians, Orange Corporation of Derry...I do not believe there exists an Orangeman in the Corporation of the City of Londonderry...in the Yeomanry Corps, which I have the honour to command, consisting of 400 privates, and of which not one-tenth were Roman Catholics, we have forborne for the last three years, on the 1st of August, the anniversary of the Relief of Derry, to exhibit the Orange lily...out of respect to the

> feelings of our Roman Catholic Brethren, then for the first time expressed.[77]

Yet the Diamond had been renamed after William that very year, a month later the "principal citizens" attended the December parade "decorated with Orange ribbons", and in 1814 an "Orange Flag, having the figure of King William" flew from the Cathedral Steeple, a feature which was regularly repeated in the next few years.[78] Similarly, the Journal provides an insight into how the parades were really regarded:

> The silly cant of a mistaken liberality, which for a time usurped the seat of reason, and considered all regard for established customs and opinions as uncharitable and criminal attached odium even to the very colours under which our deliverer bled for liberty. Of late however it has been happily discovered that the enemies to the commemoration of the event which secured our country's freedom, are also the enemies of the state.[79]

To oppose the parades was to be an enemy of the state because the guarantee against "civil and religious liberty being trampled on by ignorance and superstition" was the Protestant Constitution, which the Siege had come to symbolise.

After this initial period of conflict over the Siege anniversaries things returned to a relative calm until the early 1820s. In 1822, however, there was a full-scale confrontation over the Siege parades that involved not only communal conflict, but also, for the first time, friction between Derry Protestants and forces of the state. Several factors led to this situation. A wave of political and social unrest was evident throughout the country with both a resurgence of Ribbon activities and the emergence of O'Connellite campaigning on an unprecedented scale. Government policy had also shifted, adopting a more conciliatory line toward Catholic grievances. In Dublin, this

situation led to serious riots on July 12th, 1822 and the banning of Orange demonstrations to statue of William in College Green thereafter.[80]

The change in state policy had already been signalled in Derry by the decision of the local regular army commander to prevent both the military, and the Yeomanry, from taking part in the Closing of the Gates parade in 1821. As a consequence an "Apprentice Boys" society was formed to carry out the various practices previously performed by the army.[81] This was an important departure. Although there is some evidence that an Apprentice Boys Club was formed in 1814, from which the modern association dates its foundation, it is from 1821 that a definite record exists and an account of the August parade of 1822 significantly made a distinction between "the loyal Apprentice Boys *and* the Londonderry legion", which had previously tended to be regarded as the same thing.[82]

During the Relief parade in 1822 a riot broke out between a Catholic crowd and the marchers; a conflict continued several weeks later at the Derry race meeting, a traditional occasion of feud and faction fighting.[83] At a meeting held on the evening of August 1st 1822, Hill, congratulated for his "kindness, zeal and exertions...(for the)...mercantile and shipping interests of Derry", argued that those who were involved in the Siege marches were "devotedly attached...to their Sovereign and our happy constitution". Rev. John Graham also suggested that it was the goal of maintaining the link with Britain and the Constitution that defined their activities, and spoke against the mooted restrictions to be placed upon Orange parades;

> I allege therefore, without fear of contradiction from any sound lawyer in the British

Dominions that there are no legal or constitutional grounds of the offence in the observance of these anniversaries

The only motivation behind the Siege marches, said Graham, was in "fearing God, honouring the King".[84] Hill and Graham were joined in these sentiments by the newly elected MP for the county seat, G.R. Dawson, who declared those at the meeting to be "inflexible, undaunted and uncompromising patriots", celebrating an event by which "the cause of freedom was preserved and the foundation laid for our Glorious Constitution in church and state."[85] However, six years later, Dawson, taking his political lead from Robert Peel (to whom he was related by marriage) used the occasion of the Relief celebration dinner to announce his intention to support the introduction of Catholic emancipation. The reaction was far less amicable than the standing ovation he received in 1822.

The direction of state policy from the mid-1820s onward had a demonstrably alienating impact on the most committed advocates of the Siege Culture. John Graham, whom one contemporary described as a man of "somewhat eccentric habits, but simple, honest and devotedly loyal", was also recorded as the Grand Master of the Londonderry County Orange Lodge in 1835. As early as December, 1822, he was criticising government restrictions placed on certain Orange activities at the Siege anniversaries.[86] In a poem, written in the same month, Graham argued that, though the founders of Derry had "Orange (as) their banner, True-blue their heart", the story of the Siege also provided a cautionary tale against the possibility of betrayal on the part of those in authority,

At length in time this little town grows great

Procures bad rulers, men affecting state

Practice Vile measures, Govern as they please

Refuse no bribe, and still they live at ease,

e'en seel the city for love of fees...

Itching for gain their Country's rights forgo,

City's, nay states, they'd barter with a foe

Even lay religion and her honour low.[87]

Such sentiments anticipated the growing distance which emerged between the state and the Orange Order over the following decade. In 1825 the Grand Lodge in Ireland was suspended, in 1832 the Anti-Processions Act was introduced and the Grand Lodge was actually dissolved in 1836.[88] The Order became more populist from the early 1820s, the focus of its grass roots activists falling upon the preservation their public display of power through their "right to march". For the upper class leadership concern was centred on preserving the "Protestant Constitution". The desire to promote this politicised Protestantism, and growing official censure of the same, led to the establishment of various other hardline Protestant bodies in the late 1820s, foremost among which were the "Brunswick Clubs", created to lead opposition to the emancipation campaign in 1828.

Judging from the evidence of William Knox, the Protestant bishop of Derry, given before a parliamentary select committee in 1825, such opposition was already strong amongst Derry Protestants. When asked what the view of Protestants was on emancipation, Knox commented,

I believe it is universally against it...In the public meetings of Protestants everything is carried by acclamations...With respect to Catholic Emancipation or Protestant

Ascendancy; they are all Protestants, and they are hostile.[89]

Similarly, when the owner of the Journal decided to support the introduction of emancipation it caused the editor to leave to establish an alternative paper, the Londonderry Sentinel, whose principles were avowedly ultra-Protestant. The circulation of the Sentinel was soon almost double that of the (now renamed) "Derry" Journal.[90] However, divisions within the personnel of the Derry Protestant elite, following Dawson's declaration of support for emancipation, left them unable to mount a cohesive campaign during 1828-9.

Despite these divisions in the elite, the Orange movement continued to have a strong presence within the city. Bishop Knox noted in 1825 that there were several "Orange Societies" in Derry and the Committee investigating the state and nature of Orangeism in Ireland in 1835 found there were five lodges then active in the city.[91] Only a year before George Kerr, a Belfast trade union organiser, had gone to Derry to help establish a union among the city's cabinetmakers and was arrested and imprisoned by the mayor, Joshua Gillespie, and the sheriff, John Murray. Both Gillespie and Murray were accused, by Kerr, of being Orangemen. The basis of Kerr's claim was information given by two Orangemen, who were among those being prosecuted for trying to form the cabinetmakers' combination. This is interesting in two respects; that an Orange presence was evident within the Corporation and also that working class members of the Order could also be attracted to an embryonic trade union. Loyalties were, perhaps, more fluid than might often be assumed.[92]

The establishment of several societies of "Apprentice Boys" in Derry during the late

1820s and the early 1830s needs to be seen in the context of this conflict over the nature and role of Orangeism, its increasing popularisation and the emphasis of its working class members upon their "traditional" marching rights. A "No Surrender Apprentice Boys Club" was formed in October 1824 and by 1832 this, and another "No Surrender Club", were joined by what the Ordnance Survey called the "Death and Glory Club", which was "chiefly composed of journeymen tradesmen".[93] From the late 1820s it was these various Apprentice Boys Clubs which were the main organisers of the Siege parades, ensuring that the various established rituals and practices of the Siege Culture continued to be a central element of political activity.

By the late 1820s the overtly Protestant definition of the parades had been clearly established, signalled by the construction of Walker's pillar. Walker was the "warrior-priest" of the Siege. While Walker had always figured as a hero-icon of the Siege, his elevated and venerated status from the 1820s onward was due to growing importance of Protestantism within the Siege culture. The Pillar was commissioned by the Apprentice Boys in 1826 and paid for by public subscription. The statue of Walker was put in place on August 11th, 1828, in a ceremony attended by the mayor and the Corporation. This statue stood on an eighty-one foot-high column and was situated on the Royal Bastion where it towered above the Bogside. Walker was depicted in clerical garb, with a sword at his waist, one hand outstretched out toward the Foyle and the other holding an open bible, with "Exodus.20" written on it. It was an icon both of Protestant power and the imagined deliverance of the "chosen people".[94]

The statue was completed amid an atmosphere of increasing sectarian tension that stimulated the regular appearance, for the first time in the city, of popular Catholic marches. From 1830 onward there was a Catholic St. Patrick's day parade, which marched around the outside base of the walls, emphasising the fact that the symbolism of the walls as a sign of territorial control and power was one understood by all concerned.[95] Several factors fed into this situation. An economic and trade depression was creating problems in the city, while social conflict and tithe agitation were sweeping through the rural hinterland. Political tension also followed changes to the franchise and the continued splits between ultra-conservatives and Dawsonite elements within Derrys ruling circles accentuated antagonisms around the role of Orangeism. The Siege Culture, as was so often the case, became the central focus for confrontation and for delineating the nature of political loyalties.

Matters came to a head in early 1832. Following a ban imposed on parades by the Corporation a Catholic crowd which gathered for the St.Patrick's Day march were only prevented from marching by a large force of militia drafted into the city. The mayor (the Orange leader Joshua Gillespie) was also forced to declare, publicly, that any future Protestant marches would also be prevented. As a result, and following the introduction of the Anti-Procession Act in August, 1832, the Relief parade that summer was considerably modified. However, the following December saw an election victory for R. A. Ferguson, the new dominant force in Derry politics, in a campaign marked by the extensive use of bribery and the "practice to...look for auxiliaries among the mob on all occasions".[96] The election led to scuffles between the supporters of Ferguson and the defeated candidate, Dawson, and, as Ferguson was

"chaired", an effigy of Lundy was taken from the Corporation hall, in direct contravention both of the ban imposed by the mayor and the Anti-Procession Act, and was burnt for the first time on Walkers' Pillar.[97]

While several Apprentice Boys were subsequently prosecuted, Catholic anger over the failure of the city authorities to prevent such displays led to protracted struggles over the parades between 1833 and 1835. In 1835 forty seven Protestants were prosecuted for illegal procession, and six Protestants and seventeen Catholics were found guilty of riotous assembly. By 1836 an effective imposition of the Anti-Procession Act had been established and, while the Siege anniversaries were marked by a small march to the Cathedral, the deeply contentious route around the walls was briefly curtailed. Yet, the parades were to re-emerge, in the 1840s, with both the wall route and the burning of the effigy from Walker's Pillar re-established and the Apprentice Boys clubs continued to exist (and march) throughout the period. However, the mid-1830s marked a point at which the Siege parades (like the Orange marches) had become so socially disruptive that the state authorities, and even to some extent the local elite, regarded them as counter-productive to the maintenance of order and the status quo.

Throughout the preceding thirty years the Siege practices had become marked by an essentially "Protestant" political orientation that was both, in large part, conservative and founded upon attachment to the British link. The full force of the local Ascendancy had conditioned the growth of the Siege culture in the aftermath of the 1798 Rebellion and the Act of Union and this continued to be a dominant influence. The presence of members of the Corporation in the parades was apparent until the

mid-1830s. The Corporation hall was used as the site for burning the Lundy effigy until 1835 and R.A. Ferguson continued to patronise the Apprentice Boys clubs throughout the 1830s, 1840s and 1850s. Popular working class involvement in the Siege parades notably grew from the mid-1820s, as Orangeism found itself estranged from the state authorities. In many ways this estrangement reached a zenith in the early 1830s when the level of social conflict surrounding the parades had reached such a point that the Corporation was forced to curb the most contentious practices. Most of those practices were, however, soon to re-appear.

The whole period from 1800 to 1835 witnessed the growing identification of the Siege as the cultural practice of politicised Protestantism. In a situation where the Catholic population was growing rapidly, and was itself becoming more politicised, the public demonstration of this political Protestant identity became increasingly contentious. As a result the Siege culture emerged as the major focus for the periodic communal conflict that erupted in the city and the various Apprentice Boys clubs, which appeared in the first decades of the century, were set up and by the Orange supporters of the "Protestant Constitution".

Morality, Sobriety and Myth: The Siege Myth and Evangelicalism, 1830-1850

The Siege culture was deeply affected by the growing importance of the evangelical lobby in Derry. This was evident in several ways. At the most obvious level the promotion of a proselytising Protestant religiosity tended to aggravate sectarian tensions within the city and around the Siege marches. But evangelicalism also

encouraged the routinisation and social puritanism of the Apprentice Boys clubs, particularly from the 1840s onward. The Siege anniversaries had always been accompanied by a large degree of festive, and often raucous, behaviour typified by the "Bottle and Glass parties" which were a dominant feature of their early development. Such activities increasingly became the target for the moral strictures of fundamentalists. By the end of the 1850s such gatherings were being replaced by "tea parties". These changes in the culture which surrounded the Siege anniversaries, reflected the way a particular brand of Protestantism, and a particular moral value system, was inculcated as the communal norm. Prudish morality, and sobriety, became markers of identity with the rise of Evangelicalism.

Certainly the upsurge of interest in Protestantism fed into the growing tension in the city, evident in the confrontations over the Siege parades in the 1820s and 1830s. At times the activities of evangelical groups directly caused riots. An influx of itinerant preachers who arrived in the city in 1826, led to several small-scale clashes and a wave of complaints from the local Catholic community against their proselytizing activities. This dispute continued through until 1828, when the arrival of two members of the Reformation Society led to an unprecedented public debate between six Protestant and six Catholic clerics.[98] The "Derry Discussion" (as this event came to be called) reflected the growing confrontation between the Catholic and Protestant churches over the efforts of the evangelical movement to gain converts within the Catholic community. Within Derry a tacit agreement was re-established soon afterward that the promotion of religion should be restricted to members of the particular church's own community.

Evangelicalism was, however, more important an influence on the Siege parades because it encouraged the growth both of social puritanism and of the regulatory control over various aspects of peoples lives in the city. A major target for evangelicals was what they regarded as the "social evil" of alcohol and of secular entertainment. During the 1820s the power of this lobby was so great that they conducted successful campaigns to curb a variety of social activities. The Ordnance Survey of 1837 gives some indication of the impact of the Temperance movement:

> Gravity of character is indeed the most striking feature of the inhabitants of Derry to the most casual observer. It is manifested by the appearance of the city at night, when the streets at a comparatively early hour are nearly deserted , and the repose of the inhabitants rarely disturbed by the noise of the drunken brawler. It is exhibited still more remarkably on Sundays, when everything indicates strict order, decorum and a scrupulous observance of the Sabbath. It is apparent also in the prevailing indifference to public amusements...The theatre has been converted into a coach-house...the concerts have been discontinued; the coteries presided over by a King and Queen of the Night have died away; and even the horses-races...seem marked with all the symptoms of decay. These results are in part traceable to the absorbing influence of political as well as of religious enthusiasm...The races were suspended in 1834, owing to the exertions of the clergy and resident gentry, who considered them injurious to morality.[99]

The Siege celebrations therefore became one of the few occasions when a large degree of social licence was allowed and it may be not unconnected that the extent of ritual and regalia surrounding the marches noticeably increased during the 1820s and 1830s. Far greater use of music, banners and flags, the parading and firing of small canons, the wearing of particular forms of dress, all evidenced a heightening of the theatricality of the events.

The consumption of alcohol was also a conspicuous part of the social activity attendant on the demonstrations. This was, however, far from a new aspect of the Siege culture. From the late eighteenth onward "Bottle and Glass Parties" were held on the Siege anniversaries. An advert for one of such "party", which appeared in the Derry Journal in 1815, gives a flavour of these events:

> SHUTTING of the GATES of DERRY is a day of rejoicing to the descendants of the Brave Apprentice Boys, so long should an opportunity be afforded to every Loyal Man to cherish those principles which guided our gallant ancestors and secured the Protestant succession. As no other means seems preferable to the old custom of BOTTLE and GLASS, it is proposed that every loyal citizen shall meet in the TOWN HALL on TUESDAY evening the 19th Instant, at SEVEN O'CLOCK, with his BOTTLE and GLASS to drink to the health of our good OLD KING, and the memory of the BRAVE APPRENTICE BOY who fired the first gun at the rebel army.[100]

At a Bottle and Glass party held in the Corporation hall in 1832, there were almost 500 people present, filling the hall to the point of "suffocation". Almost all the gentry and "leading citizenry" of the city and area were in the hall and such was the throng that they all had to remain standing. Every man brought his own "bottle and glass" and numerous toasts were drunk to the "Orange and Blue", "Rule Britannia", "The Protestant Boys" and "Croppies Lie Down".[101] Similar in character to the Orange meetings held during the same period these events often went on into the early hours of the morning.

The night-time scene of a painting entitled "Burning the Effigy of Lundy in Derry",

produced by an unknown artist around 1830, also illustrates the "rough behaviour" or popular entertainment dimension of the Siege culture.[102] Aside from its directly political implications the burning of the Lundy effigy was also the most carnivalesque aspect of the Siege practices. The 1830 painting shows the effigy hung from a gibbet, being paraded through the streets in a cart which was driven by two figures, one dressed in a military uniform, the other as a horned devil.[103] The cart was pulled by four men, around whom a working class crowd formed a raucous torch-lit procession accompanied by flute players and drummers and carrying large crimson flags. The whole scene has the air of a popular carnival, watched by the more "respectable" population from within a building in the background.

However, in the 1830s and 1840s the clubs and activities of the Siege Culture became more and more carefully regulated. Rules were introduced governing the proceedings of the various clubs and ever more stringent guidelines for the conduct of the parades. In 1837 the three Apprentice Boys clubs then in existence each held only four meetings a year, attended by a small number of members, to plan for the parades.[104] The organisational character of the clubs changed substantially over the next few years. While there was a high turnover of clubs forming and dissolving through the 1840s, two were established on a much firmer footing, the Walker Club in 1844, and the Murray Club in 1847.[105] The Minutes of meetings of the Murray Club give a detailed account of their proceedings. The club held a meeting once a month, which began with prayers and at which all members of the Club were called upon to attend or face a fine. Regulations were laid down for the procedure meetings should follow, the authority of club officers and (significantly) of the conduct of members:

at all times, but more especially on our anniversaries, every member shall conduct himself soberly and orderly and shall with all due respect obey the proper commands of his officers, and any member conducting himself irregularly or being drunk and incapable of duty on any such days shall be by the officers deprived of wearing any colours connected with our celebrations.[106]

The organisation of the parades was also becoming more controlled. Meetings were held between the clubs to decide on the form of the Siege rituals, a regular order of the clubs in the processions was established and rules were laid down concerning the proper firing of volleys and the small cannons, which several of the clubs now owned. Similarly, a code of dress was established. In 1850 the Murray Club wore "white pantaloons and vest" on the parade but, by 1852, they passed a resolution that "if the other clubs wear Crimson sashes on the coming 18th we co-operate with them". What was developing was an institutionalised framework for the Siege Culture that implied not only organisational changes, but also greater control over the social and moral life of the members.

This control did have its limits. In the 1840s the popular, "rough", dimension of the Siege parades continued to have a part to play in the activities of the Apprentice Boys Clubs. The Murray Club was described in 1849 as a "youthful band of celebrators" and had passed a resolution the year before to "hold our Bottle and Glass in company with the No Surrender Club".[107] However, six years later, even though the Bottle and Glass parties were still continuing, an entry in the club minutes noted that "a member was reprimanded for being intoxicated on the anniversary of the relief".[108] Certainly the moral climate surrounding the organised Siege practices was increasingly

imbued with the ethos of mid-Victorian "respectability", in which teetotalism was very much to the fore.

Besides establishing Bible and Missionary societies in the 1820s and 1830s, Derry Protestant clerics were highly active in promoting temperance groups, although initially they met with only limited success. Tighter controls over public houses and moves against the sale of illicit spirits in the 1830s and 1840s reflected the growing strength of the temperance movement and a Temperance Society, founded in Derry in 1835, soon had over 500 members.[109] However, it was at the end of the 1850s that this drive for social puritanism and sobriety clearly established an influence on the Siege celebrations. In 1858 the Relief parade sermon was preached by Rev. George Steen, a close friend and confidante of Henry Cooke, who described the Apprentice Boys of 1689 as "men of self-denial who should not be remembered in the wine cup but in our closets and on our knees...They have set you an example of moral courage".[110]

The 1859 revival the following year was the high point of fundamentalist hysteria in nineteenth century Ulster and a drive against alcohol was one of its central concerns. In Derry the revival was welcomed by William McClure, who had been sent by the Presbyterian General Assembly to investigate the character of American revivals, in 1858.[111] The main advocates of the revival in the city were a Methodist cleric, Rev. Robert Wallace, and an evangelical Presbyterian minister, Thomas Witherow. Witherow was a confirmed advocate of the Siege culture and several years later published an account of the Siege of Derry and edited Ash's Diary for its first

publication.[112] Through the summer of 1859 huge open air services were held almost every evening in the city with anything up to 4-5,000 people in attendance. There were reports of devotees being "stricken" and falling into an hysteria-induced paralysis. Advocates of the revival were at pains to stress that such crowds included not only,

> the ignorant and those of higher rank...(but also)...Men of education, men of business talent and women of refined mental culture were brought to weep and lament over their unbelieving hearts.[113]

Numbers at religious services dramatically increased and the walls of the city were covered with placards with biblical motifs and texts.[114]

The impact of revivalism finally established temperance practices as the behaviourial norm for the Siege culture; at least within what had increasingly become the polite, middle class "respectable" circles of the Apprentice Boys clubs. In 1861 John Hempton, a leading figure in the Apprentice Boys movement, noted at the Shutting of the Gates "soiree"; "the progress of the times has changed the customs of our society and instead of the jovial bottle and glass of our predecessors, we now have this tea meeting".[115]

Raping the Maiden City: Spirituality and the Representation of Gender and Community in the Siege Myth, 1830-1850

Temperance was one of the most obvious ways that the values of enthusiastic Protestantism were lived as "an external state".[116] The evangelical moral value

system, of which sobriety was a part, was dramatised in evangelical texts through the imagery of a spiritual life which was beset by constant struggle, waged between good and evil, and which, as a result, demanded sacrifices of the devotee before salvation could be attained. Here again the Derry Siege proved a source of inspiration, and a cultural reference point, to numerous early nineteenth century Protestant clerics and evangelicals. This is particularly evident in much of the poetry, songs and fiction written of the Siege in this period and through which a number of moral strands were bound up together.

Rev. John Graham, the writer of several of the most popular songs relating to the Siege, regularly employed the imagery of besiegement in his work as a means to entwine the element of spiritual renewal with sectarian politics:

> The Sacred rights these heroes gain'd
>
> In many a hard fought day,
>
> Shall they by us be still maintained
>
> Or basely cast away:
>
> Shall rebels vile rule o'er our Isle,
>
> And call it all their own,
>
> Or surely no, the faithless foe,
>
> Must bend before the throne. [117]

Written in the same period the song "Derry's Walls" makes much the same point and links a blood-sacrificial ethos both to the (intensely Victorian) virtue of "duty" and the imagery of the city walls:

> The blood it did flow in the streams for many a winter's night,

They Knew the Lord was on their side, to help them in the fight;

They only stood upon the walls determined for to fight,

To fight and gain the victory and hoist the Crimson high;

Then work and don't surrender boys, but come when duty calls

With heart and hand, and sword and shield, we'll guard old Derry's Walls.[118]

In fact, the walls of Derry often appear in early nineteenth century Protestant rhetoric not only as a symbol of the collective boundary but also as a metaphor of the individual soul. Similarly, links were increasingly made between the cultural narrative of the Siege and the prevailing norms of sexual morality, through the metaphor of the "Maiden" City. A popular love song entitled "A Maiden Pined by Derry's Walls" emphasised the role of women as lover, wife and mother, and linked this imagery to anti-Catholic sentiment:

Oh! her fair bosom, shrine of love,

Where soft emotion heaves,

Shall nurture Freedom's rosy boys,

Not suckle Popish slaves![119]

Here again, John Graham was very much to the fore. In his poem "Derriana" Graham welded the model of the Siege, through the motif of maidenhood, to a blend of sacrificial imagery and feminine sexual symbolism;

Derriana! Lovely Dame,

By many visitors courted,

Thy beauty rare and deeds of fame,

Have been but ill-reported.

Seated in digit serene
Beside a crystal fountain,
In radiant comeliness thour't seen,
overshadowed by a mountain.

What was proud Troy compared to thee,
though Homer did command her?
How great thy Foyle would seem to be
Near Homer's old Scamander.

Like thee two Sieges sharp she stood,
By timid friends forsaken;
But unlike thee, twice drenched in blood
She fainted and was taken.[120]

The use of the walls of Derry as a comforting feminine icon has parallels with, what E.P.Thompson described as, the "womb-regressive" imagery of many early Methodist hymns and writings. As Thompson argues, the prevalence of such images, linked as they often were to blood-symbolism, promoted sexual repression, a denial of the physical world and encouraged a fixation with death.[121] One of the real powers of such symbolic representation was the ability to fuse several ideological elements together and relate them at one and the same time. The "virgin" and "maiden" imagery linked to the Siege could therefore establish a definition of gender power relations and the norms of sexual morality as an intrinsic element of a religo-political world-view and an identity of the community.

This is, perhaps, best illustrated in the works on the Siege by the English evangelical writer Charlotte Elizabeth. Elizabeth's work demonstrates the fusion of sectarian politics, puritanical sexual and social values and the emotive, conversionist conception of religious experience that defined the impact of evangelical Protestantism, both on Ulster society and the Siege Myth, in the early nineteenth century. Born the daughter of a Church of England clergyman in 1790, Elizabeth was both a committed ultra-Protestant proselytizer and a Tory.[122] Although she visited Derry on only one occasion, in 1838, shortly after the publication of her novel The Siege of Derry: A Tale of the Revolution in 1688, Elizabeth had taken a great interest in the activities of various Protestant bible groups in Derry prior to this and was very closely involved with the Reformation Society.[123]

She had also already written one of the most well-known songs of the Siege Myth, The Maiden City. The sustained imagery of this poem was constructed around the symbolism of maidenhood. The story of the Siege began when "A kingly wooer came" and the sacrifice of the slain ("It was for us they bled") resulted in ultimate victory;

> Nor wily tongue shall move us,
> Nor tyrant arm afright,
> We'll look to one above us,
> Who ne'er forsook the right....
>
> Yet the maiden on the throne, boys,
> Shall be a maiden still.[124]

The themes of a feminised city standing out against attack thanks to spiritual help,

communal sacrifice and moral virtue are ones she developed in even greater depth in her novel.

The Siege of Derry is one of the fullest fictional expositions of the Siege Myth from the early nineteenth century.[125] While having certain features which were somewhat peculiar to her own outlook, Elizabeth's story, of a virtuous Protestant family forced to flee to Derry and suffer the privations of the Siege before ultimately being "saved" by the relief of the city, illustrates how the cultural narrative of the Siege could serve as a metaphor for the imagined life of the evangelical and provide a series of symbols through which an enthusiastic Protestant world-view could be established.

The Siege of Derry is both profoundly anti-Catholic and steeped in the ethos of conversion. Much of the book was designed to encourage the promotion of Protestantism among Irish Catholics through the Irish language. In real life this was a particular concern of Elizabeth's and her visit to Derry was a result of her links with the Londonderry Auxiliary to the Irish Society.[126] This was hardly, however, a popular approach to the promotion of the "Second Reformation" among Derry Protestants, as Elizabeth herself noted during her visit:

> A good man, a scripture reader, had been telling me of his work among the poor people here, but I found that it was to nominal Protestants, not Romanists, he took his message. The latter he seemed to regard as unapproachable; and that any attempt at instructing them must necessarily fail. To say the truth, there is too much of that impression discernible even among the higher classes in the extreme North; the national character of the aborigines is often held in great contempt, and an idea is prevalent that nothing can be done with them in the way of reclamation.[127]

While Irish Catholics may have been capable of "reclamation" in the eyes of Charlotte Elizabeth, she also saw the Catholic Irish as a race of witless dupes, the simple victims of a pernicious and manipulative Catholic church. In The Siege of Derry Catholics are portrayed as charming, loyal and emotional at best, the stuff of good servants; at worst they are barbaric, violent and deceitful. This was a racist portrait, widely current in Victorian England, that employed social Darwinism to explain Irish poverty and political unrest.[128] For Elizabeth the walls of Derry represented the dividing line between the "wild, fierce and restless" without, and those within. When she visited Derry Elizabeth described a brief trip she took to the Bogside in terms of a "christian soldier", advancing into enemy territory:

> Yesterday I sallied through Butcher's Gate in quest of a relic, but did not go far: that quarter called the Bogside is the counterpart of our London St.Giles and inhabited by an uncivilised population. Oh how I long for time and opportunity to make a regular sally through that gate into the enemy's camp, after the fashion of 1689, armed with the sword of the spirit and seconded by a determined party of Irish Scripture readers. That is the precise spot where Protestants perished, who were driven under the walls...[129]

However, it is in the character of her central heroine, Lady McAllister, who, throughout the novel, is the medium of Elizabeth's own voice advocating the need for an evangelical experience. She is also the idealised image of the virtuous Protestant woman who while strong of character is, ultimately and definitively, passive:

> Highly intellectual and marked with decision of character, her countenance yet bespoke a meek benevolence which endeared what had otherwise been too commanding too inspire affection; and there were traits of long and patient endurance, sufficient to show that a cross had indeed been borne by her, whose

deportment told a tale of pious resignation.[130]

The promise of salvation through "pious resignation" provides the central meaning of the Siege story for Elizabeth, and the Siege is seen as a parallel for the inner life of the devout Protestant. Men are more active but even their power to act only comes, in the end, from the sublimation of the self. So when Lady McAllister's son Bryan, (who appears as one of the original "Apprentice Boys" in the story) inspires others to close the gates, his ability to do so only comes from spiritual intervention and emotive prayer: "One fervent prayer he (Bryan) breathed to the helper of the Oppressed, and then raising his voice to the utmost pitch, cried out, - 'for our altars and our homes! To the Guard House boys! Seize the Keys!'".[131] For the female, on the other hand, the message is one of total personal self-abasement in the face of the trial ahead:

> What words may suffice to portray the agony of those bewildered females? The dreadful reality was at length arrived, the substance of those troubled visions which had frequently haunted their pillow...Enclosed on every side, they must wait the issue; and await it they did in meek and holy resignation. No scream escaped them, no violent contortion appeared.[132]

As the Siege builds toward the climax of the Relief, the main characters experience both a heightened emotional state and an ecstatic religious vision. At the same time the imagery of the "chaste" lady McAllister and the Maiden city become totally interwoven. Ultimately the temporal victory of the Siege Relief is twinned by the longed for psycho-sexual and spiritual release for the heroine. Fulfilling the doctrine of grace by election, Lady McAllister is carried by her faithful native Irish servant toward the "only goal that can be desired without guilt, death"; just as the boom is

broken and the Relief ships enter the lough,

> She (Lady McAllister) raised her head in earnest expectation; and then the shout, the clamorous joy, that told its glad result, came pealing on our ears: our comrades on the battery exclaimed "She floats, she floats!" and I raised my dying charge and bore her to the point from whence she might descry the stately vessels bearing down in unimpeded approach. She uttered a sound of joy, and, spreading abroad her hands, exclaimed, "Lord, I have lived to pray, I come to praise thee!". Then she sunk back, breathed the name of Jesus, and departed to abide with him forever.[133]

The actions depicted in this climatic scene were similar to the physical manifestations of revivalism and, as Peter Gibbon argues, the prostrations and fits evident during the Revival of 1859 had clear psycho-sexual undertones. The Relief of the Siege works, therefore, at a variety of levels, delivering both the inner psychological release to the heroine and the external religious and political victory to Protestantism. In the end the struggle of Derry is sublimated into the rich seam of biblical imagery based on the "shining citadel" or the "strong city":

> There's a rest and a glory, Colonel Murray, prepared for the people of God, a city where nothing can enter that has not been washed in the blood of the lamb. Outside its gates is another place, and that place is hell...You've made a resolute stand, and God has prospered it: the dark hour is ended, and yonder foes will be marching away by tomorrow's dawn: but Papists defeated may rally again... [134]

Elizabeth's novel was published in numerous popular editions, and it found as wide a readership in England as in Ireland. The appeal of the novel to an evangelical audience lay in the historical subject matter, the emotional tone and the moral message of the book, all of which were quite typical of Methodist and other enthusiastic

Protestant literature of the day. Elizabeth's work emphasises the power of the Siege imagery to provide a total symbolic system for the representation of an evangelical Protestant world view.

Protestantism Besieged?: The Siege Myth and "All Protestant Union", 1830-1860

Charlotte Elizabeth also found in the Siege Myth, and the image of the walled community, a metaphor of Protestant communal solidarity;

> Disunion among the people of God is ever the precursor of judgement. Let professors lay to heart the lesson that we shall yet receive; for christians thus unnaturally separating must be melted into one by the intense fires of his wrath, whose holy name and causes are blasphemed through unseemly disputes.[135]

For Elizabeth the Siege taught the lesson that all Protestants should sink their doctrinal differences and stress instead their common theological and social bonds. In this belief Elizabeth reflected the religio-political policy that crystallised the fusion of a distinctly Protestant political culture with fundamentalist Protestantism; the concept of "All-Protestant Union".

The campaign for "All-Protestant Union", heralded by the leading evangelical Presbyterian preacher Henry Cooke from the mid-1830s onward, gave the clearest expression of a Protestant collective identity in the early nineteenth century.[136] Initially concerned with defending the privileges of the Established church, and also at first a far from uncontested position amongst Ulster Presbyterians, All-Protestant

Union emerged as a clarion call with far wider social and political repercussion. Diminishing the importance of intra-Protestant differences and emphasising the imagined common threat posed by Catholicism, All-Protestant Union became, in effect, the slogan of a new political consciousness. Significantly many of the leading advocates of Protestant Union were also strong supporters of the Siege culture with its narrative of all-Protestant resistance. Here again, the Siege Myth was deeply affected by the times.

All Protestant Union had a profound influence on the development of the Siege Culture. Divisions between various Protestant denominations were more than a matter of theological disputation in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, but carried real social and political implications. Nor did such divisions simply disappear. Within the Siege parades a contest between a form of politicised liberal Presbyterianism and All Protestant Toryism was a defining characteristic of the latter half of the 1800s. For a generation of evangelical supporters of All Protestant Union the Siege represented one of the most amenable symbolic forms through which to express their message.

The campaign for All Protestant Union was originally launched in support of the tithe privileges of the Established Church. At the Hillsborough Demonstration of October 1834, the main architect of Protestant Union, the evangelical and populist Presbyterian preacher Henry Cooke announced,

> Between the divided Churches I publish the banns of a second marriage of Christian forbearance, of Christian love where they agree, and of Christian co-operation in all

matters where their common safety is concerned.[137]

Cooke, significantly, also tied his call for "Protestant union and co-operation" to the political and economic interests of Ulster Toryism. Flann Campbell has (rightly) described this as the first occasion when "extreme Toryism and Protestant Fundamentalism first came together successfully in a mass meeting".[138] This set in motion an increasing stress within Ulster politics upon the historical myth of the "whole Protestant community"; the notion that Protestants shared (and had always shared) common interests, beliefs and traditions. It was an idea that would prove one of the most powerful ideological forces in late nineteenth century Irish society.[139]

Cooke's position was certainly hotly contested within the Presbyterian ministry in the mid-1830s. In fact, only nine other Presbyterian ministers had attended the Hillsborough Demonstration and, in its aftermath, the then Moderator of the Ulster Synod William McClure of Derry, publicly distanced the Synod from Cooke's stance,

> I beg to state that Dr Cooke is not the Moderator of the Synod of Ulster; that he had no authority from that body to appear at the meeting in question; and that , for whatever sentiments he may have there expressed, he alone is individually responsible.[140]

The need to maintain the theological distinctiveness of Presbyterianism was uppermost for McClure and four years later (along with James Denham, the minister of the Scotch Church) he argued this case against the Established Church curate in Derry, Rev. Archibald Boyd.[141] Several of McClure's predecessors had, however, been less theologically adversarial and, in political terms, had established an extremely close relationship with the local Episcopalian elite. Robert Black had been a prime mover

on a national scale in the drive for intra-protestant political co-operation and his colleague, William Hay, had been much to the fore on several occasions in supporting the position of the Corporation and Sir George Hill in the 1810s and 1820s.

Significantly though, an anti-establishment element was evident within Derry Presbyterianism and would become a significant political force in the 1850s and 1860s. Based largely on the interests and support of Presbyterian tenant farmers in the countryside and local industrialists and businessmen in the city, liberal Presbyterianism laid claim to a libertarian tradition that accentuated (rather than ignored) the social, political and theological differences between Presbyterians and the Church of Ireland. Derry had a narrow intra-Protestant denominational balance of the city so any political movement that tended to stress Protestant denominational differences was liable to have a very significant political impact.

The leading figure of Derry liberal Presbyterianism was James McKnight, who became editor of the Londonderry Standard in 1848. A fierce critic of the Established Church and of landlordism, McKnight was a leading activist of the tenants rights agitation and the driving force behind attempts to establish a distinct Presbyterian political structure within Derry during the 1850s. The Standard had been established in 1836 and soon emerged, alongside the Northern Whig, as the main voice of liberal opinion in Ulster. On its foundation, the owners of the Standard laid out the paper's political platform:

> The Standard will be the guardian of those civil and religious institutions for which our forefathers fought and conquered, it will advocate the principles of the

Revolution, and the religion of the Reformation....and where should such an appeal be successful...if not here, where the very air is eloquent with the echoes of former triumphs, here, where the memory of our ancestors' patient endurance has become a very romance and poetry of chivalrous loyalty...here in this citadel and stronghold of a pure faith, in this armoury of constitutional feelings? here we plant the Standard.[142]

For such Protestants the imagery of the Siege provided a model for their liberalism. The Siege imagery was invoked in every edition of the paper. The banner head of the Standard was written around a picture of Walkers' Pillar and below it was emblazoned the legend "Our Faith and Our Firesides". Nor did the Standard report the Siege marches through the 1840s and 1850s in anything other than glowing terms and McKnight, who called for the parades to be banned in the 1860s and 1870s, was initially far less critical. In fact, the owner of the Standard from the 1840s onward was William Glendenning who was also one of the major figures active within the Apprentice Boys movement. When the Murray Club was founded in 1847, Glendenning was the main organiser of it.[143]

While this suggests that there was a degree of political latitude allowed within the Apprentice Boys, it is also significant that the main founders and early members of the Murray Club seem to have been predominantly Presbyterian while the Walker Club, founded four years before, was dominated by members of the Church of Ireland.[144] While the Established Church and the largely Anglican elite had tended to control the organisation of the Siege Culture, members of both denominations had always been involved in the parades. Several commentators noted the presence of

Episcopalians and Presbyterians in the clubs. Similarly, of the forty seven Protestants convicted of illegal procession in 1835 only fourteen were members of the Church of Ireland and thirty three were Presbyterians.[145] Yet, though members of both major Protestant denominations were involved in the Apprentice Boys a degree of separation is also apparent within the movement. Nor was it inevitable that the doctrine of All-Protestant Union, which certainly later dominated the outlook of the Apprentice Boys, would inevitably do so. However, a growing stress on a rapprochement between Presbyterian and Episcopalian is apparent within the Apprentice Boys from the late 1850s. That rapprochement was instigated by fundamentalist and conservative Presbyterians.

Intra-Protestant rapprochement was signalled by the growing practice that both the Cathedral and the Presbyterian meeting house should be used for Siege services. Although the Cathedral had almost always been used for the Siege services, there were occasions when certain clubs had gone to the First Derry church while others attended the Cathedral, often separating after a joint parade. There was certainly disagreement about how such services should be organised. In December 1845 the Apprentice Boys Club No.3 proposed that the Cathedral be used for all anniversary services. Three years later the Shutting of the Gates sermon was preached at the First Presbyterian meeting house. When it was formed in 1854 the Mitchelburne Club, adopted, as its fourth rule, that they should attend service in the Presbyterian Meeting House on August 12th each year and the Cathedral on December 12th. By 1857 a newly formed general committee of the various clubs supported a recommendation that the "rule four" example of the Mitchelburne club should be taken up by all the

clubs.[146]

In 1858, when Henry Cooke's ally and confidante, George Steen, gave the Siege address, he was, in fact, replacing Cooke who had been unable to attend himself. As well as celebrating the virtues of temperance and the need for a religious revival, Steen put his message in terms of the need for unity amongst all Protestants;

> Are there not a great number of persons in our country who are only Protestant in name? Oh! for a band of heroes like the immortal Walker! But a time is coming when all will fight under one banner, and struggle together to obtain the stainless robe of Christ without a rent or trace of superstition. I trust that the hour is not far distant when all denominations of Christians shall unite to carry out that glorious truth of Protestantism; to have the bible, the whole bible and nothing but the bible.[147]

Merging biblical and historical authority, Steen drew a parallel between the victory of Moses over Malek and the example of "Walker and the gallant heroes" to call up the need for this intra-Protestant unity.[148] It was significant that Steen should use Walker to drive this message home. The Walker cult had grown increasingly through the 1830s and 1840s. Several editions of his diary were published, a number of memorials had been erected to him and Walker's Pillar had become a major focal point for the Siege practices, particularly after 1842 when it became the annual site for the burning of Lundy's effigy. That Walker should be celebrated as a model by a Presbyterian minister was far from natural. Walker had, in fact, symbolised for Presbyterians of previous generations the inequities they had suffered in the aftermath of the Siege. His account had been fiercely contested by numerous Presbyterian

authors and his disparaging remarks about the role of Presbyterians had been the subject of expressing Protestant diversity, not unity. But by the late 1850s fundamentalist advocates of All-Protestant Union, who opposed the liberal Presbyterian lobby, regularly invoked the image of Walker as the paragon of Protestant value.

Walker had also emerged as an archetype of an increasingly prominent element within Protestant politics, the politically active popular cleric, the pastor-politician, the warrior-priest.[149] The enthusiastic Protestant leader was one of the most powerful political figures of the late nineteenth century and Walker became the historical and cultural icon legitimating their message of aggressive Protestantism and direct political action. Speaking just a few years after Steen, Hugh Hanna, perhaps the most famous of these pastor-politicians spoke on the subject of the Derry Siege. It was a story, he said that showed the Apprentice Boys had been "loyal to the Crown and the Constitution" and in "scenes consecrated by our fathers blood", they had defended their "high moral virtues" as "united churchmen and presbyterians". The message of the Siege, Hanna wrote, was simple;

> Protestant Union, the more effectually to resist the aggression of the Papacy, was the moral of it.[150]

It was a perfect reflection of what the Siege Myth had come to represent by the 1850s. That was reflected, too, in how the Siege Culture was now organised and practised. Although the local aristocracy had long since ceased to take an active interest in the Siege parades, the Corporation and the local political elite still favoured

it with their patronage. Defence of the Protestant constitution was metamorphosing into the support of the Union and the Siege had become identified with the moral values of mid-Victorian bourgeois society and the imagination of evangelical Protestantism. The Apprentice Boys clubs, not yet the vehicles of mass political mobilisation they were to become, were, nevertheless, increasingly routinised in their activities and consciously promoting intra-Protestant solidarity. The Siege was in every way a Protestant Myth, in an increasingly Catholic city.

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> *exclaimed in a voice of intense fervour, "Now have I done what King James and all his army could not do".*

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> "There was a little city and few men within it, and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city, yet no man remembered that same poor man."

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CHAPTER V

THE LOYAL APPRENTICE BOYS:

CLASS AND PARTY POLITICS

IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Between the 1860s and the opening decades of the twentieth century the organisations, practices and symbols of the Siege culture underwent a series of changes that thoroughly altered their social and political significance. Since the late eighteenth century the Siege Myth had always been implicitly and, at times, explicitly political, but in the latter part of the nineteenth century its importance as an ideological vehicle became far more apparent. The imagery of the Derry Siege was used to mobilise mass Protestant political action. What was equally important was that this no longer applied purely to the city itself. From the 1860s onward the Siege became the most important integrating myth for Protestant politics throughout the North.

The Apprentice Boys became a far more politically aggressive movement. This growing militancy reflected the fact that the Siege Myth became totally identified with the emerging political ideology of Ulster Unionism and left no room for any alternative interpretation. In essence the Siege cycle came to mean the struggle of Unionism and Nationalism for the majority of Derry Protestants so that, by the early twentieth century, the symbols of the Siege Myth encapsulated two dominant ideological elements of Unionism: the creation of a pan-class Protestant alliance, and the imagination of an Imperial identity.

The expansion of the Siege culture from the narrow localism of its earliest manifestations to the more widespread appeal of the latter part of the nineteenth century was part and parcel of the development of Unionism as a political force. From a basically unstructured and solely city-based body in the first half of the nineteenth century the Apprentice Boys movement developed a far more institutionalised and hierarchical structure from the 1860s onward and by 1910 had established a large number of branches throughout the north west and several in other parts of Ulster and Ireland, with a strong concentration in Belfast. The modern movement was effectively created in this period. The cluster of parochial and loosely controlled clubs was replaced by an entity with a coordinating central authority, a structure of regional committees and officers and a well-developed system of parent clubs and branches. Although the central ostensible aim of the movement continued to be the preparation and execution of the Siege parades, the Apprentice Boys became an integral element in the network of Orange and other bodies that provided the organisational foundation of Unionist hegemony in the period 1880-1920.

The parades themselves changed dramatically. The railway reached Derry by the 1850s and brought with it a massive influx of marchers on the Siege anniversaries, particularly from Belfast. During the 1850s Derry successfully established rail links with Omagh (1852), Enniskillen (1854), Belfast (1855) and Dublin (1858), while in the early 1860s rail lines were built into Donegal and throughout the hinterland. By the early twentieth century Derry was a major railway terminus served by four main lines.[1] As early as 1858, works outings and day trips to Derry were being organised to coincide with the Siege anniversaries and this marked a trend that would grow

rapidly in the subsequent decade.[2]

Apart from the logistical changes in the parades (and the number of marchers swelled massively from 1860 onward) such a growth in the size of the parades aggravated tension in a city that, by now, had a significant Catholic majority. The 1870s and 1880s saw violent skirmishes break out during the Siege anniversaries in virtually every year. Violence tended to involve a disproportionate number of non-city dwellers. In addition the widening scope of the parades attracted an increasing number of Orange and Conservative populist leaders from other parts of the country. The Orange conservative MP, William Johnson, and the demagogic Belfast preacher, Hugh Hanna, were the first important political leaders from outside the city to use involvement in the Siege events to garner and manifest political support. Both men made regular appearances at the Siege parades from the early 1860s onward. This established a pattern that was to prove extremely long-lasting and stood in contrast with the pattern of earlier years, when a locally-based personnel had been completely dominant.

Reflecting both this widening geographical focus of the Siege culture and the desire of the Derry leadership of the Apprentice Boys movement to maintain local control of their organisation, most clubs introduced rules that the officers of the parent clubs had to be residents of the city and that the Derry-based parent clubs were to have control over their branches. In line with this approach the more ritualistic ceremony of initiation introduced in the late 1860s (which could only be performed within the city walls) ensured that the movement was unlikely to grow beyond the institutional

scope of the newly established Derry hierarchy.

For those who sought to mould and mobilise Protestant opinion, and who began to patronise the Siege Culture in the late nineteenth century, the Apprentice Boys did not represent a major vehicle of political organisation outside Derry itself. The Orange order, far more widespread and powerful than the Apprentice Boys, was more important in this regard. Rather, the involvement of populist Orange leaders with the Apprentice Boys was stimulated by the symbolic character of the Siege Myth, the opportunity it offered to legitimate a particular social and political stance by claiming to speak for (and through) the inheritance of 1688. The cultural and symbolic emphasis of the Siege Myth made it an increasingly powerful and influential political weapon.

It was as an overtly political weapon that the real change in the nature of the Siege Myth between 1860 and 1920 can be seen. The importance of the Siege Culture to a wider audience and the growth of the Siege parades and the Apprentice Boys movement only emphasised the potential the Siege had as a medium of political and ideological communication. Of course, the Siege Culture had always been influenced by political groups and ideologies, but from around 1860 it became intrinsically identified with Irish Conservatism and, as Conservatism metamorphosised in the 1880s, with Ulster Unionism.

The years between 1860 and 1880 also saw the rise and fall of liberal Presbyterianism in Derry. Although liberal Presbyterianism had a voice within the Siege Culture in

the early 1860s, as early as 1865 it had been all but silenced and, increasingly, the Apprentice Boys emerged as a populist auxiliary to the local Conservative party elite. At times the relationship between the largely working class Apprentice Boys and the merchants and landlords of Derry Conservatism was, itself, somewhat tense, but with the growth of the Home Rule movement in the 1880s both the parades and the Apprentice Boys operated as a mass mobilised street presence for the emerging Unionist movement.

This led, in turn, to a series of violent clashes on an unprecedented scale from the late 1860s to the 1890s. The Siege parades were often the occasion for conflict, with the Apprentice Boys providing the main organised Protestant force in these battles. At such times the rhetorical tone of the Apprentice Boys leadership noticeably hardened, and they extolled, with an emotive fervour, the militaristic example set by their seventeenth century namesakes. The Siege as a model of conflict and a celebration of Protestant martial success was further emphasised in the pseudo-militarism of the rituals and regalia of the Siege parades themselves.

The confrontational militancy of the Siege parades during the late nineteenth century also reflected the growing political involvement of the Protestant working class within the city. Through the Siege culture they could make their presence felt and their attitudes known. The distinctive economic interests of the industrialised north east underpinned the often fragile cross-class alliance of Ulster Unionism, but in order to operate as a cohesive ideological force Unionism also defined itself, and the interests of Protestant workers, in terms of a communal consciousness, through a particular

sense of the past. It was in this regard that the imagery of the "loyal Apprentice Boy" was such an important dimension of populist Unionism in Derry in the period after 1860. The "loyal Apprentice Boy" came to symbolise the ideal of the politically active Protestant worker and to personify the organisation of class relations within the city.

By the 1880s and 1890s, therefore, the Siege parades and the Apprentice Boys had become well-established as populist vehicles for Unionism in Derry. The Siege Myth had also become a way in which Unionism as a political movement could identify itself with the idea of a communal historical tradition. Crucially in this regard the symbols of the Siege cycle became imbued with the imagination of empire, the cornerstone of Ulster Unionist ideology. In the 1780s and 1790s "liberty" had been the definitive (and disputed) political principle of the Siege culture and in the early nineteenth century the "Protestant Constitution" and "All-Protestant Union" were to the fore. For the re-inventors of the myth in the late nineteenth century the Derry Siege came to represent the defence of an outpost of Empire, a bastion of "Anglo-Saxon civility" in a sea of "Celtic barbarism". A volatile mixture of religious and racial exclusivity.

As Unionism took organisational form and ideological shape, the Siege Myth became, in many ways, the most crucial symbol cycle of its imagination. As the nations and states of Europe invented a variety of traditions to organise and define their assumptions of authority, so the formation of Unionist hegemony relied upon the idea of a distinctive Ulster Protestant past to constitute itself.[3] The fusion of the Siege

with the imagery of empire produced an Ulster Protestant collective consciousness that combined the political programme of Unionism, the economic logic of imperialism and the communal identity of the Apprentice Boys' descendants.

"Increasing Numbers and Influence": The Growth of the Parades and the Apprentice Boys, 1860-1870

From the early 1860s, large numbers of Orangemen from outside Derry began to take part in the Siege celebrations. The Derry Standard noted of the Relief parade of 1861,

> the citizens and many from a distance turned out en masse to join in the demonstration... (and that the)...numbers in the procession showed that the Associated Clubs have lately been largely augmented.[4]

Four months later, for the Shutting of the Gates ceremony, the paper commented that "the celebrants numbered more than we have witnessed for many years". Speaking at a meeting on the same day one orator described the "increasing numbers and influence of the Apprentice Boys". Included in the audience were Stewart Blacker, a leading Orangeman from Armagh and William Johnson, of Ballykillbeg, soon to become a populist conservative MP.[5] By the mid-1860s the parades involved anything between 7-10,000 marchers, a considerable percentage of whom travelled into the city specifically for the day. Johnson and several other leading Orangemen were also regular attenders and speakers at the Siege Anniversary evening meetings.[6]

Commenting on the character of the Siege parades, in 1869, John Guy Ferguson

argued that much of the upsurge in numbers was the result of cheaper, swifter transport links and that this had led to a huge growth in the size of the parades:

> for the last two or three years cheap excursion trains have been run along the different lines... There was no street in Derry, hardly that could hold our procession; we could not turn; it assumed far more gigantic proportions than hitherto.[7]

The Report of a Parliamentary Commission, set up to investigate rioting in the city in 1869, suggested that this increase in numbers tended to aggravate tensions already evident in the city over the parades:

> The city of Derry, geographically cut off from the strictly Protestant districts of Ulster, has been for some time past brought into rapid communication with those portions of them in which the Orange organisation is most general....As a matter of private speculation, the railway companies, of late years, have taken to running excursion trains to Derry, on the two historic anniversaries; and this, by causing a large influx of strangers to take part in the proceedings, naturally leads to more angry feeling amongst the great body of Catholics of that city...the great number of persons assembled illustrates the dangerous facility afforded by the railway excursion-trains, for concentrating in Londonderry bodies of partisans from considerable distances.[8]

However, the technological innovation of railway transportation merely facilitated, rather than caused, wider Orange participation in the Siege marches. The more immediate spur to growing outside Orange interest in the Siege parades was the attempt by the state and judiciary to curtail the most nakedly sectarian and belligerent practices linked to the marching season through the Party Emblems Act.

Severe rioting in Belfast in 1857 had alerted the authorities to the threat to order Orange populism could entail, the Party Emblem Act was the result.[9] Rioting

surrounding the Siege parades had periodically broken out through the 1840s and 1850s. In 1848 the banning of a St Patrick's Day parade and the subsequent approval for Apprentice Boys marches led to rioting that summer and in 1849.[10] As the Party Emblems Act passed through Parliament in 1860, the newly installed Church of Ireland bishop, Hugh Tighe, prohibited the flying of the Apprentice Boys flag from the Cathedral steeple and the ringing of the Cathedral bells on the Relief anniversary, for fear that such practices came within the remit of the legislation. However a group of the Apprentice Boys, led by John Hempton and John Guy Ferguson, took the keys of the Cathedral, replaced the flag and rang the bells over a period of two days. When the bishop called in the police to have the Apprentice Boys removed, the head constable refused to take any action.[11]

As a consequence, for the following December parade, two magistrates were sent from Dublin to Derry with a force of 400 police constables, 600 infantry and two troops of cavalry. "The city", the editor of the Londonderry Guardian commented, "seemed to be converted into a camp".[12] The flying of the Cathedral flag was, however, regarded as a less provocative act than the burning of the Lundy effigy from Walker's Pillar and the firing from the city walls (as many as forty times in one day) of the many small cannon paraded by the clubs.[13] The magistrates expressly forbade the firing of these guns and a meeting of the Apprentice Boys agreed, somewhat reluctantly, to suspend this practice.

Yet, despite a huge presence, the police and military failed to intervene when members of the Mitchelburne Club, led again by their president John Hempton, were

followed by a crowd of around a thousand to Walker's Pillar in the middle of the afternoon of December 18th and fired a cannon several times in the direction of the Bogside.[14] No action was taken against any of the participants after these events. In August, 1861, Hempton was once more involved in hoisting a crimson flag on the Cathedral and although charges were brought against him (and seventeen others) under the Party Emblems Act, the case was dismissed. The practice of firing the canons also continued throughout the 1860s.[15] The reluctance of the authorities to act against Orange parades ultimately rendered their legislative proscriptions invalid.

Orangemen placed great emphasis upon their rituals and the right to march. Maintaining the practices of the marching season had become the way in which popular Orangeism asserted its presence. John Hempton told the Apprentice Boys crowd in 1861,

> objections were raised now to one point of the celebrations and again to another...from time to time every little circumstance connected with their anniversaries would have to be struggled over, and would in that way become dearer to them than it had been.[16]

Battles over the character of the Siege parades made them a celebrated cause for Orange activists. As justification for their growing interest such activists emphasised the symbolic importance of the Siege for all Protestants; as William Johnson illustrated in a speech in Derry in 1865,

> There are some people who will tell you and tell me that these Derry commemorations are purely local affairs; that strangers have no business to take part in them and that because they are, they are inoffensive or even meritorious. I admit

> that the celebrations of the Relief and Shutting of the Gates are local, inasmuch as events that took place in Derry have in Derry their perpetual memorial. But I deny most earnestly and emphatically that the great story of the Maiden City should be shut up with in Derry Walls; for Derry was the ark of safety in a desolated land...and the lovers of God's truth and God's people everywhere have a right to join in your voice of thanksgiving.[17]

It was this emphasis upon the struggle over the public demonstration of status, power and identity through the Siege practices that helped stimulate outside interest in the Derry parades. It proved a powerful and lasting influence. It also ensured that the profile of the Siege cycle was raised within the consciousness of Ulster Protestants.

By the early 1870s clubs and societies dedicated to the Siege were being established in many parts of the North. In 1873, for example, there was a Relief parade held in Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone, and one in Lurgan, attended by an estimated 10,000 people, at which an effigy of Lundy was burnt. A meeting was held on the same day in the St Agnes Street Orange Hall, Belfast, where a concert was given by the "Belfast Apprentice Boys Band".[18] In the same year the anniversary of the "Shutting of the Gates" was celebrated in the St Agnes Street Hall by a group calling itself the "Crimson Banner Defenders Club". Around 1,000 people listened to a speech by John Guy Ferguson after which they watched the, clearly popular, pyrotechnic display of burning Lundy. An effigy of Lundy was also burnt in Lisburn on the same day, watched by a crowd of over 2,000.[19]

The Siege parades in the city also saw an ever greater use of music and an ever-expanding number of marching bands. "Party tunes" were a major feature of most

of the parades, reflecting their place within all popular political meetings throughout Ireland.[20] Numerous popular Orange songs were regularly played and sung at the Siege events. In addition, songs were often written for specific Siege anniversaries and a number of songs widely current in Orangeism made particular reference to the Siege and the Siege culture. The most popular of these in the 1860s and 1870s were "The Shutting of the Gates", "Is there a traitor 'Prentice Boy?", "The Crimson Banner" and "No Surrender".[21]

The first Apprentice Boys band was formed in the late 1850s and this was soon followed by several others.[22] They seem to have been mainly flute and drum bands, usually dressed in mock-military uniforms. The Brittania Band, for example, dressed in a "blue uniform which...[was]...very like an artillery dress".[23] While many of those which took part in the parades were Orange bands, a number were specifically aligned to the Apprentice Boys, the Britannia Band being the most prominent of these. This band played a very active role in the more violent political confrontations of the late 1860s. In fact, the activities of the bands were closely linked to the most popular and militant actions of the Siege crowds. The bands often led loose groups of people in small, off-shoot parades and played into the night from the city walls; performances which tended to lead to fights with Catholic crowds.

Flags, bunting and banners were all now very prominent in the marches with crimson firmly established as the prevailing colour. Although there were few, if any, ornately designed club banners at this time, a regular form of dress had been established, with crimson collarettes being worn and club officers exhibiting insignia upon their collars

to show their rank. However, it was in the maintenance, decoration and display of the club cannon that the most lavish attention was paid. These "six-pounder" cannons were mounted on oak carriages and pulled in the processions around the Walls. Most of them were stored in an "armoury", a former coach-house in Society Street which was also regarded as the headquarters of the Apprentice Boys. The uniforms, flags, bands, emblems, cannon and formation of the marches gave the parades a quasi-militaristic air.

As the Siege parades grew, so too did the Apprentice Boys as an organisation. In the early 1850s the first central coordinating body for the various clubs was established under the leadership of a "president", a position held by James W. Gregg (town clerk in the 1860s and 1870s) from the early 1840s for almost a quarter of a century.[24] This was the precursor for a General Committee of the Apprentice Boys set up in November, 1859.[25] The Committee consisted of the president, secretary and treasurer of each club, along with the vice-president of the "senior club", who in turn elected a chairman (the president of the senior club), deputy chairman, secretary and treasurer for the committee itself. This committee assumed the authority to "transact the general business" of the association, oversaw the organisation of the Siege events and issued warrants for the setting up of the various clubs and their branches.[26]

By the early 1860s there were eight Apprentice Boys clubs in existence. Most were well-established and provided the organisational foundation of the movement in the late nineteenth century; the majority of the present-day clubs date their foundation from the 1840s and 1850s.[27] However, in contrast to the hierarchical structure of the

far larger and more powerful Orange Order each club of the Apprentice Boys had little formal relationship to each other and no presence outside the city. The total membership of all the clubs in 1869 was estimated at little more than 500.

The General Committee therefore created a degree of cohesiveness among the clubs by establishing a central decision-making body. This was particularly important as the movement began to expand both beyond the city boundaries and in the extent of its activities. This process of centralisation of the clubs culminated in the creation of the office of Governor, in 1867, a position providing a single figure as the overall leader of the movement. Even the title, adopted from the Siege story, reflected the greater prestige afforded this central authority than that conveyed by the more mundane name of "chairman" that it replaced.[28] The creation of the office also, however, represented the rise of a particular faction within the Apprentice Boys following internal tensions that had arisen in the 1860s over the political direction the movement was taking.

High Tory, No Popery: The Apprentice Boys, Conservatism and Conflict, 1860-1870

To combat the challenge of liberalism in the 1860s the Conservative party in Derry utilised the Apprentice Boys movement as its activist base. This was certainly spurred on by the growing size and importance of the Apprentice Boys and the parades. However, such Conservative control did not occur without a political struggle and the confrontation of two of the Apprentice Boys leading figures of the day personified that

contest. John Hempton and John Guy Ferguson had both been instrumental in creating the modern movement of the Apprentice Boys in the late 1850s. Both were also influential figures within local politics. By the mid-1860s Ferguson had, however, established himself as the dominant force with the Apprentice Boys while Hempton found himself the subject of abuse on the Siege anniversaries. The careers of Ferguson and Hempton illustrate the shifting political orientation of the Apprentice Boys through this period. While the influence of these men hardly created the political dynamic of the movement, their very differing fortunes in relation to the Siege celebrations show how, after 1860, the Siege culture was bound up both with the growth of party political organisation and mass political action within the city.

John Guy Ferguson was the first chairman of the General Committee and the first Governor of the Apprentice Boys, elected in 1867. He was the single most powerful figure within the Apprentice Boys movement in the late nineteenth century and was often referred to as the leader of the "Protestant workingmen" of the city. Ferguson himself was, however, not from a working class background. Like his father, who had designed the Church of Ireland "Free Church" built in 1830, John Guy Ferguson was an architect by profession. His two younger brothers inherited the substantial family building firm, but Ferguson, who had briefly emigrated to America in his youth, had established one of the most lucrative and powerful architectural practices in the city by the 1860s.[29]

Ferguson was responsible for designing many of the most important commercial buildings in the city, including the massive Tillie and Henderson shirt factory,

completed in 1856, and the Welch Magerston factory built in 1872. He was also appointed to the post of Church of Ireland diocesan architect in 1871. In this capacity he designed a new church building in Palace Street in 1872, reworked his father's design of Christ church in 1882, oversaw major repairs to the Cathedral in 1887 and built the Cathedral primary school in 1891. As well as these ecclesiastical projects, Ferguson designed the Y.M.C.A. building at the East wall in 1867 and, most prestigious of all, was architect of the new Guildhall, built at a cost of £20,000 between 1887 and 1890. He was also the designer of the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall, built in Society Street in the early 1870s. Ferguson was, in sum, the most dominant and well-connected local architectural influence in the city until his death in 1901.

Politically Ferguson was also an avowed Tory and a leading organiser for Derry Conservatism. "His activities", as the editor of the Sentinel once wrote, "were not confined to celebration days".[30] He was a very public campaigner for Tory parliamentary candidates, played a major role in establishing the local Conservative committee in the late 1860s and was a leading organiser of the various Unionist bodies founded in the city in the 1880s and 1890s. A speaker at Orange and Conservative meetings in Belfast and Glasgow, as well as in Derry, on numerous occasions, Ferguson was also among the representatives of Derry Unionists at the Ulster Convention of 1892. Within Derry itself, as the populist leader of the Apprentice Boys over several decades, Ferguson personified the political orientation of the association as it became more directly involved in party political activity from the mid-1860s onward.

The only figure who approached Ferguson as an influence on the early Apprentice Boys was John Hempton. Hempton was, if anything, the more powerful of the two in the movement in the late 1850s and early 1860s, as the highly active president of the Mitchelburne Club and a driving force behind the formation of the General Committee. Following his leading role in the confrontations over the Party Emblems Act in 1860 and 1861, as Ferguson himself later commented, "He (Hempton) was the most popular man I ever knew at that time".[31] Hempton was a publisher and bookseller, who owned a shop in the Diamond. In 1861 he published his Siege and History of Londonderry, a substantial work that re-printed several accounts of the Siege and included annals of the city up to the mid-nineteenth century, based on the massive collection of documents Hempton had in his possession.[32] On his death, in 1873, Hempton was variously described in the city press as an "eccentric", "inconsistent" or someone who, once he had, "formed a decided conviction on any subject...threw his entire heart and energy into every cause which he deliberately adopted".[33] All agreed his political career was somewhat "strange".

Originally Hempton was not only prominent within "Apprentice Boyism" but was also "rated as a sound conservative of the good old "crown and constitution" quality", and a man whose "name was known to advantage in the lodges of the Orange Society".[34] He was also however profoundly anti-authoritarian, as was clear from his attitude both to state and church over the Party Emblems affair. When political tensions first emerged within the Apprentice Boys in 1863 Hempton established a breakaway movement, presiding over several small clubs. The Mitchelburne club, of which Hempton remained president, marched separately from the main organisation in the

parades that year. Although this division in the movement proved short-lived, Hempton never re-joined the Apprentice Boys, arguing that, "the society had been diverted from its original to baser purposes and that the change was greater in the society than in his principles".[35]

To be exact Hempton broke with the Apprentice Boys because he felt that it was becoming little more than a popular organisational base for the Conservative party in the city. The Derry Journal argued,

> when he discovered that society [the Apprentice Boys] was about to turn itself into the mere political machine for the House of Hamilton, the man's natural independence of mind made him shrink from being bound hand and foot...and he joined the liberal party as a prominent supporter of Mr. Greer.[36]

The Hamilton in question was Lord Claud Hamilton, son of the 1st Duke of Abercorn, the largest landlord in the north west. The Hamilton family owned over 63,000 acres in Tyrone and Donegal alone. The Hamiltons were also the most politically powerful landed family in Ulster Conservative circles. Five of Abercorn's sons sat as Tory MPs for either Irish or English seats and they were instrumental in forging the institutional framework of Ulster Unionism.[37]

"Mr Greer" was Samuel McCurdy Greer, one of the main representatives of liberal Presbyterianism in Derry politics who stood as a liberal for the county seat on a number of occasions through the 1850s. Greer was both anti-landlord and anti-Episcopalian and one of his election handbills of 1859, which conjured up the images of the radicalism of the 1790s, reveals the way a sense of the past was deeply contested in these political struggles:

> Until the spirit of ancient freedom revisits the sons of this degenerate race, and points to the graves of their fathers, Presbyterians and Catholics, (many of them sleep side by side in the same grave-yard) who bled and died for their civil and religious liberties.[38]

Not only did Hempton become a supporter of Greer and the Liberal party, but, by the late 1860s, he was secretary of the local Liberal society and one of its most energetic activists. In the general election contest for the Derry seat in 1868, Lord Hamilton was removed after his initial victory at the polls was contested in the courts; the orchestrator of that legal battle was John Hempton.[39] Soon after Hempton became a Liberal member to the Corporation, a position he held until his death in 1873, although it seems his enthusiasm for local liberalism was beginning to wain because, "he did not like the manner in which the city and county patronage was dispensed by the Government".[40]

The significance of Hempton's career in relation to the Siege Myth is not found merely in his personal political odyssey, but in his estrangement from the Apprentice Boys in the mid-1860s, despite his influence within the movement. Hempton himself suggested that it was his growing support for the liberal party that explained this process, "after voting for Greer they (the Apprentice Boys) would not work with me".[41] Although by far the most prominent defector from the Apprentice Boys, Hempton was not alone as a supporter of the Liberal party who found his former ties with the Siege parades severed by the late 1860s.

Two prominent members of the local Presbyterian ecclesiastical establishment, Prof.

Richard Smyth of Magee College and Rev. William McClure, preached Siege sermons in the late 1850s and early 1860s.[42] Neither had any involvement in the Siege events from the mid-1860s onward. At the same time both supported the shift in liberal Presbyterianism within the city from a solely social and evangelical interest to more pronounced political involvement.[43] McClure was personally thanked for his support in the victory speech of the newly elected liberal MP, Richard Dowse, in 1868, while Smyth went on to sit as liberal MP for county Derry between 1874-78. The Conservative candidate unseated in 1868, Lord Hamilton, criticised Presbyterian ministers for the part they had played in his defeat.[44]

Derry Catholics had regarded the Siege parades as overtly sectarian for decades, but liberal middle class Derry Protestants only came to the same conclusion in the late 1860s. The Derry Standard announced its opposition to the parades in December, 1865, and in 1869 James McKnight described the speeches given at the marches as being in the "very coarsest terms of the day...very strong, high Tory...and No Popery speeches". McKnight still regarded the Siege itself as having helped to secure "civil, political and religious liberty", but he argued that the parades were "kept up for the mere sake of rivalry" and that particular aspects of them were designed simply to maintain a "constant feud":

> It has always appeared to me that selecting that portion of the Wall, or any portion of the Wall permanently, that overlooks what we may really call the Roman Catholic section outside the city wall, and firing in practical triumph over the heads and houses of these people, I say I can conceive of nothing more intensely calculated to aggravate than that practice.[45]

William Tillie, one of the most substantial industrialists in the city and a leading

figure within Derry Presbyterian Liberalism, argued, in 1869, that the "Presbyterian leading men" felt that all parades in the city should be suppressed, while his fellow-liberal William Brown, a local doctor, and a member of the Church of Ireland, suggested "political and party irritation has become more developed in Derry owing to these periodic celebrations".[46]

In similar vein William McCarter, a merchant, director of a railway company, owner of a tannery within the city and for many years an alderman on the Corporation, admitted that up until the mid-1860s he had contributed to the expenses of the Siege celebrations but,

> all those demonstrations have assumed a very strong political character...indeed I think there is a necessity for discontinuing all the celebrations from the feeling which has unfortunately arisen in Derry.

He added that, while the desire for the Siege parades to be terminated was something he had heard expressed by Presbyterians, "I never heard Episcopalian Protestants express a desire to have them discontinued".[47]

Undoubtedly the adoption by the Liberal party of the policy to disestablish the Church of Ireland had a profound influence on such divisions within the Derry Protestant community. That policy was very much welcomed by sections of Presbyterian opinion and vehemently opposed by Anglican Tories. The campaign to oppose Disestablishment also provided a focus for popular Toryism in Derry in 1868-69. In turn, this fed into the polarisation of politics in the city and the growing identification of the Apprentice Boys with Conservatism.

However, the reason Derry Protestant liberals had become so opposed to the Siege parades and to the Apprentice Boys, by the end of the 1860s, was not simply because both were now solely identified with the Conservative party, but also because during 1868 and 1869 the parades had been the occasion of, and the Apprentice Boys deeply involved in, an unprecedented upsurge in violent communal and political confrontations. After the election of Hamilton in 1865 the Apprentice Boys regularly demonstrated in support of local Conservatism, on almost any pretext. During the heightened political tension at the end of the 1860s the leadership became far more militant and aggressive and the Apprentice Boys emerged as the main focus of Protestant working class political mobilisation within the city. The growing confrontation surrounding the parades at first saw a regular incidence of low-level and relatively limited violence. A not untypical example of such small-scale skirmishes occurred in 1866 when a crowd from the Bogside clashed with a number of the Siege marchers. After the Apprentice Boys had completed their cannonade from the walls, a small Catholic crowd tried to capture one of Murray Club banners and attacked those following one of their larger guns.[48]

Events became far more serious in 1868. The immediate cause of this was the tension surrounding the general election, but several factors led to a growing militancy amongst the Protestant working class membership of the Apprentice Boys in the late 1860s. A confrontation between Orangemen and Catholics at Muff Glen, Co. Donegal, in mid-1867, heightened tension within the city, while the success of William Johnson in mobilising popular Orangeism in Belfast encouraged the Derry Apprentice Boys to take a more aggressive stance than their local Conservative

leadership.[49] It was at this point that the Apprentice Boys, under the control of Ferguson, were re-organising themselves while, at the same time, spearheading a local campaign against Church disestablishment. Tensions came to a head after the announcement of the election campaign and when the Liberal candidate called a public meeting to be held in the Corporation Hall on July 20th, 1868.[50] A force of armed Apprentice Boys, "young working men, about forty or fifty", marched in procession from their rooms in Society Street and attacked the Corporation Hall in an attempt to prevent the meeting. They were, however, forcefully repelled by "fifty unarmed men of the working class", mostly Catholic dockers.[51]

While neither the August or December parades were accompanied by any serious violence, on polling day, November 20th, Ferguson gathered a force of 400-500 of Hamilton "supporters of the working class" in Bishop street; a riot broke out and the Apprentice Boys "Gun Room" was subsequently attacked.[52] There were several marches, counter-marches and confrontations during the following months. Members of the Apprentice Boys were invariably involved and their Gun Room was the site of clashes on several occasions. The possession of arms by various groups within the city was also becoming increasingly apparent.[53] On April 28th, 1869, a member of the royal family visited Derry, and demonstrations were held both by a Catholic crowd, led by the "Hibernia Band", and a Protestant crowd who watched the Apprentice Boys fire their guns from the city walls and followed them in procession through the town as the Britannia Band played "Derry Walls Away" and "Protestant Boys". Rioting broke out in the evening, with stone-throwing between a force of "Bogsiders" and a large number of "Apprentice Boys", who occupied a position on

the walls. This, in turn, led to a gun battle in which three people were shot and killed after the police opened fire on crowds in the Diamond; one Presbyterian, one Episcopalian and one Catholic.[54]

The refusal of the authorities to suppress Orange and Apprentice Boys marches following these events was deeply resented by the local Catholic community. There was also a sense that the police and the courts dealt less than fairly with the Catholics after clashes. As one Catholic leader put it:

> They [Catholics] never see justice done in the scrimmages raised by the Apprentice Boys...generally they see Apprentice boys sent out clear while the others are imprisoned.[55]

There was a general belief among the Catholic population that, as the doctor of the city asylum alleged, "the city police, as a body, are known to have connections and relatives among the Apprentice Boys and to take extreme views in politics".[56] As a result Catholics organised and armed themselves in order to oppose the parades. In August, 1869, a "Catholic Workingmens Defence Association" was formed and an estimated force of 5,000 was gathered together to take part in a counter-demonstration on August 12th in an attempt to prevent the Apprentice Boys marching.

A "Londonderry Protestant Workingmens Defence Association" had already been formed, in 1868.[57] Even the leadership of the Apprentice Boys admitted that many of their members owned guns privately and there were at least two Protestant gun clubs in the city; one of these gun clubs, the "Maiden City Rifle Club", had a membership, "the greater portion" of which were "Apprentice Boys".[58] There were

also suggestions that the Apprentice Boys had armed themselves en masse through 1868-69, though their officers consistently denied that this was the case.

In 1870 rioting and clashes continued to accompany the Apprentice Boys parades, which were allowed to proceed despite a recommendation to the contrary from the Riot Inquiry which issued its report early that year. Catholic counter-demonstrations maintained pressure upon the authorities to take action against the parades in late 1870 and 1871 and confrontations occurred between the police and the Apprentice Boys as the more overtly antagonistic practices associated with the parades again came under scrutiny. At the December parade of 1870 attempts to prevent the burning of the Lundy effigy from Walker's Pillar resulted in the Apprentice Boys occupying the Corporation Hall and hanging the flaming figure from a window, with the Magistrates proclamation banning the action pinned to its breast.[59] The following August William Johnson was among those who defied a ban issued to prevent the Relief procession. Despite a brief confrontation with a force of several hundred police this march was allowed to proceed to a meeting in the Cathedral.[60]

While in the mid-1870s a relative calm descended over the parades, this period of sustained conflict over the political implications of the Siege Culture had taken its toll on the relationship between the rank and file of the Apprentice Boys and the elite Conservative patrons of the movement. To some extent, the militancy of the movement during 1868-69 had led many of the upper class leaders of the local Conservative party to distance themselves from the actions of the Apprentice Boys and this contributed to the disarray that temporarily paralysed the local Tory party. Only

with the demise of the fragile alliances that had boosted Liberalism within the city during the previous decade did Conservatism reassert itself as the dominant local political force after 1872.

This period of tension over the parades seems also to have resulted in a split within the Apprentice Boys movement itself. Although he continued to be the most powerful force within the organisation, Ferguson was given the title of Governor only up to 1870. Between 1871 and 1874 a Philip Shannon was named as "President of the Apprentice Boys Clubs", while in the same period William Hanna was recorded in the minutes of the General Committee as "President of the Associated Clubs" and separate parades were organised until 1875.[61]

By the early 1870s the parades were thoroughly identified with an anti-Catholic and anti-Liberal form of Protestant politics. Protestants who opposed this militant populism, and particularly those who supported the Liberal party, found themselves forced to reject the culture of the Siege as blatantly conservative and sectarian. Some, in turn, were subject to the antagonism of the working class supporters of the parades and, of course, the Siege narrative provided a way in which such supposed "betrayal" could be understood. John Hempton noted that during the December 18 parade in 1868,

> the procession came past my door publicly in daylight, groaning, the procession with the cannons and flags and music...[and that after the Apprentice Boy meetings...the mob...generally passed the door [of his shop in the Diamond] and called in names to me...[62]

Following the Relief parade of 1868, "the procession, when coming off the

walls...calling at my house, calling out "Lundy" as they did on former occasions". After a demonstration against Church Disestablishment, in June, 1869, Hempton was attacked, called a "bloody Fenian" and told "you were a brave man once, and I think a disgrace of you now...[you have] turned nothing but a Lundy".[63]

Defending the Union, Keeping Control: Unionism and Protestant Working Class Mobilisation, 1870-1890

Party political divisions shaped the nature of the Apprentice Boys but they did so in relation to the emergence of mass political mobilisation stimulated by the democratisation of politics. This in turn reflected the growing importance of the working class in formal political activity. The Apprentice Boys movement became the main organisation for Protestant working class political mobilisation in late nineteenth century Derry. As such it provided a forum for the construction of the cross class alliance that was a defining characteristic of Ulster Unionism.

The cross class Protestant alliance became even more important in the early 1880s, when the growth of the Home Rule movement resulted in the consolidation of Conservative Protestant politics around the issue of the Union. In Derry substantial rioting was again the result and this time upper class and bourgeois support of the Apprentice Boys was even more in evidence than before. Foreshadowing the development of the Orange Order as a primary mechanism of opposing the Home Rule Bill of 1886, the Apprentice Boys became the means to forge a variety social forces and interests in Derry into the active ideology of Ulster Unionism.

Cross-class links underwrote the development of the Apprentice Boys. While John Hempton was being denounced as an arch-traitor John Guy Ferguson was instigating a project designed to raise the political and public profile of the Apprentice Boys within the city. In 1867 the General Committee resolved to ask "a few Gentleman of known influence to permit their names be placed on a Committee", in order to raise the funds for an Apprentice Boys Hall designed "for Protestant Meetings and Commemorative purposes".[64] In 1869 the organisation purchased the site of "Foys factory" in Society street and between 1873 and 1877 the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall, designed by Ferguson himself, was constructed at a cost of around £3,250, raised through public subscription.

The Committee included, amongst others, almost all the Conservative members of the Derry Corporation, leading Orange MPs William Johnson and Col. Stuart Knox, and was headed by Lord Claud Hamilton and Lord Garvagh. The list encompassed both ultra-Protestant political activists from various parts of Ulster and a large part of local Conservative business and landed interests. It also reflected the extent of upper class patronage the movement received. Significantly, however, most of these patrons were little involved in the movement itself and (with the notable exception of Johnson), they were certainly nowhere to be found during the physical battles that surrounded the parades in the late 1860s and early 1870s. In part, their absence reflected a certain antipathy toward the militancy of the Apprentice Boys during this period. The Church of Ireland bishop of Derry, delivering the Relief sermon in 1873, voiced the view of many in the establishment that such sectarian militancy was counter-productive to "good order", when he called upon the Apprentice Boys to

"remember where they found a reception where their banners were allowed to rest, where they have been welcomed, year after year", and that they should recognise, "the spirit which we should cherish toward those without... tolerance for individuals...Intolerance of evil principles".[65]

The distance of patrons from the actions of the Apprentice Boys was also however indicative of the social make-up of the organisation. While merchants and landlords of the area were willing to give a degree of public support to the Apprentice Boys, its office holders tended to be either professionals or small businessmen, with the greater and most active part of the membership coming from the working class. This social division between the patrons and the membership was reflected in the distinction Ferguson made, in his evidence to the 1869 inquiry, between what he described as the "active members" and the "honourary members". The former he numbered at around 300, and all "residents of the city", while the latter included, "some people of very high social position".[66] The secretary of one of the clubs, describing himself as a "merchant tailors assistant", contended that the "acting members" were "mostly all tradesmen", while another member of the association, Fitzgibbon Louch, an active Orangeman in the city and, like Ferguson, an "architect and civil engineer", argued that the Apprentice Boys were, "all respectable tradesmen in the town, and there is a large number of honourary members, the first noblemen in the land".[67]

While these descriptions from members of the association need to treated with a degree of scepticism (the organisation and, in particular, Ferguson himself, were being accused of instigating riots in 1869 and they were therefore at pains to insist

upon their "respectability"), it seems clear that the actual membership constituted only a portion of the crowds who were involved in the Siege parades and in the violence that accompanied them, though they took a leading part in street clashes. The sheer size of the parades in comparison to the numbers enroled in the Apprentice Boys clubs would bear out the first point, while the organisation, its band and its premises were often found at the heart of the actions of the Protestant crowd. Similarly those involved in the disturbances were generally referred to as "labouring men" or members of the "working class". John Hempton argued that very few of the Apprentice Boys lived inside the walls, implying that they were mostly residents of the Fountain area and that they were of, "the working classes, very few of the working classes live inside".[68]

The movement in fact seems to have had a similar social profile to that of the local Conservative association. The Conservative election committee of 1868 was, not surprisingly, numerically dominated by merchants and professionals with a strong landed presence and a minimal number of "artisans". At the same time the Conservative voters included a large proportion of both shopkeepers and artisans.

Table 5.1
Occupations of Members of Conservative Election Committee and Conservative Voters, Derry City, 1868.[69]

	Committee	Voters
Gentlemen	16.2	3.3
Professionals	25.7	13.6
Merchants	37.8	26.4
Shopkeepers	16.2	19.2
Drink Interests	-	3.3
Artisans	4.1	22.6
Others	-	11.6

The number of working class office holders in the Apprentice Boys is extremely difficult to quantify. There is some evidence that the membership of the various clubs differed along class lines. What is clear is that the honourary membership was overwhelmingly upper class, with middle class elements dominating the active leadership and the majority of their followers having either lower middle class, or working class, occupations.

Table 5.2
Denomination of members of the Conservative Committee and Conservative Voters in Derry City, 1868.[70]

	Committee	Voters
Episcopalians	62.5	45.7
Presbyterians	30.7	43.4
Dissenters etc.	6.6	7.0
Catholics	-	3.9

It is worth noting, too, that even at its height the extent of popular Presbyterian support for liberalism in the city was limited. While again, Episcopalians were predominant within the local Conservative Committee, as they were in the upper ranks of the Apprentice Boys, Presbyterian voters were proportionately almost as well-represented amongst Conservative voters.

Though Presbyterians far out-numbered Episcopalians as Liberal voters in 1868 (on the eve of Church Disestablishment), more Presbyterians voted for Hamilton than for Dowse and Catholics were by far the mainstay of local Liberal support. The rise of the Home Rule party, which first put up a candidate for the Derry seat in 1872, was regarded by many as the main cause of the demise of liberal Presbyterianism within the city, but it is significant that it had a narrow enough hold upon the Derry non-

Episcopalian Protestant voters before then. There was to be a steady drift of Presbyterian voters toward the Tories through the mid-1870s.

Table 5.3
Number of Voters by Denomination in Derry City, 1868.[71]

	Liberal	Conservative
Episcopalians	13	275
Presbyterians	163	259
Dissenters etc.	27	43
Catholics	501	22

While again it was in the interests of the Apprentice Boys leadership to exaggerate the extent of Presbyterian involvement in their movement, one office holder claimed that "about three-fourths of them (Apprentice Boys) are connected with the Presbyterians", and Ferguson asserted that the majority of Presbyterians were in favour of the parades.[72] Certainly it seems that, while the organisation was led by an Episcopalian elite, it found support among ordinary Protestants, at least a large proportion of whom were non-Anglican. A conservative Presbyterian minister, speaking in December, 1873, shortly after the laying of the Memorial Hall's foundation stone, called to mind for the assembled Apprentice Boys an earlier example of Protestant union:

> Though there are some Presbyterians who would not like to see this prosperity (of the Apprentice Boys) yet there are some of them who rejoice when you rejoice. We remember the days when we all combined to struggle against error. We all remember the time when the great man Dr. Cooke drove Arianism far from us.[73]

While the ceremony of the founding of the Hall was attended by a number of prominent members of the Corporation, the Derry Journal noted that the processionists

were neither as numerous or possessed the "respectability" of former parades. The identification of the Siege culture with conservatism was, however, beyond doubt. The ever-present William Johnson, "the essence of Orangeism, the Goliath of the Brethren, the very personification of Ulster Tory Protestantism", proposed to the Apprentice Boys:

> We are conservatives all of us; and we are conservatives because we are Protestants, and whenever we cease to be conservatives, we forget the duty we owe as Protestants to our country.[74]

Conservative businessmen and landlords offered symbolic patronage to the Apprentice Boys, but were conspicuous by their absence from parades, political demonstrations and riots, in the late 1860s and early 1870s. This absence stands in sharp contrast to the events of the early 1880s. Foreshadowing the ever closer alliance cemented through the Orange order from 1885 onward between the Protestant working class and the landed and mercantile interests that dominated Ulster Conservatism, elements of the Derry Protestant elite gave their wholehearted and visible support to the Apprentice Boys during a period of particular political tension in 1883, and continued to do so consistently thereafter. This marked a crucial point in the consolidation of Conservative hegemony in the city, built around opposition to Home Rule and, therefore, definitively "Unionist". Conservative hegemony was also espoused through the Siege Culture which, by the late 1880s and 1890s, was publicly sanctioned by the Corporation and had been subsumed into their prevailing and dominant ideological perspective.

The immediate spark for the Derry Riots of 1883, like the Corporation riot of 1868, were plans for a political meeting to be held in the Town Hall which the Apprentice Boys sought to physically prevent. This occurred against a backdrop of mounting political tension in the city occasioned, first, by the Land War and, subsequently, by the growing demand for Home Rule. A concerted campaign, the "Invasion of Ulster", was launched by the National League, in mid-1883, to expand their support in the North.[75] Prominent Land League and Home Rule activists went on speaking tours that took them to various parts of Ulster. On August 15th Michael Davitt spoke to a political meeting in Draperstown, Co. Derry, and the following day he appeared in Donegal Town, where violent clashes ensued after local Orangemen organised a counter-demonstration.[76] Through the second half of the year the Orange Order mounted an aggressive campaign of counter-marches in opposition to such Nationalist political meetings.

Traditionally it was less the Orange Order than the Apprentice Boys who were responsible for organising marches and parades in Derry, though the membership of these groups was inevitably overlapping. In fact, there was little or no celebration of the "Twelfth of July" in the city and it had become a well-established custom for Derry Orangemen to travel by train and march in other parts of the North on that day. For the Boyne anniversary, in 1883, approximately 1,000 members of the Order were led in procession (inevitably) by John Guy Ferguson from the Memorial Hall, which was shared by a number of the city Orange lodges, to the train station, where they left for a parade in Lambeg. Significantly, most were wearing "Crimson sashes".[77] However, while the most obvious of ritualistic events in the Orange calendar was a

limited affair as far as Derry was concerned, and while the city had never been one of the foremost centres of the Order, Orangeism did have an important presence. For Derry, Orangeism was publicly displayed through the Siege culture. Orangeism and Apprentice Boyism were organised separately but in terms of their personnel, premises and practices, they were largely indistinguishable.

Political tension grew in Derry in the summer of 1883, and it was again the August, rather than July "Twelfth", which was the occasion of clashes. The parades were, by now, marked by a massive influx of Orangemen from outside the city and by the rituals and paraphernalia which elsewhere were identified with Orange culture. Orange arches, employing the Siege as their theme, were by now regularly constructed in working class Protestant areas:

> In Fountain Street and Fountain Place numerous artistic arches, decorated with appropriate mottos and emblems suggestive of the Siege spanned its roadway, while on several houses were hoisted Crimson flags.[78]

Seven bands took part in the Relief parade, including three Derry bands; the "Britannia", "Maiden City" and "No Surrender", along with (what were clearly Orange) bands drawn from other parts of Ulster, the "Portadown Brass Band", the "Hamilton", "Campsie" and "Churchill".[79] At least "forty stands of colours" were also carried.[80] Large contingents of marchers attended from Belfast, Portadown and Lisburn, those "strongholds of Protestantism" as Ferguson called them, and many more from Strabane, Ballygawley and "black Donegal".[81]

A number of leading Orange spokespersons were present, including the Rev. Richard

Kane, who had gained some notoriety by advocating the shooting of land leaguers and who had already made efforts to establish an Orange militia. Kane was also, as he informed the Apprentice Boys, a militant supporter of independent Orange action by the Protestant working class:

> The members of parliament and the gentry had deserted them, but the clergy clung to them...They [Protestants] would have to organise an independent party and send members to parliament who would be Protestants first and conservatives afterwards.[82]

While supporting Kane's desire that political leaders should preserve the interests of Protestant workers, John Ferguson was quick to add that the local Conservative party did just that through its patronage of the Apprentice Boys:

> He [Ferguson] endorsed every word that had been said as to the way they had been served by time-serving politicians, but assured all present that the member for the city was not representative of any clique, but of the Protestant Working men of the city. Charles E. Lewis was the contributor of the munificent sum of £1,000 toward the building of the Memorial Hall.

Most of the speeches carried on in much the same vein, voicing a belligerent and often overtly sectarian populist opposition to the National League, and calling for direct action in at times highly lurid, violent and provocative language. Rev. Thomas Fullerton from Monaghan called for the Government to stop giving "bread" to "priests and the Romish party" while "thousands of Protestant children were starving", arguing that while the "false and treacherous Government" was "pampering the rebel race", "the Bogside party loom around them [Protestants] and the Papists hounds are

coming". Kane's speech, in particular, was regarded as being in large part responsible for the violence and rioting that accompanied the days events.[83]

As the march proceeded, Catholic crowds gathered in Carlisle Road to protest against the parade and were confronted by both police and Protestant marchers, with a large contingent of Protestants amassing in Ferryquay Street and Bridge Street.[84] Localised fighting and outbreaks of rioting continued on into the night, particularly in and around Bishop Street, which lay between the main Catholic and Protestant working class areas and which, one observer said, was "becoming a hot place".[85] At least fifteen people were charged with assault after the events of the day, most (if not all) of whom were Catholic.[86]

A description of one such confrontation may help to illustrate the as yet generally small-scale and disorganised nature of this rioting.[87] A crowd of "Apprentice Boys" was drinking in Neely's Pub in Bishop Street on the evening of August 12th, including both "local men" and a larger number of a "Belfast party". Shortly after they were fighting in Bishop Street with an "opposite party" of "Bogsiders". The fighting escalated until both groups numbered several dozen and a gunbattle had begun, resulting in one of the Apprentice Boys being shot in the arm and a Catholic resident of Bishop Street being arrested and charged with the offence. Word of the confrontation and the shooting quickly spread and led to further clashes. As a postscript it is worth noting that, when he was referred to trial, the Catholic accused of the shooting found himself confronted by at least two magistrates who were liable to be less than sympathetic to his case; one was Robert McVicker, who had laid the

foundation stone of the Memorial Hall in 1873, and the other, Alderman Henry Darcus, was Governor of the Apprentice Boys from 1876 to 1879.

Tension and communal rioting continued throughout the next few months, never amounting to a state of wholesale violence, but never, at the same time, completely disappearing. These battles were almost entirely restricted to certain areas of the city, the "shatter zones" where Catholic and Protestant working class areas met. Stone-throwing fights occurred regularly throughout September 1883, and as one magistrate noted, these took place around the Fountain area and the newly developed, mainly Catholic, streets which were appearing around it; "Bishop St. is becoming a troublesome place...The Foyle Road is also becoming a favourite place for rowdyism".[88]

Against this background of mounting communal tension, local Unionists arranged for a visit to Derry of the leader of the Conservative party, Sir Stafford Northcote on October 9th. Northcote arrived in Ulster at the beginning of the month and had originally intended to go only to Belfast, where he opened the building for a new "Constitutional Club". In what was a carefully calculated move to mobilise popular political support to counter the "Invasion of Ulster", a number of meetings were hastily arranged in several other towns and cities.[89] Although the Conservative business and landed elite of Derry and the north west turned out in force to welcome Northcote, more popular elements were celebrated by the Sentinel for having been instrumental in organising the affair:

> In justice to the Protestant working men of Derry we must say, as usual, that they

> were in the foreground of the outdoor and indoor proceedings. They took the initiative in inducing Sir Stafford to visit Derry and the position they occupied was willingly conceded to them by Sir William Miller and the Constitutionalists of our city by granting them precedence in the presentation of the address which was so well and emphatically read by Mr J.G. Ferguson, president of the Apprentice Boys.[90]

The "Protestant working men of Derry", as those identified with the Apprentice Boys were now invariably described, assembled at Walkers Pillar and then marched through the town down to the train station where Northcote, accompanied by the Duke of Abercorn and three of his sons, were greeted by members of the Corporation. After a procession to the Bishops palace in Bishop's St., where Ferguson was introduced to Northcote in front of a large crowd, a public meeting was held in the Guildhall, at which Ferguson, as the leader of the "deputation of working men", read out their address. This began,

> We the Protestant Conservative working men of Derry most heartily bid you welcome to our loyal and renowned city, behind whose walls in the stormy time, the Colonists of Ulster found refuge and a bulwark which the *enemies of Ireland* could never force.[91]

The meeting continued in much the same vein, with exhortations of the benefits the Union provided mixed with calls to remember "the contest so bravely carried on by our ancestors" and that the need might arise for more than talk. Lord Claud Hamilton, the former MP for the city, told the crowd to show that they had,

> a determination that, under no circumstances whatever, shall the Union between this country and Great Britain ever be severed...the people of Ulster are prepared to go to any straits, aye, even to shed their blood, for the maintenance of the Union.[92]

The Conservative party, Hamilton asserted, was the only party which would uphold the constitution, a struggle, he said, he could sum up in two simple phrases,"No Home Rule, No Surrender".

While the Conservative leadership insisted that they spoke of fighting Home Rulers only in a metaphorical sense, they were sending out signals preparing the way for far more direct action. Even Northcote, who was highly conscious of the impact his speech would have to an English audience, joked that when he told Derry Protestants to "keep their powder dry", he did not mean,

> literally with regard to your powder, for I am told that if I did I would expose myself to be brought up under the Crimes Act. (Loud cheers.) I say you must keep yourself ready, your oratory, your eloquence, your zeal in fighting your battle, when the moment for action comes, as come it will.[93]

That "moment" was apparently not long away. In the middle of October the local Nationalist party announced plans for Charles Dawson, the Lord Mayor of Dublin and a leading Home Rule figure, to visit Derry on November 1st. A procession was to meet Dawson at the train station, as had been done by the Conservatives for Northcote less than a month before, and would proceed to the Corporation Hall where a meeting was to be held under the auspices the "Catholic Working Mens Institute".[94] In reaction to this announcement handbills were distributed through the city calling upon the "Men of Derry" to oppose Dawson who, the notices declared, was an "enemy" coming "within your walls". The "Loyalists of Derry" were called upon to "Remember your watchword, No Surrender" and to meet at Walker's Pillar two hours before Dawson's arrival when the "Apprentice Boys" would be "addressed by

influential friends".[95] Claud Hamilton left no-one in any doubt as to how this situation should be understood in a letter he had published in the Sentinel, on the morning of November 1st:

> Derry will have her opportunity. Let her loyalists of all classes and all creeds demonstrate by their numbers their strength and their determination that the Maiden City abhors the principles of the National League.[96]

The meeting was attended by several hundred "working men" along with "persons of influence and superior station". The latter briefly disappeared while up to 500 Apprentice Boys wearing crimson scarves, following their bands, carrying their Club flags and led by Ferguson, marched from the Royal Bastion down into Bishop Street. According to the subsequent Riot Commission Report,

> as they approached the Diamond they quickened their pace to what was described as a run and then rushed into the Corporation hall...the Assembly Room [where the Nationalist Meeting was to held] was in the undisputed occupation of the Apprentice Boys.[97]

The Apprentice Boys encountered no opposition in their invasion of the hall, despite the fact that several hundred extra policemen and a detachment of troops had ben drafted into the city for the day and a meeting of the Corporation was still in progress. In fact, soon afterwards the police were drawn up in a line across-the corner of Bishop Street and Butcher Street to direct the Nationalist procession away from the Corporation hall through Butchers Gate and down into the Bogside.

When the Nationalist march arrived in the Diamond they were fired upon from within the Corporation Hall and, in the ensuing riot, two Catholics were killed. The police

forced the Nationalists into the Bogside while the Apprentice Boys only relinquished possession of the Hall to the military after they were given assurances that no nationalist meeting would be permitted. By nightfall there was substantial rioting in various parts of the city, though the bulk of the fighting was restricted to the area around Bishops Gate. Riots continued for days afterwards, with Catholic crowds gathering in the Long Tower area and Protestants congregating in Fountain Street.

In addition, a wave of strikes gave vent to Catholic anger at the Apprentice Boys armed occupation. In particular, Tillies shirt factory was paralysed for eight days when Catholic women workers went on strike to demand to resignation of William Miller, a Conservative councillor and the official doctor to the factory, who had spoken to the Apprentice Boys during their occupation of the Corporation Hall. These women were attacked and baton charged by the police when they demonstrated outside the factory and,

> At night a body of the girls marched through the city singing "God Save Ireland". When they reached Bishop Gate there was much tumult and bottles and stones were thrown.[98]

They continued to march every day for the next week.

So alienated were Catholics after the riots and the role the authorities played during them that they refused to take part in the official inquiry set up in December to investigate the riot in December. They maintained that the remit of the Riot Commission was too narrow, that an "insolent minority" were in control of local civic and judicial power, and that the presence of many of those who had taken part in the

Apprentice Boys storming of the Hall would result in "the conversion of what should be a criminal investigation into a commission of excuse".[99] For Catholics responsibility for the riot lay not only in the immediate events that led to November 1st but in the nature of Derry's political power structure; symbolised by the Siege Culture and the organisation which celebrated it. They also felt, as Dawson himself sarcastically commented in a speech he gave in the Bogside on the evening of November 1st, that something other than the plight of the ordinary Protestant lay behind the character of the Siege Myth and the motives of its leading proponents:

> A Mr John Guy Ferguson, "a representative of the Protestant working men of Derry", he has a very aristocratic cluster of names for a working man; I fear he is but an honourary member of that body, Mr John Guy Ferguson clearly represents the material interests of English power than those of the honest farmers or the toiling working men of this city.[100]

Once again the Apprentice Boys, acting as a vanguard of local Conservatism, had been at the centre of a major riot. What differentiated this from the violent demonstrations of the 1860s and 1870s was that the certain sections of the Conservative elite gave active and direct support to what was an illegal occupation of the Corporation Hall orchestrated and organised by the Apprentice Boys. Having taken over the hall the Apprentice Boys held a meeting at which speeches were given by several leading Orangemen from the city and elsewhere, a number of Conservative town councillors, two Church of Ireland clerics who had become prominent in the Siege parades and, most significant of all, Lord Ernest Hamilton.

Hamilton, who became MP for North Tyrone in 1885, was present as "the

representative of my family", a family which was the most powerful and prestigious Conservative force within western Ulster.[101] The various members of the Hamilton family were instrumental in forging the political alliances that created the hegemonic hold and institutional structure of Ulster Unionism through the 1880s and 1890s so that the presence of one of their number represented a sanction of the actions of the Apprentice Boys from the highest ranks of the Ulster establishment.[102] By the early twentieth century Ernest Hamilton would become one of the most vociferous leaders of Ulster Unionism and an outspoken proponent of a distinctive Ulster Protestant identity.[103]

The imagery of besiegement permeated the speeches and loyalist reports of the Apprentice Boys demonstration. Hamilton argued that Protestants had to fight the attempt by the Nationalist party to enter "through the gates of our city", while John Guy Ferguson insisted that their actions represented the "moral force of No Surrender".[104] The Belfast Newsletter eulogised the actions of the "worthy descendants of the Apprentices who closed the gates" in this "second Siege of Derry". It went on to describe the shootings that followed as "regrettable, but...unavoidable" in the desire to defend the walls of the "Maiden city".[105]

There was a degree of anger aimed at the members of the Corporation who had failed to prevent the Nationalist meeting, but several of the landlords and businessmen of local Conservatism had been quick to attach themselves to the activities of the Apprentice Boys. They were, however, at some pains to insist that the main impetus for such action originated with working class Protestants themselves. Rev. Richard

Babbington, who been involved with the Apprentice Boys since the 1860s, argued:

> the demonstration against the letting of the Hall for the Lord mayors lecture was not got up by what are called the gentry of the country. It was by the Protestant Artisans, commonly called the Apprentice Boys, and others joined them, and it was they who invited the gentlemen to come here and assist them in their protest.[106]

The commissioners investigating the riot concurred that the "counter-demonstration appears to have originated chiefly with a body of the Protestant artisans known as the Apprentice Boys, but it was strongly supported by a number of gentlemen of position and influence".[107] The role of the "gentlemen of position" was not quite as passive as either Babbington or the Riot Report suggested, but certainly the Apprentice Boys were seen as the main vehicle for mobilising the Protestant working class in the city, and the imagery of the Derry Siege as the way to express the politics of the Union. Even in the aftermath of the rioting, the worst the city witnessed throughout the nineteenth century, establishment support for Apprentice Boy militancy was maintained and inevitably expressed in the Siege parades. Just over a month after the November 1st clashes, in the midst of continuing sporadic violence and just as the Riot commission was being announced, the "Shutting of the Gates" march was proclaimed but the anniversary was still marked by its usual ritualism, including the burning of Lundy on the city wall.[108]

A mass meeting was held in the Memorial Hall. At this meeting the essence of what the Siege Myth had become, and the politics with which it was now thoroughly enmeshed, were fully evident. Both Lord Claud and Lord Ernest Hamilton attended and expressed their support for the "loyal Apprentice Boys of Derry" and the seizing

of the Corporation Hall. Claud Hamilton also criticised those

> traders and merchants...who think that if things were allowed to remain quiet...the country would return to a state of harmony. They couldn't make a greater mistake...I see no reason why liberals, and even radicals should not join with the conservatives...and show that we are a loyal and industrious people, and that we would sooner die and shed our blood than allow the Land League to get a footing in our province.[109]

John Guy Ferguson denied that the Apprentice Boys were "the tools of landlords and of the gentry" and, despite the overwhelming extent to which the movement had become identified with the Conservatives, insisted that "they were the followers of no sect or party" but the upholders of "certain principles". However the Hamiltons, Ferguson contended, were the "standard-bearers" of those principles and therefore should be supported. The Derry Siege and the Apprentice Boys represented the essence of a populist Orange militancy tied to the emerging political hegemony of Unionism. Ordinary Protestant support for the establishment was dependent upon the latter fulfilling certain obligations, represented as the protection of certain historic rights. The good leader was the one who "never asked his men to go where he was not prepared to lead", the bad, those who sought to "use the Apprentice Boys for their own purposes". Rev. Babbington's tribute to the Apprentice Boys for their part in the riot of 1883, captured the essence of what the Siege Myth now was and Unionism was to become, a political ideology and movement built upon the mobilisation of the Protestant working class in the cause of "loyalty":

> The Apprentice Boys of the present day were quite worthy descendants of the men who manned the Walls during the Siege. (Cheers.) They were always ready to man

> the Walls and fight the good fight...The Apprentice Boys and the Protestant working men of Derry - they were nearly convertible terms - (who) had never failed to do their duty when called upon...were not set the example they ought to be by those above them...but the Apprentice Boys would know to put their proper value on such friends.[110]

The 1883 riots represented a highpoint of both political violence and Apprentice Boy militancy in the late nineteenth century. The relationship between the Protestant working class, organised through the Apprentice Boys, and the conservative elite of the city was undoubtedly a delicate and potentially fractious one. The example of the Hamiltons, who were to fund and virtually control the machinery of the Conservative party in the city through until the early twentieth century, had, however, shown how the cross-class alliance could be maintained and popular Protestant grievances channelled in support of both Conservative interests and the Union at a time when criticism of the Ulster establishment was mounting.

Opposition to the Home Rule bill in 1886 consolidated the political bloc of Ulster Unionism in Derry, as elsewhere, and almost obliterated any cohesive Protestant opposition to Conservatism in the city. Although there had been a further outbreak of rioting in early 1885, the introduction and defeat of the Home Rule bill itself (which led to three months of violence in Belfast and the deaths of thirty two people) was greeted with little violence in Derry and little dissention within the Derry Protestant community. However, remnants of the liberal Presbyterian lobby did continue to have some political role to play. In the general election of 1886 the Home Rule party captured the Derry constituency. The sitting Conservative MP, Charles

Lewis, was initially declared the winner by a mere three votes but the decision was overturned on appeal and the seat was awarded to Justin McCarthy. A limited, but nevertheless important, element of this electoral support for Home Rule was garnered from among Derry Protestants. In January, 1886, the Derry city presbytery refused to pass a resolution opposing Home Rule and Sir John Ross, the Conservative MP for Derry from 1892 and 1895, believed that there were about "twenty or thirty" Protestant Home Rulers in the city. The organisation of this vote through the Irish Protestant Home Rule Association was certainly an important electoral factor in what was now an extraordinarily marginal parliamentary constituency.[111]

Nevertheless, the period had seen the demise of a distinctive anti-Tory Protestant presence in the city. By the time the Home Rule Bill was defeated, Derry Protestant support for Conservatism and Unionism had already been consolidated and was evident in the character of the Siege parades and the Siege culture. The Siege had become the way in which, what Desmond Murphy has called, the prevailing "Tory-Episcopalian hegemony in social and cultural matters", was expressed.[112] When the bi-centenary celebrations of the Shutting of the Gates, in 1888, were led by the Duke of Abercorn, the Marquis of Hamilton, the Episcopalian Bishop of Derry and the Lord Mayor, William Miller, no-one could be in any doubt as to what the Siege was supposed to represent. Nor could anyone be left in two minds what the "friend of the Protestant working men", John Guy Ferguson, believed the role of their populist supporters to be: "the brave Apprentices, despising timid counsels, closed their gates, baffled the designs of the enemies of their country's liberties and faith...still battling, still conquering, still unsubdued".[113]

The Loyal Apprentice Boys: Myth and Class in Derry, 1870-1890

Two underlying factors conditioned the changing nature of the Siege Myth in the period 1860-1890, the economic and demographic growth of Derry and the introduction of political structures that gave birth to political ideologies and party machines capable of engendering popular mass support. The two were, of course, interlinked and reflected wider trends: the rise of the modern state and of the nation as the most commonly called upon and evocative social unit, or "imagined community".[114] For Derry the industrial expansion of the late-nineteenth century defined the environment within which the Siege myth was imagined. The development of industrial factory production, the transport revolution and the growth of the working class population invariably had profound effects on Derry's social, political and cultural life.

In addition, the changing character of politics, formally signalled by the extension of the franchise and municipal reform during the late nineteenth century, necessitated new forms of political mobilisation and the "invention of new traditions" as,

> new or old but dramatically transformed, social groups, environments and social contexts called for new devices to ensure or express social cohesion and identity and to structure social relations.[115]

As a result, Protestant working class identities and politics were expressed through the dominant ideology of Unionism and the dominant symbolic model of the Siege Myth. The Apprentice Boys as a symbol, similarly, provided a crucial form through which the imagination of populist Unionism could be expressed. That the changing socio-

economic structure of the city was also encouraging an increase in female numbers in the work force also helps to explain why that symbolism was definitively and overtly masculine.

When William Thackeray visited Derry, in 1842, he vividly described the sort of town it had become by the middle of the nineteenth century. "As one enters it", he wrote:

> It does not belie as many other Irish towns do, its first flourishing look... the old-fashioned stout red houses of the town cluster, girt in with the ramparts and walls that kept out James' soldiers of old. Quays, factories, huge red warehouses, have grown round this famous old barrier, and now stretch along the river. A couple of large steamers and other craft lay within the bridge; and as we passed over its stout wooden edifice, stretching eleven hundred feet across the noble expanse of the Foyle, we heard along the quay a great thundering and clattering of ironwork in an enormous steam frigate which has been built in Derry, and seems to lie alongside a whole street of houses. The suburb, too, through which we passed was bustling and comfortable; and the view was not only pleasing from its natural beauties, but has a manly, thriving honest air of prosperity.[116]

Significantly, however, industrial growth had been limited in Derry. While commerce had maintained the affluence of Derry merchants through periods of depression and fluctuation in the first half of the century, there was not the rapid expansion in factory production experienced in Belfast. Derry's manufacturing base remained relatively small. This was reflected in the size of the city population. The trade depression of the 1830s had led to an outflow of skilled workers, resulting in a net fall of the city's population from 19,620 in 1831, to just over 15,000 by 1841. Not until the early

1850s did the population of the city return to its 1831 level, and it remained more or less static for the next decade. In 1861 the population was still only 20,519.

Table 5.4
Population of the City of Derry, 1821-1911.[117]

Date	Population	Area
1821	9,313	-
1831	19,620	497
1841	15,196	497
1851	19,727	497
1861	20,519	497
1871	25,242	1,933
1881	29,162	2,164
1891	33,200	2,164
1901	39,892	2,164
1911	40,780	2,579

These figures mask the growth of the population in the Derry area outside the actual borough, but this does not detract from the fact that the period from the 1860s to the early twentieth century saw a relative demographic boom. By 1871 the population had risen to over 25,000, and continued to rise to more than 40,000 by 1911. While this pace of demographic growth was dwarfed by the Belfast population explosion in the same period, it nevertheless meant that the population of the city virtually doubled in the second half of the century. The rise in the city's population was a result of the continued influx of migrants from the rural hinterland, particularly from Donegal. The most obvious impact this had upon Derry's social and political life was to increase the Catholic proportion of the population. By 1901, Catholics far outnumbered any other single denomination in the city, and were a very clear majority even if all non-Catholics were taken together.

Table 5.5
Population of the County and County Borough of Derry, 1901.[118]

	Population	% of total
Catholic	22,923	56.2
Episcopalian	7,148	17.5
Presbyterian	8,700	21.3
Methodist	1,183	2.9
Other	826	2.0

The expansion of the Catholic community undoubtedly contributed to the growing sectarian tension that surrounded the Siege parades in the 1860s and 1880s. In Derry, as in Belfast, tensions between old and new groups of the urban population, so characteristic of the nineteenth century city, took on a distinctly sectarian flavour.[119] This situation also tended to enhance the sense within the Catholic community that the Siege marches were designed to proclaim Protestant triumph in a city where, despite their numerical majority, Catholics continued to be excluded from social, political and economic power. In turn, the focus of the Siege Culture was increasingly upon the division of the "community within" and the "enemy without", and exemplified in the extreme lengths the Apprentice Boys were willing to go to in order that Catholic demonstrations "within the walls" would be prevented. The constant demand to "defend the walls" was literally represented in the route of the Siege parades, in the siting of the Memorial hall and in the events that triggered riots in the period.

Symbolically the walls became the central icon of the Siege Myth, a sign representing, at one and the same time, the preservation of Protestant privilege, the political confrontation of Unionism and Nationalism and the boundary of communal difference. During the Riot Inquiry, of 1869, the working class members of the Apprentice Boys

were referred to as "the party who lived within the walls". This was indicative of the symbolic importance of the walls, it was also, as John Hempton was at pains to point out, factually incorrect as far as the residents of the Fountain were concerned, who, after all, made up the bulk of working class activists.

The rising population included not only a disproportionate number of Catholics but also more women than men. This was largely the result of the increase in female employment in the city, in turn almost exclusively due to the growth of what was Derry's staple industry in the late nineteenth century, shirtmaking. In the mid-nineteenth century the production and distribution of textiles in Derry went through a major slump. The English writer, Harriet Martineau, who travelled to Ireland in 1852, noted the impact that the introduction of factory techniques and powered machinery in the Belfast textiles industry had upon the cottage-based production in the Derry area:

> The change in the productions and exports are worth notice. Formerly there was much linen manufacture; but that is over; Belfast seems to have absorbed it...the clack of the loom is scarcely heard.[120]

In a situation where the dominance of Belfast as a world centre of textile production undermined manufacturing in other parts of Ulster, it was the market specialisation and the expansion of the "outworker system" that made shirtmaking the distinctive (and successful) basis of Derry's industrial revolution.[121]

Shirtmaking had first been introduced into Derry in the early 1830s by William Scott, a Presbyterian weaver who opened up markets in Scotland and who employed around

250 weavers by the mid-1840s.[122] The real expansion in the industry was due to the introduction of new technological innovations that facilitated factory production during the 1850s. In 1853 two Glasgow shirt and collar manufacturers, William Tillie and John Henderson, first began to use the newly invented sewing machine in a factory they had established two years earlier. Tillie and Henderson built a huge new factory at the foot of the newly constructed bridge in 1857, and several other similar factories were built by a number of companies through the 1860s and 1870s, most established by an influx of Scottish Presbyterian businessmen, many of whom formed the backbone of the liberal party in the city. In the 1850s there were 5 shirt factories in Derry, by 1902 there were 38.

By 1870 there were up to 10,000 people employed in the Derry area in the shirtmaking industry and, by 1901, as many as 19,000 throughout Counties Derry, Donegal and Tyrone, with a further 3,000 shirtmakers working in Derry city alone.[123] While a substantial proportion of this workforce continued to live in the countryside, shirtmaking did, nevertheless, provide a major new employment sector in the city. This was particularly important as the restructuring of the rural economy forced many small cottiers from their holdings in the north west area in the aftermath of the 1845-49 famine. Although famine mortality rates in the Derry hinterland were far lower than in many other areas, the post-famine period saw a growing tendency toward larger farm sizes and pasture farming production, stimulated by the expanding produce market in Britain. Both of these factors undermined the tenurial security and employment opportunities of the rural labour force and led to an upsurge in emigration from the 1850s and an influx into Derry. Given the growing demand for

female workers in the shirt factories, there was also a disproportionately large number of women in this inward migration.

Like shifts in the denominational ratio of the city, changes in the gender balance in Derry had significant political implications and a bearing on the culture of the Siege. Given the fact that women had no voting (and few other) rights one effect was to make the electoral strength of the Catholic community less impressive than a simple head count of the population would suggest. Even more important for the character of the Siege Myth, however, was that the presence of such a large and mostly Catholic female labour force exacerbated the generally patriarchal character of unionist political culture. The prevailing social norm within the industrial city was for female labour to be increasingly confined to the domestic sphere, and for the "worker" to be construed as essentially "male". The presence in Derry of a large female workforce and the potential of male dependency upon female "breadwinners" stood in contrast to this and tended to lead to an even greater emphasis upon the cultural manifestation of male dominance.[124]

In this sense, the extent of the female labour force in the "Maiden city" contributed to what was, in any case, a profoundly masculine cult of the "Apprentice Boys" and the celebration of what were defined as the "male" values of martial prowess. Already well-established in the Siege Myth, the extolling of the Apprentice Boys, both of the past and present, for their "courage" and "endurance", congratulating the "Men of Derry" for their "soldier-like discipline", was combined with the quasi-militarist paraphernalia that characterised the Siege parades. Invariably the active-passive

distinction between the male and female inhabitants of the city during the Siege was invoked (if women were mentioned at all) so that the rhetoric of the Siege Myth expressed a cultural model of "gallant men" who "struggle" for "fair women's sweet applause".[125] When Catholic women workers marched in protest against the Apprentice Boys, in 1883, they were, therefore, challenging more than a sectarian taboo.

While the shirt industry employed a workforce that was anything up to 90% female, the main sources of male employment in the city continued to be the construction industry and the docks. This resulted in a labour force with a high proportion of semi-skilled workers and unskilled labourers whose position was highly vulnerable to short term depressions. Consequently, control over access to certain sections of the labour market was of paramount importance and a high premium was placed on any employment that offered a degree of security, or better pay and conditions. This profile tended to deter trade union organisation in the city, which remained relatively primitive and weak throughout the late nineteenth century. It also tended to underpin the exercise of paternalistic influence and sustained a system of patronage that operated through the network of small, locally owned businesses that controlled most employment in the city. The corollary was a political culture in which exclusionary practices could be justified on the grounds of communal interest.[126]

It is in this context that the growth of the Apprentice Boys as an organisation of the "Protestant working men of Derry", supported by a paternalistic "conservative elite", should be viewed. It would be too simplistic to suggest that the organisation operated

solely as a crude mechanism of patronage and dependency and it would also be difficult to show quantitatively the extent to which membership of the Apprentice Boys guaranteed employment. It is true, however, that certain sectors of skilled male employment in the city were dominated by Protestants, while Catholics formed the overwhelming majority of general and unskilled labourers.[127]

Table 5.6
Unskilled Male Employment by Denomination in the City of Derry, 1901.

	Total	Catholic	%	Non-Catholic	
General Workers	1914	1349	70	565	30
Dock Workers	252	219	87	33	13
Carters	333	229	69	104	31

The Corporation overwhelmingly employed Protestants. Similarly, it would be surprising if membership of a body that avowed the unity of "capital and labour" and called upon "influential friends" to support "Protestant workingmen" did not at least suggest the possibility of social and economic advantage.[128]

A culture of privilege, as much as the exercise of and access to privilege, cemented the pan-class alliance of Unionism. The sense that Protestant working class grievances, expressed through Orange populism were likely to be redressed, fed a definition of the Siege Myth in which "loyal Apprentice Boys" were served well by "loyal leaders". The other side of this was, of course, the need to be wary of "untrue friends", the "Lundies" who would sell the city for their own gain. But when someone as powerful within the local construction industry as John Guy Ferguson called a Protestant worker or artisan a "brother Apprentice Boy", it implied both a relationship of equals and a sense of mutual interest. The social reality facing the

Derry Protestant worker was tied to a consciousness of prestige and the public exhibition of a notional egalitarianism. "His" responsibility was to remain "true to the principles" of the "original thirteen", to "shut the Gates" against the enemy without and maintain loyalty to the Crown; his "rights" as a "loyal subject in faith and nation" would then be secured.

If aspects of the Siege and the imagery of the Apprentice Boys were "invented", this was not a mere process of manipulation from above, but a culture that reflected the very real popular feeling within the Protestant working class of the city. To a great extent local Conservative interests were reacting to, rather than creating, the mood of belligerent communal identity that characterised the Siege parades of the late-nineteenth century. Just as the Hamiltons and their ilk began to enter the Orange Order in the midst of the Land War and took over the leadership of what was, essentially, a plebian organisation around 1885-86, so too did certain sections of the north west establishment, including the Hamilton family, patronise the Apprentice Boys movement by grafting themselves onto, and giving a specific interpretation of, an existent ideological framework.

The iconography of the Siege culture represented a symbolic system through which Derry Protestant workers could order (and historically root) their lived experience. The Siege Myth, therefore, combined a vague awareness of class grievance, the plight of the ordinary "Apprentice Boy", with an aggressive projection of communal identity, that was intrinsically anti-catholic and a model for popular action. The "Apprentice Boys", as a subjective historical and cultural sign, came to represent not

only the position of the ordinary Protestant "under threat from without" but also to symbolise what needed to be done in this situation. The action of the original Apprentice Boys had been both direct and in the street; they had taken physical possession of their environment. In the new urban setting of Orangeism in the late nineteenth century it was the street which became the arena of popular Protestant agitation and the control of territory a central element of Orange and Apprentice Boy activity. The Apprentice Boys as a symbol was also definitively collective. They acted as a vanguard of the community, as a popular force setting an ideal example particularly to the "timorous council" of their "social betters". They were, therefore, the epitome of a militant Orangeism, which, as Henry Patterson has argued, "provided the main categories by which certain limited forms of class conflict could be expressed".[129]

Patterson overstates his case, however, when he suggests that such popular Orangeism was a "relatively autonomous" force, that was not "simply a pliant instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie". For, while the Apprentice Boys, as an example of such Orangeism, could act to bring pressure to bear upon the establishment, members of the Derry bourgeoisie were very much to the fore in the movement. The professions and business class of Derry were dominated by Protestants, and the promotion of the Siege culture, particularly by those for whom an elevated social status was still something that had to be struggled for was a means of shoring up that dominance.[130] It was not so much the most powerful and prominent families of the Derry Unionist elite who took an active part in the Siege parades and the Apprentice Boys, but clerics, medical and other professionals, traders, shopkeepers and so on. No better

example of this could be found than in the person of John Guy Ferguson himself who owed his powerful position within Derry politics to his ability to identify with and direct the force of popular Protestant agitation.

Table 5.7
Male Occupation of Various Professional and Business Occupations by Denomination in Derry, 1901

Professional	Catholic (%)	Non-Catholic (%)
Municipal Govt.	17.5	82.5
Lawyers	23	77
Doctors	17	83
Civil Engineers	19.5	80.5
Architects	25	75
Commercial/Industrial		
Bankers	34	66
Bank Services	9.5	90.5
Merchants	20.5	79.5
Brokers	18	82
Linen/Flax Manaf	25	75
Linen Drapers	31.5	68.5

Ferguson was also instrumental in giving a lead to the merger of the Apprentice Boys with the institutional structure of local Conservatism. Mirroring wider trends Derry Conservatism (and, subsequently, Unionism) developed a far more cohesive and effective political machinery capable of embracing the newly enfranchised working class male population. From the mid-1860s onward, various Conservative committees and associations were established in the city, many of which were designed specifically to mobilise popular support. The Londonderry Protestant Workingmens Defence Association was an early forerunner of such bodies, and the Derry Working Mens Constitutional Association was particularly active in 1885 and 1886.[131]

The fledgling Unionist movement began to take on an increasingly cohesive and

electorally powerful form with the growth of organisations such as the North West Loyalist Registration and Electoral Association set up in 1885, and the work of local registration agents was extremely important in transforming support into votes.[132] That process was dependent in the first place, however, on such support being engendered through a variety of social practices and the Apprentice Boys and the Siege culture was the most powerful way in which the mass base of local Conservative hegemony was created and given public display. It was no coincidence, too, that the local registration agent for Derry throughout the late nineteenth century, Daniel Mulholland, was at the same time highly active in the Apprentice Boys, served as the organisations Lieutenant-Governor from 1901 to 1905 and, briefly, became the Governor in 1906.[133]

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Derry parliamentary constituency became one of the most fiercely contested and marginal in Ulster.[134] The desire to maintain control of the "Maiden City", as the Siege Myth became a central symbolic focus for Ulster Unionism, made it imperative for Unionists to hold the seat. Similarly, dominating the Corporation, after municipal reform through the mid-century had greatly broadened the local franchise, had both symbolic and much more obvious material benefits. Because of this the Conservative party and the Hamilton family, in particular, spent a great deal of time, effort and money in supporting Derry Conservatism and patronising the Siege culture.

Coalescing Protestant support for Unionism and maintaining an electoral majority in such a marginal seat meant defining as "Lundies" any who "betrayed" the community,

a rhetoric that took on very tangible dimensions on polling day or in the midst of riots. Ultimately, Derry Unionist efforts to defy the logic of demographic arithmetic would lead them to embark upon the first of many electoral boundary changes in the 1890s, but the Siege culture represented a way in which the norms of political allegiance could be rigorously enforced through socialisation and display. For Unionists and Orangemen everywhere acting out their control of the Ulster through denying, at least once a year, that Derry was now a predominantly Catholic city, became part and parcel of Unionism. Essentially, the more widespread and more institutionalised Apprentice Boys movement of the late nineteenth century became one of those organisational forms through which Unionism as a mass political bloc took shape, and when the Ulster Unionist Council was set up, in 1905, as a coordinating umbrella for these groups, the Governor of the Apprentice Boys of Derry Clubs had a place at the table.[135]

In August, 1869, the Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate the riots in Derry argued that the Siege Myth was the central ideological marker for the two communities in the city, and that the Siege parades had become anything but apolitical folk festivals:

> It is in its double aspect, that its celebration becomes a cause of anger and offence. . . . Of the celebrants, all, at least, are not actuated merely by the just pride in a great achievement, with which every man should sympathise. Of those resenting it all regard it, and resent it because they regard it s a triumph over themselves and an outrage to their feelings, under the guise of reverence for deeds of bygone heroism.[136]

Even in the minds of Government officials, who were still liable to voice their

admiration for the "noble endeavour" of "Derry's original defenders", it was clear that the Siege of Derry was considered to be an historical symbol of Protestant power.

It was also to become increasingly identified in the following forty years with the aims, attitudes and actions of the "Protestant workingmen" of the city; with their militant support for political conservatism, economic populism and sectarian division. What Peter Gibbon calls the "structured popular politics, structured system of political class alliances and structured set of political and crypto-political ideologies", that made up the political culture in which Ulster Unionism was born, found their most clear mythical expression in the late nineteenth century vision of the Derry Siege.[137]

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CHAPTER VI

THE BESIEGED OUTPOST:

THE IMAGINATION OF EMPIRE AND THE SIEGE MYTH

1860-1912

The Home Rule crisis of 1912-14 brought to the fore a variety of tensions within Irish society and in the relationship between Ireland and Britain. The spatial unevenness of Irish economic and social development, the sectarian organisation of power and the ideological confrontation of Nationalism and Unionism constituted a series of dualities at the heart of Irish society. Ultimately the territorial separation of part of Ulster from the rest of Ireland was the result.[1] However, both Unionism and Nationalism found themselves at odds with a British imperial state and polity consumed by its own difficulties and convulsed by the impact of long term change. The issue of the Union came to crystallise what constituted a prolonged crisis for the British state from the end of the nineteenth century through to the 1920s. This crisis led to shifts in British political strategy in Ireland: an initial, grudging and hotly contested support for Home Rule, followed by the introduction of partition. The process these shifts in strategy set in motion represented a precursor to the decolonisation that would occur in other parts of the empire in the decades to come.

For Ulster Unionists the changing nature of British political strategy represented a cultural, as well as a material, challenge because it undermined the very ideological basis upon which Unionism had constituted itself. This difficulty was reflected in the

character of the Siege Myth during this period. If by the end of the nineteenth century the Siege of Derry had become a cultural rallying call for all-Protestant pan-class unity it had also come to symbolise, like the Union itself, the idea and identity of the British empire. The struggle over the constitutional status of Ireland fought between the 1880s and the 1920s occurred at the same time as a patriotic attachment to an imperial-nationalism came to play a pivotal role in British political culture. The twinning of these elements deeply affected the ideological character of Ulster Unionism. Unionism, as a mass movement, based much of its appeal upon "imperial collectivism". As a political platform "imperial collectivism" identified a call for domestic social and economic reform with imperial expansion, and conceived the role of the citizen in relation to the need for authoritarian leadership.[2] The Siege Myth came to encapsulate these ideas of identity and political mobilisation.

There was an acute problem for Unionism as an ideology when the state and "imagined community" which they argued they were part of suggested that this was not, after all, the case. By the early twentieth century Unionism as a hegemonic force was faced with an Irish Nationalism which, it argued, was intrinsically alien and inimical and sections of the British ruling elite that were willing to reconstitute the Anglo-Irish relationship as the first step to reforming the imperial state. It was a situation in which Unionism became more thoroughly imbued with the consciousness and imagery of Siege.

Even when not directly referring to the Derry Siege itself, Unionist ideology was built around the "structural opposites" that the Siege had come to exemplify. The symbol

system of the Siege therefore became not just an historical touchstone, but the very language through which Unionism expressed itself. The "Siege mentality" that emerged as the self-definition of Ulster Protestant political culture provided ideological legitimation first for political rebellion and (after partition) of state power. But through that historical passage from state support to anti-state action and then state authority, Unionism, as constituted through the signs of the Siege Myth, re-articulated itself to explain changing circumstance.

While the use of the same signs of the Siege cycle gave the semblance of ideological continuity, what is striking is the discontinuity for Unionism through this period and particularly in the circumstances of the Home Rule crisis. The rhetoric accompanying the Siege culture encapsulated this discontinuity. Derry as a besieged outpost of empire is a theme throughout but what the empire meant and how the Siege could be withstood, these at times differed greatly. Within the imagination of the Siege Myth the need of the independent action of the Ulster Protestant community, symbolised through the icon of the Apprentice Boys, and the motif of an English relief force either unwilling or unable to come to the aid of the "besieged", were both elements of profound significance in times of crisis. At such moments Lundies were to be found everywhere and the fickleness of the English fleet, their only reliable feature.

To understand the depth of the ideological as well as material dilemma Unionism was confronted with by the possible reform of the imperial state, it is first necessary to analyse the extent to which "imperial patriotism" was a foundation of its beliefs. The projection of a national-imperial identity and of the cultural values of imperialism

were evident within the Siege culture from the mid-nineteenth century onward. As well as placing the political struggles of Ulster into an imperial context, this also meant defining the Siege as a struggle between two forces, those of imperial civilisation and colonised barbarity. Unionists could imagine, through the narrative of the Siege, the triumph of the former over the latter. Just as evangelical Protestantism helped to promote patriotic and imperial sentiment in England, so a number of clerics and evangelical supporters within Derry used the imagery of the Siege to suggest the inevitable superiority of the Anglo-Saxon.[3] An even more important influence in establishing the Siege as part of an embryonic British imperial imagination was Thomas Babbington Macaulay, a leading advocate of cultural imperialism, who made the Siege of Derry the very apogee of the values he celebrated in his immensely influential work The History of England.

It was, however, in the period from 1880 to 1910 that the importance of imperial values and imagery came very much to the fore within the Siege Myth and this reflected wider trends. This was the period marked by a sustained and fundamental crisis in the character of the British state and British society that was crystallised in the battle over Home Rule for Ireland. The rise of the Home Rule movement thrust the issue of the Union to the fore in British politics, and reaction against Home Rule was crucial in changing the terrain of British political life. The hegemonic crisis that preservation of the Union unleashed helped forge the new and pervasive force of social imperialism (or imperial collectivism) in British society generally and in British Conservatism in particular.[4]

To a great extent the Unionist campaigns opposing Nationalist demands between the 1880s and 1910s were consciously designed to tap into this dimension of British political culture.[5] However, Ulster Protestants did not merely appeal to the cultural assumptions and symbolic allegiances that underwrote the consciousness of social imperialism, they also shared them, often in an accentuated form. For an Ulster Protestant collective identity to legitimate the politics of Ulster Unionism, they had to see themselves as the guardians of the imperial imagined community. This involved the promotion of a whole set of moral and cultural assumptions. As Edward Said argues, British imperialism in the late nineteenth century was not simply a material process of acquisition, it was also

> supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include the notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination...that distant territories and their native peoples should be subjugated, and, on the other (hand that this) replenished metropolitan energies so that these decent people could think of the imperium as a protracted, almost metaphysical obligation to rule subordinate, inferior or less advanced peoples.[6]

That both English Conservatives and Ulster Unionists could argue against Home Rule on the basis that Irish Catholics were unable to govern themselves gave voice to a world view that derived its shape from the presumptions of superiority attendant upon imperialism.[7] However, there were also differences in the nature of imperial identity in England and Ulster and these also conditioned the nature of the Siege Myth. Such "ideological formations" were ordered within a sense of the past and of "tradition". Thus within British political culture the legitimacy of the imperial order was grounded in a belief that British constitutional development was superior, definitively Anglo-Saxon and symbolised in the office of the constitutional monarchy.[8] For Ulster

Unionism, too, imperial ideology was grounded in a sense of the past, and in particular, through the imagery of the Siege.

The Siege Myth was shaped by two important dimensions of what the Union came to symbolise during the period 1880 to 1910. First, there was the complex interaction of religious difference, the "nation" and the empire in the idea of the Union as the basis for an Ulster Protestant collective identity. The particular mix of these various elements, at any given time, tended to find expression within the Siege Myth through the personified symbolism of the Apprentice Boys, acting as the model of the imagined community. While the Apprentice Boys were invariably described as racially homogeneous, as well as denominationally distinct from the besiegers of the city, their supposed racial character was usually linked to an imperial collective, as "Anglo-Saxons", or "British". There was at times, however, a re-emphasis and re-articulation of the Siege Myth that concentrated upon the "Ulsterness", as well as the "Protestantism" of the Siege defenders. The Apprentice Boys emerged as the epitome of the "Honest Ulstermen".[9]

Linked to this, the relationship of Englishness, Britishness and Unionism was also deeply problematic.[10] As Tom Paulin has argued, while Englishness was an "instinctual, ethnic identification", Britishness lacked "its inspirational power" and, in certain circumstances, what might be called, a hierarchy of belonging was established within the framework of imperial patriotism.[11] Within the imagery of the Siege the mirror of this was, at times, a negative representation of what "Englishness" meant, reflecting tensions between the imperial centre and the colonial periphery and

reinforcing a sense of difference, as well as projecting commonality, with England, expressed in terms of loyalty and betrayal. The notional "Ulsterness" of the Apprentice Boys was a reaction to this. In this vein what became known as the "conditional loyalty" of early twentieth century Ulster Unionism shared the same conceptual framework as the "colonial nationalisms" of Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada in the same period.[12]

The tension produced between Ulster Unionists and the British state by the Home Rule crisis saw both the "Ulsterness" of the Apprentice Boys and the unreliability of the English as a force of "relief" merge with an emphasis on the sacrificial dimension of the Siege. This was an ideological formula to justify rebellion. The "enemy within", symbolised in the figure of Lundy, was a powerful means of legitimating not only the need for communal solidarity but also of a potential rejection of authority. The British Government playing the role of Lundy, or the Government cast not as the honest monarch who assure deliverance, but the reticent fleet which awaits catastrophe, became a means to articulate the cause of armed opposition. Similarly, during periods of crisis, the act of defiance in "Shutting the Gates" and the sacrifices that were made as a result, became a more favoured theme than the moment of deliverance and relief. The Siege Myth proved, once again, its ability to project a model for social and political action.

As a result the Siege, now defined as a battle for the preservation of Ulster (rather than of Ireland), as an outpost of empire fought by Ulster Protestants themselves and as the icon of an imagined distinct constitutional tradition, the covenant, emerged as

a mythic legitimation of partition. As Unionism became an official ideology rather than an oppositional political bloc, as the nature of the British empire and identity were re-defined and the Union was reformulated, so the way was left open for the Siege parades to become, by the 1920s, part of the cultural apparatus of the state of Northern Ireland and a celebration of Orange hegemony.

To examine the relationship between the Siege Myth, the imagination of imperialism and the character of Unionist ideology when faced with the crisis of the early twentieth century, it is necessary to analyse three major elements within the Siege culture of this period. First, how did the celebration of imperial values develop within the Siege Myth from the mid-nineteenth century onward? Second, what was the relationship of empire, nation and religion in the definition of the imagined community of Ulster Unionism, and lastly, what tension developed for Unionists between an identity of empire and Union and the social and political realities facing Ulster Protestants during the onset of crisis in 1912?

"A Contest Between Nations": Macaulay, Empire and the Siege, 1840-1880

The foundations of the "imagination of empire" were laid in the mid-nineteenth century by early advocates of an imperial-patriotism who found, like so many others, the Siege of Derry could become an exemplary model for their point of view. One of the first, and in many ways most important, was the work of Lord Macaulay, The History of England. The popularity of Macaulay's work made the Derry Siege far better known than ever before, making the Siege Myth an ever more widely celebrated

cultural phenomenon. However, Macaulay's was not the only voice promoting the Siege as an imperial narrative. He was joined by a veritable chorus from within the Derry establishment and among the local organisers of the Siege parades in projecting an imperial identity through the Siege Myth.

Significantly, evangelical clerics were very much to the fore in this process. Sermons, given on the theme of the Siege, had become established as one of the set-piece rituals of the Siege culture and provided an opportunity for clergymen to articulate a particular definition of the moral and political meaning of the Siege Myth. Many used this opportunity to extol the virtues of empire from the mid-nineteenth century onward. However, for some advocates of the Siege, the significance of nation or empire as the basis of identity was extremely limited, and, in some quarters, regarded as potentially damaging. A number of commentators defined the Siege as an example of Protestant virtue and argued that this should not be confused with, or diluted by any other ideological identity. Again, the fusion of Protestantism and Empire, which was to be an underlying characteristic of Ulster Unionism, was a matter of process rather than natural conclusion.

If any single text of the nineteenth century influenced the imagination of identity contained within the Siege Myth it was the account provided by Thomas Babbington Macaulay in his History of England, published in 1855.[13] Macaulay made the Siege one of the centrepiece episodes of his work and both supporters of the Siege Culture and later Unionists were to utilise the History in celebration of the Siege Myth. Macaulay was regularly cited in the speeches and sermons on the Siege and the

History (one of the most popular pieces of mid-nineteenth century English literature) was clearly widely read in Derry. "Since the publication of Macaulay's history", John Guy Ferguson told the Riot Commissioners of 1869, "the pride of Derry Protestants in the Siege had "been greatly increased".[14]

Macaulay was among the leading political and intellectual figures of his day. At various times he was a prominent Whig MP and government minister, an architect of the British colonial administration in India and one of the most widely read literary figures of the mid-nineteenth century. As his most important literary work, the History of England was also the prime example of Whig historiography. A celebration of the British parliamentary and constitutional system the History was designed, in true Whig fashion, to popularise and inculcate a moral, political, and social value system. The History was originally intended to cover the period from the seventeenth century to the nineteenth century, but it became concerned solely with the "Glorious Revolution" which, Macaulay argued, had laid the foundation of British industrial and imperial progress. It was this perspective which made the Siege so central to Macaulay's work, and led him to describe it as, "the most memorable in the annals of the British isles".[15]

In his biography of Macaulay, Owen Dudley Edwards argues that the History was written to "train a citizenry for participation in and possession of a future England".[16] This ambitious ideological project aimed at culturally defining the relationship of citizen, state and empire through the imagery of the past. A social and political authoritarian, who believed that "the higher and middling orders are the natural

representatives of the human race", Macaulay combined this outlook with a desire to promote the idea of a national community through the celebration of popular culture.[17] He intended his History to be not only a record of "government" but also "of the people", to include accounts of the, "revolutions which have taken place in dress, furniture, repasts, and public amusements".[18] It was in this vein that, before writing his account of the Siege, Macaulay travelled to Derry and spent two days viewing the walls and collecting local anecdotes and folk tales that had built up around the Siege culture. It was also why he found time to comment upon the nature of the Siege parades.

Mid-nineteenth century Whig and liberal conceptions of what constituted the "nation" were marked, as Eric Hobsbawm has remarked, by "a surprising degree of intellectual vagueness".[19] However, Macaulay sought to establish an idea of the British national community around what has been described as a "grammar of imperialism", to found a sense of identity capable of maintaining domestic stability through the celebration of a distinctive, and supposedly superior, British civilisation that would, in turn, legitimate imperial expansion.[20] A keen advocate of such expansion Macaulay had directly affected its path when, as President for the "Committee of Public Instruction" in Bengal, he wrote his "Minutes of Education", a blueprint for the policy of anglicization, the cultural accompaniment to British economic and political domination in the Indian sub-continent. His History of England was intended, therefore, not only to establish the idea of a national memory and a national past, but also to evoke such a memory in the cause of empire.

In his vivid and emotive depiction of the Siege Macaulay argued that it represented less a confrontation between two communities defined by their religious difference than a struggle of nations, conceived as distinctive cultural formations. Religion did have a part to play. It is clear throughout his work that Macaulay regarded Catholicism as politically undesirable and historically anachronistic, and he described the walls of Derry as "that sacred enclosure which, in the evil time, gave shelter to their race and religion".[21] However, the true significance of the Siege for Macaulay was the struggle it symbolised between a morally and culturally advanced civilisation and one which, through its defeat, was shown to be less so. What is evident too, is that Macaulay saw moral and cultural development as a result of national characteristics:

> The means both of attack and defence had undoubtedly been such as would have moved the great warriors of the continent to laughter; this is the very circumstance which gives so peculiar an interest to the history of the contest. It was a contest, not between engineers, but between nations; and the victory remained with the nation which, though inferior in number, was superior in civilisation, in capacity for self-government, and in stubbornness of resolution.[22]

Similarly, the nation, imagined through the Siege, was explicitly to include all social classes acting in concert: "the whole crowded city was moved by one impulse. Soldiers, gentlemen, yeomen, artisans, rushed to the walls and manned the guns".[23] The nation was also defined not as a group distinctive to the North of Ireland, but a wider national-racial family, an amalgam fused into a single entity by the imagined threat of a shared foe:

> The inhabitants were Protestants of Anglo-saxon blood. They were indeed not all

of one country or of one church; but Englishmen and Scotchmen, Episcopalians and Presbyterians, seem to have generally lived together in friendship, a friendship which is sufficiently explained by their common antipathy to the Irish race and to the Popish religion.[24]

It is therefore race, the "Englishry of Leinster and Northern Ulster", the character of the "Anglo-saxon colony", and the relationship of race to the political community of the United Kingdom that above all else defined the imagined collective of Macaulay's besieged.

For the political relationship of the Union to operate effectively, Macaulay suggested, the abuse of authority by an elite, defined in terms of their religious difference, had to be avoided,

> With what contempt, with what antipathy, the ruling minority in that country (Ireland) long regarded the subject majority may best be learned from the hateful laws which, within the memory of men still living, disgraced the Irish statute books. Those laws were at length annulled; but the spirit which had dictated them survived them, and even at this day sometimes breaks out in excesses pernicious to the commonwealth and dishonourable to the Protestant religion.[25]

Devotion to the secular gods of nation and cultural civilisation (which for Macaulay were the primary means of constituting social and political consensus) therefore made him critical of religion as a form of public and political discourse. Although he had himself been brought up in an evangelical household, Macaulay developed an ideological perspective which saw politicised Protestantism as detrimental to the

operation of state authority and "Britishness" as a dominant, hegemonic identity.

Certainly his parliamentary defeat in Edinburgh in 1847, largely due to the rise of conservative Protestantism in the city, was likely to have heightened this perspective. Two years later, when he visited Derry in order to collect material for his account of the Siege, Macaulay foreshadowed the "double aspects" thesis of the Riot Commissioners some two decades later, by not only commenting at length upon the Siege culture, but also criticising its more blatantly sectarian manifestations:

> It is impossible for the moralist or statesman to look with unmixed complacency on the solemnities with which Londonderry commemorates her deliverance, and on the honours which she pays to those who saved her. Unhappily the animosities of her brave champions have descended with their glory. The faults which are ordinarily found in dominant castes and dominant sects have not seldom shown themselves without disguise at her festivities; and even when the expressions of pious gratitude which have resounded from her pulpits have too often been mingled words of wrath and defiance.[26]

Nevertheless, the Siege was no mere artefact of the past for Macaulay, it was an idealised mythic model for action, an event quite undiminished in its relevance by the passage of time. The significance of Macaulay's conception of the Siege lay most of all in his conscious desire to promote the Siege culture as an example of how the "imagined community" of the "British peoples" should be culturally and popularly remembered through social practice and public display. He described in detail Walker's Pillar, the preservation of relics and other monuments, the burning of Lundy, the nature of the clubs, parades, speeches and sermons of the Siege culture.

He argued that the walls were "to the Protestants of Ulster what the trophy of Marathon was to the Athenians", and pointed out, in no uncertain terms, the ideological role such a series of cultural practices could perform:

> It is impossible not to respect the sentiment which is indicated by these tokens. It is a sentiment which belongs to the higher and purer part of human nature, and which adds not a little to the strength of states. A people which takes no pride in the noble achievements of remote ancestors will never achieve anything worthy to be remembered with pride by remote ancestors.[27]

Macaulay was, in essence, advocating the invention of a British national tradition through the Siege culture.

There were, however, many who saw no contradiction in the construction of a sense of Britishness that was definitively Protestant in character. Among the earliest proponents of British imperial patriotism were the same evangelical Protestants who, in the 1820s and 1850s, promoted the "Second Reformation" in Ireland. These evangelicals conceived of Britain as having a special relationship with God, imagined as that of the Israelites of the Old Testament, whereby they were ordained to be a world-wide civilising and christianising influence whose Protestant values were enshrined in the constitutional history, and gave rise to the economic prosperity, of the English people.[28] The antithesis of this was "popery", and particularly the Irish variety, a perspective which gave both "meaning and direction to the long-standing English anti-Catholic tradition" and "explained" the poverty and political unrest of Ireland.[29] The imagery of "God's Chosen Few", and the civilising project of the British empire, found a home in the culture of Orangeism and echoes among the advocates of the Siege Myth from the mid-nineteenth century onward.[30]

The concepts of "empire", the "British people" and "patriotism" were also hardly new to Protestant political culture in Ireland, nor to the Siege Myth, by the 1850s and 1860s. Yet, they had tended to be expressed only in the vaguest of terms and as peripheral to the "real" meaning of the Siege, which was predominantly conceived as a defence of definitively "Protestant" values. Protestantism continued, of course, to be a dominant element in the Siege Myth, but it was also now related more precisely to the "empire" and the "nation".

Preaching in Derry Cathedral for the Relief parade of 1858, Rev. William Beresford *(an Evangelical of the Church of Ireland) drew direct comparisons* between the values supposedly struggled for in the Siege and those enshrined in an imperial destiny. Beresford defined both the Siege and the empire in terms of a divine mission:

> It is the glorious destiny of Great Britain to send the gospel with all its saving and civilising influences to all other lands, to unite all in one majestic harmony...We have not only an earthly inheritance of historic lore, lofty reminiscences of traditions of power, honour and wealth...but the inheritance of hoe and trust in the redemption of out lord and saviour and the manifestation of his spirit...the spring of unity and concord, of domestic virtue, of intellectual excellence...these are the inestimable privileges committed to our stewardship *as a nation*...these are the blessings our God has showered on us in a degree unequalled by all that the world has seen since the days of his favoured people Israel.[31]

Significantly, when Beresford spoke of the people "as a nation" he did so in terms of both a British and Protestant community to which he saw his Derry Protestant audience belonging. Three years later the Rev. William McClure, the Derry

Presbyterian minister, eulogised the Siege in much the same vein, arguing that the "we" for whom it had been fought included not only the "nation" but also the "vast colonial empire", which was, consequently, indebted to the Siege for its existence. Further than this, he proposed that patriotic support of the nation was a christian virtue exemplified in the Siege Myth;

> Patriotism is a part of religion, and he who is a true lover of God will be a genuine lover of his country also. The remembrance of the glorious events we are met to commemorate, the relief of our city on this auspicious day, these forcibly remind us of the privileges we enjoy.[32]

McClure was, however, less specific about the "country" to which such duty was owed and while loyal attachment to the empire and a British identity were becoming more prevalent elements of the Siege Myth (and not only among Evangelical Protestant preachers), there continued to be a certain fluidity in the definition of what constituted the "nation" that was not restricted to McClure's liberal cast of mind. "Britishness" was still a highly problematic term. Although in 1860 the Londonderry Guardian described the crimson flag as being "neither Orange or Green; it is the blood red flag of Old England", this was both an idiosyncratic description and one designed specifically to criticise the presence of a large military and police force in the city for the Siege parade.[33]

The editor of the Londonderry Sentinel, John Edward Finlay, as far from a liberal as one could find, published an account of the Siege in the same year. Finlay drew a contrast between "British Protestants" and "Irish Protestants", even though he also described the walls as, "a monument of great deliverance. The Wall [he continued]

is preserved as a sacred enclosure; which gave shelter to the British race and the Protestant religion".[34] For Finlay, in line with the politicised Protestantism that was the basis of the early nineteenth century Siege culture, "Britishness" continued to take very much a secondary role to "Protestantism", and the idea of such a thing as "Ulster Protestantism" was significantly nowhere to be found.

In fact, there was little or no mention of an Ulster identity, or of the Siege as a *specifically Ulster cycle in accounts of this period.* Though Finlay certainly argued that because of the Siege, Derry was "a sacred spot, dear to memory and ever-kindling by its very name the fire of patriotism", his was a vaguely defined "British" patriotism, and one which (directly contradicting Macaulay) had only a limited meaning;

> The victory has been ascribed to superiority in civilisation, to greater capacity in self-government, to stubbornness in resolution, and difference of race. This may be true, but it is not the whole truth; all these are elements of success, but the main elements were Protestant spirit and divine assistance. These are the elements which cast the brightest halo around Derry.[35]

Ulster Unionist political identity would ultimately ground itself upon a fusion of racial and religious distinction but (while there was undoubtedly an affinity between "Britishness" and Protestantism) that fusion was neither inevitable or easy and certainly there were some versions of the Siege Myth which saw patriotism and Protestantism as, at least, potentially conflicting loyalties. In 1871 Hugh Hanna published a pamphlet defending a lecture he had given on the Siege which had been attacked by a liberal Presbyterian cleric, Rev A. Robinson. Robinson had contended

that Hanna was at fault both for over-emphasising the similarities of the Episcopalian and Presbyterian traditions, and for discounting the relevance of racial distinctiveness. Hanna re-asserted his belief that the Siege should, indeed, be seen as a model of identity and action, believing that the "past speaketh to the present" and (not surprisingly) he suggested that the story of the Siege "advocated Protestant Union in resistance to the growing political power of the Papacy".[36] However, he also countered the Macaulay-esque theory proposed by his critic, that the Siege had been a battle of nations rather than religions, by citing what he regarded as the erroneous behaviour of the "Old English" during the seventeenth century:

> The Norman and Saxon origin of the chief migrants should on his [Robinson's] theory have secured their friendship for the immigrants of the plantation. Race should have come to its kindred race. But it did not. The sympathies of race were overruled by the stronger spirit of religious fanaticism, and the Anglo-Irish papists were among the fiercest persecutors of the men who, in Ulster, represented the land of their fathers. The sympathies of race never have opposed a sufficient barrier to the cruelties of intolerant bigotry. The Jews forgot the common relations of the early disciples of Christ to father Abraham, when zeal for the institutions of Moses seemed to require the extinction of the Christian name.[37]

The populist, demagogic, Orange orator Hanna combined his emphasis upon the difference of religion with an implicit distinction drawn between the "men" of "Ulster" and the "chief migrants", the "Anglo-Irish" of the rest of the island.

In a sense it is the tension between the communal integration of religious division and the imperial integration of the "British nation", as the basis of identity and political hegemony, that defines the "double aspect" view of the Siege culture expressed by the

1869 Riot Commissioners. Their report is infused throughout with the rationale of Macaulay, celebrating the Siege as a "noble exploit of humanity", a "fine example of fidelity to principle" and of "unyielding valour", while they also echo him, almost word for word, when they argue for the ending of all parades in the city on the grounds that they are ultimately, and dangerously, socially divisive:

> the statesman, whose duty it is to fuse together the conflicting elements of a disrupted society, cannot attach too great importance to it.[38]

The eyes of the commissioners were trained on (and in) a British polity whose social and economic power base was increasingly ordered through the imagined shared interest of a national tradition. Seen from such a perspective the Siege culture, at one moment a celebration of that very tradition, was at the same time marked by a sectarianism rooted in the particularity of social relations in Irish society. The Siege culture could, therefore, only be regarded as outside their conception of order. Not until the 1880s would large sections of the British ruling class readily identify Ulster Orangeism as at least coming from the same ideological stable as their own imperial patriotism.

The Union, Protestantism and the Crown: The Siege and Imperial Patriotism, 1880-1900

In the midst of the November 1st riot, in 1883 a Coleraine Orangeman, a "working man of the county", with the rather appropriate name of Vance Macaulay, addressed the Apprentice Boys and argued that they stood for

> three things which could not be separated...the Protestant Crown of England and the Bible - (cheers) - Ireland and England - (cheers) - and capital and labour...loyalty

> such as the Derry Apprentice Boys exhibited, and insult flung in the face of her gracious majesty the Queen, could not be united.

The three elements which Vance Macaulay picked out illuminate the character of Ulster Unionist ideology and the nature of the Siege Myth by the 1880s. The Union, Protestantism and the Crown were the foundational elements upon which the cross-class alliance of "capital and labour" were to be based. While these "three things" were, in many ways, particular to Ulster Unionism they also reflected currents of political thought and symbolism that Unionism shared with British Conservatism in general.

By the 1880s and 1890s mass political mobilisation created the growing importance of imperial nationalism. The idea of what was called the "common patriotism" of the empire, a platform for the mass appeal of English Conservatism from the early 1870s onward, was inextricably bound up with the emerging ideology of Ulster Unionism.[39] The struggle over Home Rule accelerated this process and brought into sharp relief the contours of an identity that combined the Empire and the Union, Protestantism and the Crown, into a cohesive and recognisable ideological perspective capable of establishing a cross-class alliance that was in turn given a cultural outlet in the Siege parades.

The basis for this fusion of religious distinctiveness, imperial patriotism and the celebration of the monarchy in both Ulster Unionism and the Siege culture during the end of the nineteenth century was not merely political opportunism, nor solely the result of structural changes in Irish society, though these were clearly important

factors. It was also the result of changes in the ideological concepts themselves. If, from the late 1860s onward, Irish Nationalism was clearly established as a significant social and political force with the rise of Fenianism, the Home Rule movement and the Gaelic Revival, British imperial patriotism emerged as a strident phenomenon from the early 1870s and was an ideological discourse through which Ulster Conservatism, Unionism and the devotees of the Siege increasingly came to see themselves. It is useful to examine the character of Unionism and the Siege Myth within the perspective of the traits it shared with British social imperialism, if only to illuminate the difficulty, at an ideological level, which faced Unionism when the project of an "Ulster nationalism" was half-heartedly, briefly and unsuccessfully attempted during the crisis years of 1912-20.[40]

Disraeli has been credited with establishing the importance of patriotism in British politics in his Crystal Palace speech of 1872, when as one commentator noted, Disraeli discovered two things: "he had discovered the conservative working man, he had discovered the electoral value of imperial sentiment".[41] The growth of mass political activity and the expansion and consolidation of the empire both fed into the growth of popular imperialism. In this Britain was not unique. Beginning first in France, the concepts of patriotism and nationalism significantly altered in the early 1870s, shifting from concepts associated primarily with "liberalism and the Left" into a "chauvinist, imperialist and xenophobic movement of the right".[42] This shift impacted upon the character of politics throughout Europe. As the imperial and dynastic power structures of the continent adapted the language and momentum of patriotism into what Benedict Anderson has called their "official nationalisms", Irish

Conservatives found in the imagination of British imperial patriotism a counter to the ideological force of Irish Nationalism.[43]

To a great extent it was the English monarchy which became the focus of this process in British politics, symbolised in the idea of the "Crown" itself. The very constitutional powerlessness of the English Crown by the end of the nineteenth century made it, paradoxically, even more crucial as the ritually enhanced centrepiece of British imperial nationalism, a "symbol of consensus and continuity".[44] Certainly the Crown also emerges as a dominant symbol of the meaning of the Siege Myth in the same period. Defending the walls of Derry became centred around an avowed allegiance to the Crown. As an ideological symbol the Crown became both an idealised reflection of the meaning of the Union and the iconographic representation of the imagined community.

Of course, loyalty to the Crown was not new within Protestant political culture nor within the Siege Myth, where it had invariably been tied to a concept of religious distinctiveness. After the Relief parade of 1867 William Johnson argued that the "Apprentice Boys have shown today that they are ready not only to pay due respects to the Queen, but also ready, as of old, to man the walls in defence of her throne".[45] On the same occasion, the preacher of the Siege sermon called upon the Apprentice Boys as "champions of all Protestant truth, loyal to your Queen, come to the help of the Lord against the mighty".

To some extent the appeal to the symbolism of the Crown reflected the importance

of the "Covenanting tradition" within Irish Protestant political culture; the contractarian model of the state-society relationship that emerged as the mythologised legitimation of anti-authoritarian and anti-state sentiment in the late nineteenth century and which itself formed a strand feeding into the character of Ulster Unionist ideology.[46] Linked to this ideological tradition the Crown, conceived as the symbol of social and moral good, was also, however, disassociated from the mundane exercise of parliamentary power. To support the Crown and to oppose the abuse of power by government, were conceived, during key moments of crisis, as the central reason the Derry Siege had taken place. The Siege Myth therefore proved capable of legitimating the rejection of parliamentary authority.

However, the growing importance of the Crown outside the confines of this tradition and through the imagery of imperial nationalism must also be seen as a factor in the way the Crown came to act as a Unionist icon. As a symbol, the Crown came to incorporate the heightened prestige and profile afforded the imperial monarchy and combined that prestige with a diverse range of meanings. Speaking in Derry, in 1883, Lord Claud Hamilton argued that the feelings of "Ulster" were the same "as in days of old". Support for the Union, Protestantism, industrialisation and the imagined mission of empire was, for Hamilton, visible through support for the Crown, which was an icon embodying these various elements of identity:

> that national feeling (is)...in the first place, loyalty to the throne, and in the second a determination that, under no circumstances whatever, shall the union between this country and Great Britain ever be severed...Great Britain is the home of the manufactures of the world. She is the great centre from which Protestant Christianity radiates throughout the whole universe. She is the apostle of civil and religious

liberty throughout the world.[47]

Both Royal visits to Derry by Edward VII, as the then Prince of Wales in 1885 and again as King in 1903, demonstrated the growing propensity of the monarchy to take part in public symbolic display and provided an opportunity for local Unionists and the Apprentice Boys to show their "loyal" support of Union and empire:

> The monarch might well be proud of the unmistakeable evidence of love and loyalty which were manifest by all the creeds and classes...the generous and enthusiastic welcome should prove to their majesties that the heart of Ireland is loyal and that the people love their throne as intensely as their subjects in any other part of the Empire.[48]

The Crown was, therefore, a means to combine an Ulster Protestant identity with this more general imagination of social imperialism.

Similarly, the horizons of the political community in which the Siege Culture was conceived continued to be expanded beyond the confines of city and state to endorse the far-flung imperial regime. It became increasingly common during the 1870s and early 1880s for the Siege to be seen as a great moment in the "history of England" and one of the events which marked "a glorious era in the history of the Empire".[49] The bicentenary celebrations of 1888 and 1889 allowed this definition of the Siege Myth to be given full vent.[50] The Sentinel contended that these commemorations were designed for those who "stand true to Queen and country - that is the United Kingdom and the British empire".[51] Similarly, during the Shutting of the Gates anniversary in 1888, the Canon of the Cathedral, who was "chaplain" both to the "Lord Bishop" and the "Apprentice Boys" argued, with hyperbolic praise of the Siege

rare even on such occasions:

> We are to trace the wonderful dealings of God in the history of our Empire from that hour in which the Gates of Derry were closed...We trace all the greatness and the glory which belongs to the British nation to the noble defence of our walls.[52]

Eight months later the Bishop of Derry, William Alexander, gave the bicentenary Relief sermon. Alexander was a highly influential clerical figure in Unionist circles and a staunch advocate of opposition to Home Rule. His speech gave voice to these political beliefs and did so in a classic late-Victorian fusion of militarism, christianity, race theory and imperialism. It was a prime example of the ability of the cultural signs of the Siege to bear a variety of meanings at one and the same time, and combine them into a powerful ideological message. Alexander contended that the importance for the empire of the Siege was unequalled because of the "lesson" it provided:

> Here on the Walls of Derry we are reminded that "Principles are reined in blood"...the expiation of Calvary is the highest specimen of the universal law whereby shedding of blood is necessary...The earth is soaked with blood. Many of its fields - those around this very city - have been altars of immolation...For myself I confess that I hold this. A nation which is committed to the charge of vast masses of the human race cannot abnegate its military position without being guilty of treason against humanity. A race which has been imperial cannot say I will never go to war under any circumstances without contracting a taint which thins its blood and dooms it to permanent deterioration...Let us observe that a good cause and a good conscience were not wanting to those who were penned behind these Walls. For loyalty in those days as in these was an instinct strong in the natures of the Scotch and English settlers in Ulster.[53]

Even in the organisation of the Apprentice Boys itself a fledgling network of imperial links was beginning to emerge. While non-Irish branches of the Apprentice Boys clubs were a phenomenon of the twentieth century rather than the late nineteenth century, leading members of the Orange order in Canada and the United States, as well as from England, began to attend the Siege parades from this period onward. Their presence was invariably celebrated as an example of the integrity of the Anglo-Saxon imperial family. As early as 1873 representatives of Orangeism in Canada and John J. Bond, the Grand Master of the Orange Order in America took part in the Siege parades. During the laying of the foundation stone of the Memorial Hall these transatlantic visitors were presented with a crimson banner and an address that placed the Siege firmly in the context of empire and nation:

> Brothers in sentiment and principle, lovers alike of civil and religious freedom, whether under the starry banner of the great Anglo-Saxon Republic, or the blood-red flag of Britain's glorious empire, Derry places in your charge this heirloom of immortal memories the badge of a common heritage - the virgin flag of a besieged yet conquering city.[54]

Speaking after the bicentenary Relief parade, a Rev. John Moore of Boston, USA, addressed an audience gathered in the Memorial Hall that included, among the Apprentice Boys and city dignitaries, several representatives of Orange lodges from England as well as from other parts of Ireland. Proclaiming his admiration for what he called the "Puritan brains, intelligence and enterprise" that had "built up" America, he saw in the Siege a struggle of race and religion that had meaning far beyond the "City Walls":

> The United States is the outgrowth and daughter of Great Britain. We are

> substantially one race, having the same language and literature, with the same open bible, being the two great pillars of Christian civilisation and liberty. (Applause.) The event celebrated that day was one of the great events in the history of this and other nations. The celebration of the Relief of Derry was adapted to fire the Patriotism of true Americans as well as that of the true friends of civil and religious freedom in this part of the world.[55]

If the Siege meant anything it meant, argued Moore, that Ireland should not "be severed from the British empire".

The prospect of the imperial link being "severed" was, of course, the prospect that Home Rule held out. The mixture of populist Orange sectarianism and Victorian imperial patriotism was used as the rhetorical answer to the nationalist claims of cultural and ethnic integrity and the demand of national self-determination. The Siege Myth could also provide a parable of the imagined threat of Home Rule in far simpler and starker terms. An account of the life of Walker, published in 1887, by a member of the Dublin branch of the Apprentice Boys of Derry Club, insisted that he had lived in a period marked by "anarchy and outrage", confounded by "weak administrations...a chronic evil" and surrounded by "unscrupulous agitators" who were the "perennial curse of Ireland".[56] A Wicklow cleric speaking at the Relief bi-centenary meeting, argued, with a more than moderate degree of historical licence,

> Two hundred years ago they had in Ireland what at present there was much talk about today, namely, a Home Rule parliament. For a couple of months during the Siege of Derry that parliament was sitting in Dublin...the very first act which that Home Rule parliament had passed was an act for the Repeal of the Union.[57]

However, if the empire and the Crown were an important part of the Siege Myth, they were conditioned by two elements which were, indeed, more acutely expressed within Ulster Unionism than elsewhere: the limitations of the imperial state and the importance of religious difference. The failure of the state to come to the relief of the city was a theme given a fair airing during the 1880s and 1890s, when Home Rule was very much an issue central to Liberal party policy. Significantly, it was also often accompanied by an emerging sense of Ulster as a distinctive entity, though this was, as yet, a relatively tentative proposition and certainly the Siege defenders were still invariably seen racially as "English" or "Anglo-Saxon". In this vein the Belfast Newsletter, having described Tyrconnell as the "prototype of Mr Gladstone", argued that the celebration of the bicentenary

> was the sacred duty of every *Ulsterman*. Considering how much the defence of Derry meant to England it is only remarkable that the bicentenary of such an event was not made the subject of universal celebrations throughout the country. But the people of Ulster have long ago made acquaintance with the difficulty of impressing upon England the position which they have occupied toward the country that "planted" them... The battle which was fought on Derry's walls...is one of the most glorious achievements of the *English race*...Truly no more need be said to the descendants of such men as successfully defended Derry in 1689 - men whose example of heroism has need to be followed in 1889, when once again the *loyal province* is threatened with disaster.[58]

An even more explicit criticism of the state was voiced by Canon Dougherty during the Shutting of the Gates parade in 1888. Dougherty insisted that the Siege showed the importance of Derry for the maintenance of the Empire but continued by

promoting the example of "self-reliance" set during the Siege as the only means to achieve this end:

> Ours is a triumph but it is a triumph of the city. It owes nothing to English soldiery defending the Walls - nothing to English Generals directing the defence...and therefore there is more honour to the defenders and our ceremonial today is designed to pay it.[59]

This imagery of "self reliance" voiced the potential resistance of Ulster Protestants to the introduction of Home Rule and the eminently Victorian concept of "self reliance" would, itself, become a dominant theme in the construction of the "Honest Ulsterman" persona.

But if the struggle of the Siege was between an unreliable English authority and a "loyal province" which had to act for itself, the true goal of the Siege was, suggested Bishop Alexander, "to preserve civilisation in this land, to maintain order against the Celtic genius for anarchy". Similarly if the "Celt" had an apparently ingrained proclivity for "anarchy", how stark was the contrast to be drawn with that archetype of the imperial race, the "men of Ulster", possessed of a "three-fold characteristic",

> the spirit of law, of obedience to the law, the spirit of freedom, the very suspicion of slavery... (and)... the spirit of commerce... they would never be broken away from the unity of this great empire.[60]

By the early twentieth century the ideas of loyalty to the Crown, the necessity of the Union for maintaining the essential character of the Empire and the religio-racial difference of the Catholic-Celt and the Anglo-Saxon Protestant were an integral part of the symbolism of the Siege Myth. In turn, such characteristics were conceived,

in "Arnoldian" terms, as reflecting moral "goods" that were the inherent traits of different nations. The imagination of the Siege Myth was imbued with the imagination of Victorian and Edwardian imperialism. The Apprentice Boys, as self-sacrificing, patriotic, proud defenders of a city, ever ready for action, were cast in the same mould as the models projected in the popular culture of the British music hall or the pages of juvenile adventure fiction, the "energising myth of empire".[61]

In fact, the Siege was the subject of one such children's story, and significantly the 'Prentice Boys who saved an empire: a story of the Siege of Londonderry, published in 1905, was concerned as much with the promotion of evangelical Protestantism as it was with the imperial mission of English civilisation.[62] The publishers of this book, T.C and E.C. Jack, specialised in juvenile literature with an imperial theme, including a number of books on "the outposts of Empire".[63] In the 'Prentice Boys a "conniving, manipulative Priest" led a "vile rabble" consisting of the "scum of Ireland" against the "civilised" and "virtuous" "'Prentice Lads" within the walls. Not unlike Charlotte Elizabeth's Siege of Derry, a single Protestant family, in this case the Tomkins, personifies the struggle of the besieged and in this instance their spiritual salvation rests upon the victory of the empire. As one of the family proclaims, just as she is about to die: "bury me with my face toward England; there is the gospel, and from the saints there the light shall come to this dark, dark land".[64] With the ending of the Siege and the defeat of Catholicism the Tomkin males are feted for their endurance and valour, the young Tomkin girl "rewarded" with the promise of domestic and marital "bliss", partnering one of the original "Apprentice Boys". The "Empire is saved".

Here again it is possible to see the fusion of various political discourses and moral imperatives which made the Siege the bearer, less of a single political message than a world view. The "inter-relation of gender, religious and historic-political themes" was a means to project at one and the same moment the power of men, Protestants and the empire.[65] It could be particularly influential in the education of the young. At this time the headmaster of Foyle College, the leading Protestant school in Derry, was M. C. Hime. Hime wrote several books, bearing such titles as Morality, On Human nature as an Excuse for Sin and the intriguingly named Schollboy's Special Immorality. Hime's books reflect his affinity with the values propagated in the Edwardian public school system that was so crucial in promoting the ideology of empire. Hime was also Governor of the Apprentice Boys in the first decades of the twentieth century.[66]

By the turn of the century the Siege Myth had, therefore, come to encapsulate a political struggle that was defined in terms of both racial and religious difference and which promoted a particular moral value system. The combination of imperial-nationalism with the sectarianism of Protestant exclusivity was central. While there were obviously elements specific to the nature of Ulster Protestant political culture and the particular social formation of late nineteenth century Ireland, such a definition owed a great deal to the prevailing ideological currents of the day. The character of British patriotism in this age of empire was forged by the right from the early 1870s onward and such patriotism was "firmly identified with Conservatism, militarism, royalism and racialism".[67]

Certainly the Siege Myth, the Siege defenders and, by implication, the identity of Ulster Protestants in the period after 1880 were, at least in part, defined within this framework of imperial patriotism. The consolidation of a Victorian ideology that justified the exploitation of subject peoples throughout the world, was represented as a series of values which, when drawn together, constituted the substance of "Britain's unique imperial mission".[68] These same moral and social assumptions were etched onto the Siege Myth. Similarly, the militarist culture of the Siege parades, which promoted the mobilisation of popular political activity, fitted into the same model. These various dimensions were then symbolised in the elevated status afforded the increasingly ritualistic role of the crown.

Ulster Unionism and the Siege Myth differed from the main strains of imperial patriotism in two main areas, both dependent on the nature of Irish social and political life. In the first place this imperial-nationalism was combined with an anti-Catholicism born out of the sectarianised social relations of Irish society. Second, because of the particular relationship of Unionists to the British state, there also existed an embryonic, though deeply problematic, notion of Ulster Protestant distinctiveness. However the identity of Ulster Unionist ideology and of the Siege culture were so enmeshed in the idea of empire and the invented tradition of the planter that a theoretical basis conceived in "Ulster nationalist" terms was at best nebulous. The resort to the constitutional discourse of the covenanting tradition was the result as much of the failure of the language of nationalism to legitimate the role of Unionists as it was the evocation of a deeply ingrained political tradition.

The Apprentice Boys as "Honest Ulstermen": Derry Unionism and the Crisis of Empire in 1912

In 1911 Home Rule became a very real prospect after the right of veto over Commons legislation held by the House of Lords, a constitutional bastion and guarantor of the Union, had been reduced by the Parliament Act to a delaying power. The Unionist response was to embark on a mass political campaign that ultimately brought Ireland to the brink of civil war. That campaign was centred in the first instance upon the Ulster Solemn League and Covenant, a document grounded in the rhetoric of the "Covenant tradition". The Ulster Covenant of 1912 succinctly combined the ideological elements of Unionism, arguing that Home Rule would be "subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship and perilous to the unity of the empire".[69]

The Covenant concluded that, as "loyal subjects", the signatories should pledge themselves to use "all means necessary" to oppose Home Rule and that should an Irish parliament be introduced, they would "refuse to recognise its authority". Unionists were asked to rely upon themselves, the Crown and the "God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted". The campaign in support of the Covenant took shape in the Carson trail, a progression of mass public meetings held throughout the North in the latter part of 1912, climaxing on September 28th in the mass signing of the Covenant itself.

This period was crucial for the development of Unionist ideology and represented a

massive disjuncture from its previous manifestations. In a sense it represents the nadir of the imperial imagination, which undoubtedly never disappeared within the Ulster Unionist ideology but which never quite appeared in the same way again. This also proved to be a moment when the Siege Myth received a very distinctive definition. As part of the campaign in support of the Covenant a mass meeting was organised to be held in Derry in late September 1912. This meeting, and the events around, it were imbued with the symbolism of the Siege. It also allowed for one of the fullest expositions of the Siege Myth by a leading figure of the Unionist movement, Edward Carson. As such it is worth analysing in some depth to show how the Siege symbols offered a means to construct, discursively, the ideology of Unionism when it was in a period of crisis and change, and the way such discontinuity was represented as an apparently unchanging political discourse.

In Derry preparations for opposition to Home Rule and the visit of Carson centred on both the local Unionist Association and the Apprentice Boys, organisations which, by now, were substantially interlinked. Not only were the Apprentice Boys one of the groups affiliated to the Unionist Council but there were also a number of figures of the Apprentice Boys leadership prominent within the local party structure. The Honourary Secretary of the Apprentice Boys and several other officers were members of the Derry Unionist Association Council and in their Governor, M.C. Hime, the Apprentice Boys could claim both a Unionist member of the Corporation and a local magistrate.[70] Hime was also a leading member of the Orange Order, being for many years the Treasurer the City Grand Lodge, a representative for Donegal on the Irish Unionist Alliance and a delegate for Derry to the Ulster Unionist Council.[71]

Certain figures who were later to gain positions of authority within local Unionism were clearly active in the Apprentice Boys at this time. Matthew Kerr and James Wilton, both later members of the local party hierarchy, were prominent figures in the movement, Wilton regularly chaired Apprentice Boys meetings and Kerr was already Treasurer of the General Committee and President of the No Surrender Club.[72] Significantly, though, the leading figures of the local Unionist hierarchy, businessmen such as the railway owner, John McFarland, or the shirt manufacturer, R.N. Anderson, were neither members of the Apprentice Boys or ever evident in the parades. Professional and petit bourgeois Protestants continued to dominate the leadership of the Apprentice Boys.

The Hamilton family, with the Marquis ensconced as MP for Derry from 1903 onward, continued, however, to maintain their paternalistic and essentially ritualistic links. At the Relief parade of 1911 telegrams of support were received from the Duke of Abercorn and Lord Claud Hamilton. Lord Frederick Hamilton, one of the most populist and militant figures in the Ulster Unionist leadership, who was at the parade, gave a hint of what was to come as he informed the Apprentice Boys,

> the time is rapidly approaching when we North of Ireland Protestants shall have to make the people of England understand that we intend to preserve our civil and religious liberties as firmly in 1911 as our forefathers did in 1688.[73]

Such was the extent of Unionist dominance within Derry in the opening decade of the twentieth century that the Marquis of Hamilton had, in fact, been returned unopposed to the parliamentary seat in 1903 and 1906, and Unionism had further entrenched

itself within the local Corporation. In large part this was a result of the disarray of the local Nationalist organisation which, in the wake of the post-Parnellite splits, had collapsed into political immobility. By the 1910 and 1911 the Irish Parliamentary party had, however, begun to re-establish itself as a political force. A wave of labour activity in the city during the same period contributed to the growing challenge posed to the local elite.[74] The predicament of Unionism in Derry was therefore a microcosm of that faced by the ruling class throughout Ireland: a regime which had become assured in its economic and political authority, challenged on several fronts by the possibility of change.

The Covenant campaign afforded an opportunity to address both these immediate conditions and longer term tensions. The campaign was designed, in much the same vein as the Siege parades themselves, as an exercise in mass political display aimed at maximising the ideological impact of the Siege Myth on popular consciousness through carefully planned public demonstration. The "Carson Trail" was orchestrated to act in the same way, as was the mass signing of the Covenant itself: both were designed to express a sense communal solidarity through symbolic display. Public display was understood to be a powerful political tool by the Unionist leadership. In a letter written at the end of August the Unionist leader, Edward Carson, wrote to James Craig congratulating him on how "splendid" his preparations for Belfast were, adding that he hoped "as many working men's representatives as possible will get admission" and that,

> I do not know whether it is feasible, but I think if "Ulster Day" could wind up with bonfires through the country it would be impressive and create enthusiasm.[75]

The Carson trial began in Enniskillen on September 18th and arrived in Derry on the evening of Friday 20th. The symbolism, rituals and imagery of the Siege Myth seeped into every aspect of an event staged as "a Royal Progress".[76] The demonstration began when Carson and a large party, including F.E. Smith, James Craig, the Duke of Abercorn and Marquis of Hamilton, were met at the railway station by a large crowd and a procession headed by the Apprentice Boys, accompanied by their three bands. A military guard was also there to welcome Carson as "the commander-in-chief of the Irish loyalist forces", and was made up of members of the local Ulster Club, dressed in their uniforms "trimmed with crimson bands" and the recently established local brigade of Boy Scouts, the "juvenile face of popular imperialism".[77]

After a "crimson handkerchief" was attached to Carson's carriage, the parade proceeded into the centre of the city, passing a Nationalist crowd held back by a large contingent of police at the bottom of Bridge Street. The Britannia band led the way playing "Derry's Walls" on a route which was clearly designed to make a symbolic passage into the walled city. There was "a great outburst of cheering as Carson passed within the walls" before the procession marched down to be met at the Guildhall (where the evening rally was to be held) by delegations of local Unionist groups, the Apprentice Boys, and a "number of Unionist workers".[78]

The Guildhall, like late nineteenth and early twentieth century town halls and public buildings constructed throughout Europe, was a product of the vogue for monumental civic architecture and bore the hallmarks of its social and political environment. It

was a redolent architectural expression of the character of Unionist ideology. Although much of the building designed by John Guy Ferguson had been destroyed by fire in 1908, the original tower remained and the rest was re-constructed in much the same "Tudor-Gothic style with Scottish overtones".[79] Stained glass windows inside the building celebrated the link with the imperial capital and several windows were commissioned by the leadership of local Unionism. Following the example of the Cathedral, which had installed a window in mid-1911 dedicated to the Apprentice Boys, a work was commissioned in 1912 depicting various episodes from the Siege.[80] At the inauguration of the Cathedral window the Duke of Abercorn had combined biblical analogy and Siege imagery to explain the position of Unionism in 1912:

> I consider this a most appropriate time for placing a window in the Cathedral in memory of the celebrated Siege of Derry...The Prophet Jeremiah had sufficient confidence in the future of Jerusalem to buy a field there, although the enemy of the King of Babylon was actually investing the city. We have a like confidence in the future of Derry Cathedral, in spite of lowering clouds.[81]

In fact, only three months before Carson's meeting, a window had been unveiled in the Guildhall showing the "Relief of Derry" based on Folingsby's mid-nineteenth century painting. Paintings of William and Mary, presented to the Corporation in the late 1890s, adorned the main promenade. A large statue of Queen Victoria stood in the main entrance hall. Commissioned for Victoria's Diamond jubilee in 1898, this statue stood on "a richly carved piece of Indian Ornamentation suggesting the title of Empress of India". It was flanked on either side by busts of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, "in commemoration of their majesties visit to Londonderry in 1903, being the first visit of a reigning Sovereign of great Britain to the city".[82] Even the sound

of Guildhall tower clock contained an echo of empire as it marked the hours with a chime specifically designed to be "similar to the Westminster clock".[83]

The Guildhall was the setting for the climax of the days events, a mass rally attended by several hundred within the hall and a large crowd including "many unionists from a distance", who thronged the square outside. Almost all the speakers at this meeting married the message of Unionist intransigence in the face of Home Rule with the imagination of the Siege. They also dwelt at length upon the nature of popular Conservatism and imperial patriotism.

The Duke of Abercorn opened the meeting by "especially mentioning the working men of Derry" because "the working men of Derry are the finest body of men to be found in the United Kingdom". They would, Abercorn argued, be in the vanguard of opposition to Home Rule as they showed by their presence at the rally, which

> reminds one of the days when about 250 years ago, a great meeting was held in Derry of Loyalist supporters of King William as to whether they should admit French emissaries and other soldiers connected with King James into this historic city of Derry.[84]

There had been, Abercorn went on, "only one traitor at that meeting", while the resolve of the rest had been to "fight and resist". He concluded by hoping that the Unionists of 1912 would "fight and resist it [Home Rule] as your ancestors did". Abercorn had been a major figure in the Unionist party since the 1880s, when he had been the first president of the Ulster Unionist Council. He was also one of the most active advocates of popular Unionist militancy. As well as being head of the Tyrone UVF in 1912, Abercorn had been a founder of the "civilian force", earlier that year

which was designed to "assist in the maintenance of law and order...in times of emergency. The use of such a force he [Abercorn] pointed out should be realised at times when the community was threatened with widespread labour difficulty.[85] Abercorn linked the cause of the Union to the identity of empire. This may be in part be explained by his own interests in Britain's imperial possessions. As his Times obituary noted in 1913, Abercorn had also, "in his later years become largely interested in colonial and especially South African affairs" and was from the early 1900s President of the British South African Company.[86]

The theme of betrayal was taken up by Abercorn's son, Lord Ernest Hamilton, who concentrated particularly on the need to be sceptical of state authority and to prepare for mass popular action behind leaders who could be relied upon from within the ranks of the "besieged". Hamilton had led the Apprentice Boys during the UVF march past at the Balmoral meeting in April, 1912. In his expression of authoritarian-populist political mobilisation at the Guildhall meeting, the Siege again formed a central metaphor for Hamilton. This was not, Hamilton suggested

> the only time that they had been confronted with a similar peril but never before had the peril been so close. There was not a workingman in the city of Derry who was not prepared to take his part in the contest as their friend Sir Edward Carson. 223 years ago when the enemy was at the gates of Derry there was dissention among the leaders, but happily there was none today. There were no Mr Pliable, Mr Timorous or Mr Facing-Both ways. The Gates of Derry were shut in the face of the enemy, and history had justified their action...The men of Derry would be degenerate descendants of their brave forefathers if they allowed their liberties to be filched away...they would face (their future) with determination, resolution and

steadfastness.[87]

The virtues Hamilton ascribed to the "Men of Derry" formed an aspect of the imagined "Honest Ulsterman" persona which he himself sought to promote throughout this period. In The Soul of Ulster, which Hamilton published in 1917, he personified the Ulsterman in the form of their seventeenth century antecedents, planters and empire builders who could

> boast some fine sterling qualities...Treachery of any kind was looked upon with unspeakable abhorrence. They were brave...with a dogged, resolute bravery that was equally a part code, and they had a strong sense of justice...a race endowed with many of the essentials for successful colonisation.[88]

These "qualities" he noted were at that time not necessarily appreciated from "a national point of view", nor did many in England understand that the difference of Nationalist and Unionist was not "sentimental, traditional or merely religious". The struggle over Home Rule was the same as that fought at Derry, "one of the most gallant and stirring achievements in the history of the world", a battle for the ownership and control of land gained through colonial conquest and of

> race...on the one side we have the Roman Catholic natives, an emotional and credulous people...on the other side we have the Protestants - British colonists...Protestants...a strong race, brave and true, and with a clean conscience...to the position which they have built for themselves in the country they will cling with the last gasp of their bodies.[89]

The same notion of a specifically Ulster character reflected in the Siege Myth was

taken up by another speaker, Colonel Packenham, a local Unionist leader, who also linked it to populist political action:

> The people of the North of Ireland are a hard-headed and canny folk and were they to be stirred up to rebellion for the sake of rebellion, or for the sake of leaders who were playing a game... Who was it closed the Gates of Derry? It was not the leaders but the people who closed the gates of Derry.[90]

These two speeches give voice to a significant shift in the definition of the Siege that represents more than a mere change in political tactics. George Boyce has argued that for non-Irish Unionists, the 1912 and 1914 period was "their last crusade...(to)... prevent the decline of Britain as a nation". While the notion that Britain as a "nation" had ever existed in the first place is highly contentious, certainly, as Boyce goes on to suggest, the failure of this ideological project was the inability to conceive a "theory of Britishness that could encompass all patriotically minded men and women on both sides of the Irish Sea". The creation of the "Honest Ulsterman" was one result of this, but Unionism had still to construct this self-definition within the framework of imperial patriotism, the "Honest Ulsterman" would "take on the role of imperial defenders".[91]

Nowhere was the Siege Myth more apparent, however, than in the speech of Carson himself. Throughout his speech Carson's political and ideological language was driven and given substance by the vivid symbolism of the Siege. This operated at a number of levels. A central ideological function of Myth is that it projects the idea of a "recurring past" and thereby raises the mundanity of social reality into the epic proportions of "Sacred time".[92] By signing the Covenant, suggested Carson, Derry

Protestants would not so much "make history" as live

> the old history of two hundred years ago. Confronted with old dangers and the old enemy, we are going to have the old victory...We mean, so far as Derry is concerned, by the signing and publication of that Covenant, once more to close the gates against the enemy.[93]

In turn, those who did not sign the Covenant (and there was a small dissenting group within the Derry Unionist leadership who were opposed to it) "must be regarded as the successors of the infamous Lundy".[94]

Combined with the mythic element of the "recurring past" is the sacrificial myth, the cultural representation of social suffering, political disempowerment or psychological distress. Richard Kearney has argued (correctly) that Orange culture tends to identify with "the triumphalist figures of their historical victories: King Billy and Carson". However, Kearney misconceives the sacrificial dimension of the Siege Myth, regarding Lundy as the archetype of sacrifice within the Siege culture: "when the Loyalists stage an annual ritualistic burning of the Lundy simulacrum...it is not to sanctify the sacrificial victim but to pour scorn on him".[95] Lundy has little to do with "sacrifice" in this sense, but is a warning to those who may be tempted to step outside the narrow confines of collective communal values and practices. Similarly, while triumphalism has been a central component of the Siege culture, this reflects the political and social reality of empowerment and dominance. During periods when Unionists were confronted with a cohesive challenge, the sacrificial dimension of the Siege, represented by the suffering of the inhabitants of the city, comes to the fore. In this vein Carson argued that loyalty and betrayal were represented in the Covenant and Lundy:

What do we mean by the Covenant? We are going to make mutual pledges, one with the other and any man who having made that pledge goes back on it or fails at the critical moment let him be aware that he is a betrayer to his brother...he will be an ignoble successor of Lundy...and there is nowhere in the world where Lundyism or Russellism is better understood than in Derry".[96]

On the other hand, the sense of sacrifice is much to the fore and represented by the suffering of the besieged community. Salvation, in this instance, could only come from both secular and metaphysical struggle:

> You know better than any other people in Ireland what those behind the Walls of Derry had to suffer, and what I believe you are prepared, if necessary, having signed the Covenant, to suffer again. Have you ever read the description of that great citizen-soldier Hunter as to what was the condition of affairs in this very city..."I am sure it was the Lord who kept the city and no-one else, for there were many of us who could hardly stand on our feet...it was not the poor starving men who were in Derry who kept them out, but the might God of Jacob, to whom be praise for ever and ever". Now Gentlemen on Saturday week you will be asked to sign this Covenant.[97]

Like Hamilton, Carson conceived the basis of resistance to Home Rule to be rooted, in the first instance, on an imagined character of the Ulsterman. For Carson this ideal figure was cast in the much the same mould as the imagined imperial soldier-administrator of Edwardian imperial propaganda:

> You are entering into that sacred obligation with the same spirit, the same determination, the same calmness and the same reasoning as influenced your forefathers when they resisted James II.[98]

This "sacred obligation" would defend three things: the "economic progress and material prosperity" provided by the Union, "civil and religious freedom and "the glory of the Empire". But what is so striking is the extent to which the imagination of the empire and the imagery of Derry as a besieged outpost were being significantly re-cast. Rather than being able to rely upon the heart of the empire and the imperial state, the clearest of distinctions had to be drawn between the besieged, who were defined as the Ulster Protestant community, and all others. This was a critical break and reflected the level of conflict of interest that existed between those in control of British policy and Ulster Unionists.

A torchlight procession followed the Guildhall rally, with Carson pulled in his coach to the railway station by a body of the Apprentice Boys following the Britannia band.[99] If the planners of this carefully staged procession hoped, as Carson had done a month before, that a late night pyrotechnic display would instill "enthusiasm", such was certainly the case. Rioting occurred throughout the night as hundreds of Unionist marchers clashed with Nationalist crowds in the area of the Diamond.[100] A week later the Covenant was signed by several thousand Unionists in Derry as elsewhere in the North.[101]

What the Carson Trial meeting of 1912 reveals is the extent to which the Siege Myth had become a model for political opposition. This clearly reflected wider shifts in the nature of Unionist politics in a period when Unionists found themselves utterly at odds with British government policy. What is equally significant, however, is that this process did not involve the wholesale rejection of previous cultural norms and social

and political values. On the contrary, the actions and attitudes of Unionists were construed as maintaining the historic mission and belief system of the community.

However, this was a markedly different set of political and historical circumstances given the emergence of conflict with the state. This situation, in turn, ensured the re-articulation of the tenets of Unionism and a re-definition of the meaning of the Siege. From the mid-nineteenth century onward Ulster Protestant identity and been constituted in relation to an identity of empire. This continued to be the case and imperial patriotism remained a basic tenet of Ulster Unionist ideology. Yet, imperial patriotism was combined, during periods of crisis, with an antagonism toward the centre of power which was also projected symbolically. The most obvious example of this was the persona of the Honest Ulsterman, "a central motif in the loyalist myth-structure which emerged from about 1885.[102]

From the mid-1880s there is a similar (and growing) concentration in the mythic representation of the Siege upon the need for self reliance and independent action as exemplified in the figure of the Apprentice Boys shutting the gates of the city. The imagery of the Apprentice Boy was the central icon of collective identity within the Siege Myth. Within the context of an imperial-national identity it was the Apprentice Boy who provided an exemplary model to follow. The Apprentice Boy was also the idealisation of the Protestant working class, actively defending the walls of both community and the Union through mass political mobilisation. When political crisis called for active political participation and opposition to authority, it was through the tableau of the Shutting of the Gates that such action and opposition could be voiced

and legitimised.

Crisis also meant stressing the potential of betrayal by the state. The concept of loyalty, which lay at the core of communal self identity, provided the means to articulate claims on the state. Within the imagination of the Siege the antithesis of such loyalty was the betrayal not only of Lundy but also of the reluctant relief force. At the beginning of the Carson trail meeting in the Guildhall in September, 1912, a ballad was sung which gave voice to this Loyalist sense of betrayal:

> For Britain's honour we have fought,
>
> Our sons with her did die.
>
> And e'er old England casts us off
>
> We want a reason why.
>
> Fair Derry's Walls once, long ago,
>
> Heard Ulster's stern reply -
>
> It lives, for still we call our own,
>
> That "No Surrender" cry.[103]

It was political crisis which conditioned this articulation of the Siege Myth, and the imagery of "besiegement", already so endemic within the rhetoric of Unionism, was only to become even more so in the years to follow. The imperial identity, that had been a crucial feature of popular Unionism and of the Siege Myth through from the days of Macaulay, contorted under the pressure of events and would emerge, if not thoroughly changed, then at least suffused with a different spirit.

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CHAPTER VII

THE SIEGE WALLS OF A BORDER CITY: FROM CRISIS TO STATE HEGEMONY IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Between 1912 and 1925 Unionism was transformed from a movement of political opposition into a party of power that enjoyed a virtual monopoly of political leadership within the Ulster Protestant community and the newly created state of Northern Ireland. In this process integrative collective myths, such as that of the Derry Siege, played an ever greater role and the imagery of besiegement permeated all aspects of Unionist ideology. The idea of besiegement, as Patrick Buckland has suggested, came to define the position of the state itself after partition,

> Ulster Unionists thus felt like an embattled community under siege from the forces of evil... In view of this Catholic/nationalist threat, real or imagined, such was the need to maintain party unity that progressive tendencies and policy debates within the Unionist movement were discouraged.[1]

As every electoral contest after 1921 became, in essence, a referendum on the border, Unionism insisted that politics was a straightforward struggle between two forces; the external threat and the besieged. The situation, as far as Unionism was concerned, called both for the domination of the former and the internal solidarity of the latter. A sense of Siege shaped the very nature of politics and power in this new state and also provided Unionism with the ideological justification for the social, political and economic discrimination practised against northern Catholics.

The Catholic community had been represented as the threat of "the Other" within Unionist ideology and in the Siege Myth over a long period of time.[2] That was nothing new. However, what was different in the period 1912 to 1925 was the way in which that imagery was interwoven with other perceived "threats" to shore up the social alliances that underpinned Unionist hegemony in the new state. This, in turn, was a response to differences and potential divisions within Unionism itself.

Disunity within the Unionist bloc had not been unknown before 1912. One source of such division had been the tradition of liberal Presbyterianism, although this was on the wane from the 1870s onward. Fed, in part, by working class alienation, Independent Orangeism had also represented an "episodic" challenge to the dominance of the Unionist elite, combining a virulent anti-Catholicism with a militant anti-authoritarianism.[3] Growing Protestant working class involvement in the labour movement, signalled by the Belfast Dock strike of 1907, similarly suggested a possible limit to Unionism's hegemonic hold. As Paul Bew *et al.* have argued, the decade which straddled the introduction of partition saw the social forces, that created such potentially divisive movements, integrated into the Unionist bloc to a previously unrealised degree.[4]

The primary organisational vehicles for such integration were the Orange Order and the populist and paramilitary groups established by Unionism, from 1912 onward, to channel Protestant working class activity; in particular the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) and the Ulster Unionist Labour Association (UULA). Tony Gray goes so far as to argue that the "very creation of the state of Northern Ireland was a triumph for

the Orange Order".[5] The emergence of both the UVF and the UULA also marked a "shift in political relations within the Protestant class bloc" which gave "institutional and official status...(to the) ...Orange section of the working class".[6]

Significantly, groups such as the UVF and the UULA became more important than the Apprentice Boys as a practical means for Unionism to organise political and paramilitary activity in Derry in the 1910s and 1920s. While in the 1860s and 1880s the Apprentice Boys Clubs were the major institutional focus for popular Protestant political mobilisation in the city, the UVF and the UULA proved far more effective than the Apprentice Boys, given the changed circumstances and aims of Unionism, between 1912 and 1925. The Apprentice Boys, as with the Siege parades themselves, were far more important in symbolic and ideological terms.

With the foundation of the state of Northern Ireland the Siege Culture became a symbolic component of Unionism's ideological apparatus. The marches and regalia of Orangeism and the Siege became a means to public enact the imagined relationship between the state and the Protestant community. Patronised by members of the local Unionist party and involving a growing number of participants from outside the city, the Siege Culture became far less an agency of actual political mobilisation than an annual performance of Unionist populism and a display of Unionist power. In this way, Unionism integrated the invented traditions of the Siege and the cycle of seventeenth century struggles into the image of the state itself.

As a mirror of the state the Siege Myth reflected the fact that the primary ideological

vehicles of integration for Unionism in the first decades of the twentieth century were the images of threat and besiegement. Again, it was the ability of certain key symbols within the structure of the Siege Myth to articulate a diversity of meanings simultaneously that made it such an influential element of Unionist ideological discourse. The interrelation of elements through symbols allowed, in this instance, the fusion of various "threats" into a single "enemy without". In particular, it allowed the challenge of Irish nationalism to be blended with the fear of a socialist revolution or even significant social change.

Such a fear was acutely felt by the leadership of Unionism during the late 1910s and early 1920s. That the threat of the "Red Menace" was essentially the same as that of a besieging Catholic community was also a favourite theme of Unionist propagandists. Writing in 1919, Herbert Moore Pim concluded his book Unconquerable Ulster with the suggestion that, "a sordid class war was clothed with exceeding cunning in the robes of a national struggle of liberty. Now the dead secret of the Nationalists is out of the bag... A well known Unionist writer named the legions of Sinn Feiners Bolsheviks".[7] Similarly, H.S. Morrison, a prominent member of the South Derry Unionist party and the UVF, wrote, in 1920, that the Orange Order and Unionism were not only designed to "defend Protestantism" but also to oppose

> the gathering forces of anti-Christian socialism and the aggressive atheistical labour movement that threatens to overwhelm all sections of Christianity in a common ruin. I cannot help thinking that forces such as the Institution (Orange Order) might, if rightly handled, offer a solid resistance to a common enemy.[8]

What was most noticeable was that all such challenges to Unionism were constituted as intrinsically "alien" to the Protestant community.

Here, too, Unionism shared a common theme with British Conservatism and the legacy of imperial patriotism. As David Dutton has recently argued, the first decades of the twentieth century were ones in which the British empire was increasingly challenged by a variety of forces and this gave rise to the popularity of "invasion literature", a xenophobic obsession with the perceived threat of the alien.[9] Within the Siege Myth such an alien threat was invariably seen in the shape of the besieger. This alien besieger could, however, variously be the Catholic minority in the six counties, the Free State government, the Catholic Church, or the labour militant. All were understood to be detrimental to the way of life of Northern Protestants and all occupied the same place within the Siege cycle. These various threats could therefore be moulded together through the symbol system of the Siege to constitute a single challenge; the "enemy without".

It was through this sense of Siege and the threat of the "alien enemy without" that Unionism achieved a previously unattainable unanimity of support from almost all Ulster Protestants. The threat of the other was therefore an essential component of the Siege as a successful integrative myth. As well as limiting the possibility of internal dissention the threat of the besieger was also, then, able to legitimate the existence of the Northern state and the sectarian organisation of social and political power. The Siege mentality became the essence of Ulster Unionism.

To analyse the role the "alien threat" played within the Siege Myth and the development of Unionism in Derry in the early twentieth century it is first necessary to examine the nature of the Siege parades and the Apprentice Boys movement by the

1920s. Within this context it is then possible to look at the use of the rhetoric of threat and besiegement within Unionism. In turn, the rhetoric and symbolism of the "enemy without" can be examined as part of the process which made the Siege Myth the essential cultural motif of Unionism as it became the hegemonic ideology of the state of Northern Ireland. Ultimately, this process needs also to be seen in relation to the real political and economic struggles which characterised the period.

Personnel, Practices and the Expansion of the Parades: The Apprentice Boys and the Unionist party, 1900-1930

By the early twentieth century the Siege parades were massive affairs, attended by thousands from within the city and large numbers of those from elsewhere. The Apprentice Boys had established a number of branches outside Derry. The parades were also accompanied by the full range of rituals and cultural practices associated within popular Orangeism. As such they provided a primary focus for a sense of community and politico-cultural activity for Protestants in Derry. By the early 1920s they were also patronised to a greater extent than ever before by members of the local Unionist hierarchy. While certain Unionist figures had always been involved with the Apprentice Boys, and while there was a close relationship between the clubs and the Unionist party from the late nineteenth century, local Unionist leaders were far more likely to be members and actively involved with the Apprentice Boys after 1912. This marked a significant change in the nature and role of the Siege culture in the political life of the city.

In his book Modern Ulster, published in 1920, H.S. Morrison described the Apprentice Boys as a "bastion of anti-socialism", dedicated to promoting "true imperialism, and love for civil freedom with which our colonial empire has so beneficially leavened". He also noted the extent to which the Clubs had expanded in size and numbers in the previous few years;

> from all parts of the Anglo-Saxon world, Canada, Australia, United States, England, and Scotland, members are joining this order...I think it was established many years ago, but of recent years it has become widely diffused in Protestant circles.[10]

While never as widespread a movement as the Orange Order, the Apprentice Boys had, indeed, grown significantly by the first decades of the twentieth century. Groups and bodies organised in connection with the Siege and the Apprentice Boys had been founded outside the city from the 1880s onward. The majority still tended to be located in the north-west area and certainly the Apprentice Boys was always more popular in the immediate area of Derry and had far less appeal than the Orange Order in most other places. While the Orange Order had anything up to 100-125,000 members within Northern Ireland alone, membership of the Apprentice Boys never exceeded 15-20,000. As late as the 1960s, for example, one commentator claimed that no more than 10% of Orangemen in Co. Armagh were members of the Apprentice Boys.[11] C.D. Milligan, a leading figure in the Apprentice Boys and the editor of the Sentinel from the 1930s suggested that while

> members of the Apprentice Boys of Derry Association are to be found in almost every part of the globe, it cannot be regarded as a world-wide body in the sense that the Orange Institution and the Royal Black institution are.[12]

By the 1920s and 1930s there were seven parent clubs; the Apprentice Boys of Derry, No Surrender, Walker, Murray, Mitchelburne, Baker and Browning. Most of these clubs had been formed in the mid-nineteenth century, although the Baker club was only set up in 1927. While these clubs did not control the sort of widespread movement ruled over by the Grand Orange lodge, they did form branches in other parts of Ulster and elsewhere from the early part of the 1900s onward. Branches of the Walker club were formed, amongst other places, in Armagh, in 1891 and Kilrea, in 1907.[13] The Walker club had also formed a Belfast branch as early as 1888 and, although this ceased to exist only three years later, it formed a new branch in the city in 1904. The Mitchelburne club also formed a Belfast branch in 1904 and by the 1920s had over a dozen branches affiliated to the parent club.[14] The Murray club had a Belfast branch from 1900 onward and along with the No Surrender club it was one of the first clubs to form branches outside of Ireland. Both the Murray club and the No Surrender club established the first Scottish branches of the Apprentice Boys in 1903 and, in 1911, the Murray set up a branch in Bootle, Liverpool.[15] Located in cities with a large and influential presence of the Orange Order, this expansion emphasised the diffusion of the Siege culture that Morrison was to note a decade later.

In the aftermath of the First World War there was a general upsurge in the size and activity of various Unionist organisations stimulated by the demobilisation of large numbers of soldiers and the changing political environment. The reformation of the UVF and the setting up of the UULA were part of this process. Several new lodges of the Orange Order were also established in Derry and the symbolic importance of the Siege for Derry Protestants led one of these new lodges to be named the "Relief

of Derry" L.O.L. The Relief of Derry lodge was also awarded the warrant number "1689" by the Grand Lodge. Several members of this lodge were particularly influential within Orange and Unionist circles in the next two decades.[16]

The end of the war in 1918 also boosted the expansion of the Apprentice Boys. 1919 saw probably the largest single influx of members into the organisation at any one time, when several hundred returning servicemen were initiated on the Relief anniversary of that year.[17] The next few years also saw a rash of new branches created throughout the North. While the General Committee of the Association remained the main coordinating body, the increasing size and complexity of the movement meant that a level of regional organisation had to be introduced. Significantly, it was for the Belfast area that the first regional amalgamated committee. Designed to "co-ordinate and umbrella all the clubs in that particular area", the Belfast Amalgamated Committee was set up in 1925.[18] In fact, the whole period from 1900 to 1930 was one of rapid expansion in the size and numbers of the Apprentice Boys clubs and even by the time partition was introduced, the institution had a far larger membership, a far greater geographical spread and a far more central place in the cultural organisation of Protestant communal identity than ever before.

The greater geographical spread and more fully developed political and cultural significance of the Siege Myth were well evidenced in the Siege parades by the early 1920s. During 1920 and 1921 restrictions were imposed upon the conduct of the parades which were not fully removed until 1924. Even still branches from Belfast, Liverpool and Glasgow were present at the parade in 1922, and up to twelve marching

bands took part.[19] The Relief parade of 1924 was, however, the first to take place without any limits upon its activities after the introduction of partition and was "the largest since prewar days".[20] Aside from those taking part from Derry itself there were an estimated 20,000 visitors to the city with over thirty branches marching with their parent clubs. In addition to the seven local bands which played in the parade there were a further twenty seven bands accompanying the various out of town branches.

Parades on this sort of scale became the norm from this point onward and, if anything, they grew in size in the 1930s. In 1935 an estimated 3,000 Apprentice Boys travelled from Belfast alone for the Relief parade and the eight parent clubs were joined by as many as seventy five branch clubs. As well as the large influx from Belfast, for whom it was necessary to lay on twenty special trains, there were members present from as far afield as Glasgow, Liverpool and Philadelphia. At least nine new clubs had been established in that year alone, including branches in Birkenhead near Liverpool, Larne, Trillick in Scotland and Ballinakellew, Co. Donegal. By the mid-1930s the Apprentice Boys were well established as a sizeable and significant movement in all the major centres of Orangeism.[21]

The growing size of the parades was however only part of the story. Just as significant was the growing complexity of the rituals involved with the Siege culture and the increasingly lavish preparations which surrounded the parades. Many of these practices had been in existence before the 1914-18 war, but after partition they became far more developed, widespread and regular occurrences. Again, this is

apparent from the early 1920s onward. A ban placed upon the Siege parade in 1920 meant that all the branches stayed away and the parent clubs were limited to a parade around the cathedral. Despite this Orange arches were built in Protestant working class areas throughout the city. Particularly ornate examples appeared in Fountain street, Fountain Place and Wapping lane. Crowds also gathered around bonfires on the night of the twelfth "and sang the National Anthem".[22] The following December, with the ban still in place, Lundy's effigy was burnt from the Memorial Hall while a crowd around it sang "Derry's Walls".[23]

In 1924, with all restrictions removed, these various rites and rituals were entered into with even greater gusto. Orange arches appeared throughout the city alongside a "plentiful display of flags". An arch built in Carlisle square declared "Fermanagh and Tyrone we'll never disown" and painted on the wall at the end of Carlisle bridge was a mural declaring, "The spirit of 1688-89 is still as strong as ever".[24] Mural painting was a relatively recent innovation within Ulster Protestant political culture, particularly in Derry. The first such paintings appeared in working class areas in Belfast in the period prior to the 1912-14 Home Rule crisis, but only in the 1920s and 1930s did mural painting became a common feature of Orangeism and Unionism.[25] In the early 1920s the first Protestant murals appeared in Derry.

One of these early murals has also proved the longest-lasting. Perhaps the most famous, and certainly the oldest, wall mural still in existence in Northern Ireland, the "Siege of Derry" mural in the Fountain area, was first painted by Bobby Jackson in the early 1920s. For many years the verger of St. Columb's cathedral, Jackson was

also a life long member of the Apprentice Boys.[26] The "Siege of Derry mural", painted in Fountain place, was split into two parts. One half was based upon Benjamin West's painting, from the 1860s, of William III crossing the Boyne, an image widely popularised through its reproduction in cheap prints and Orange pamphlets. The other half celebrated the Relief of the Siege in 1689. Again, this depiction was based upon an earlier painting commonly reproduced in Orange literature and ephemera. Folingsby's painting of the Relief, which Jackson used as the basis for the mural, had Walker at its centre, standing on top of the city walls pointing down the Foyle toward the three ships as they broke the boom. Along side the image of William III crossing the Boyne this painting of the Relief was therefore a triumphal celebration of a victory secured.

During the 1930s Orange arches built for the Relief and Shutting of the Gates anniversaries became ever more elaborate and the street displays of flags, bunting and wall paintings, ever more extensive. Here again wider trends underwrote these developments. The early 1920s saw the great anniversaries of Orangeism marked on an unprecedented scale. The building of Orange arches, the flying of flags, the painting of murals and the production of Orange ephemera all boomed and each became a definitive part of how Orangeism, Protestantism and Unionism wee popularly understood and manifest.

Within the parades themselves the element of display was not only reflected in the wearing of crimson sashes, which was already a well-established feature by the 1920s, but also in the common practice, by the 1930s, for each branch to carry a large

banner, almost invariably showing a key moment or figure from the Siege story. The growing number of bands which accompanied the clubs and branches also reflected a build up in the level of display involved with the parades and, by the mid-1930s, there was regularly well over thirty marching bands involved in the Relief anniversary. The theatricality of the parades was, of course, epitomised in the burning of the Lundy effigy. These effigies were usually around twenty feet high and, although the December events were not as large as those in the summer, anything up to 10,000 people would gather around Walker's Pillar to watch this giant figure set alight. From the early 1920s up until relatively recently the design and construction of these effigies was the responsibility of the Jackson family.

A proliferation of plaques and memorials dedicated to the Siege were commissioned in the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting growing official interest in the Siege.[27] This level of official sanction of the Siege Myth also reflected another important aspect of changes in the Siege culture during this period; the greater active participation of members of the local Unionist political elite. Direct links between the Apprentice Boys and the local business and land owning community had something of a chequered development. Periods of heightened political tension tended to produce more active involvement, as the crises of the 1880s and the 1912-14 period had shown. But equally these periods emphasised the fact many of those who dominated Derry Conservative and Unionist politics were relatively little involved, particularly on a day to day basis. Certain sections of the Protestant middle class had always tended to be most prominent in the movement and while some of those, such as John Guy Ferguson, Daniel Mulholland and M.C. Hime, undoubtedly wielded a degree of

influence within the local Unionist party, they were far from being its leading members.

In the period after 1914, and particularly after 1920, the leadership of the Apprentice Boys became dominated by figures who were, indeed, prominent in Derry Unionism. While the post-war era saw the rapid demise of the role the Hamilton family played in Derry political life, certain other families in the city with a history of influence in the Apprentice Boys were also powerful within the local Unionist party. The closer links between the clubs and the party can be seen in the careers of three men in particular, James Wilton, Maxwell Scott Moore, and Matthew Kerr.

Wilton was a local businessman who emerged as a Unionist political activist in the midst of the Home Rule crisis. Among those who organised the UVF in Derry in 1912, Wilton subsequently served with the Ulster division during the war. In the 1920 local government election Wilton became a town councillor and remained a member of the Corporation until the 1950s. Wilton was mayor of the city for several years during the late 1930s, a position which continued to carry far more than purely ceremonial functions. During the 1920s and 1930s Wilton was, in fact, one of the most influential figures within the local Unionist party.

Wilton was also a life-long member of the Apprentice Boys and an active participant in the parades from the early part of the century. He served for many years as the president of the Apprentice Boys parent club as well as being the president of the Britannia band, the most well-established marching band in the city. When the Derry

corporation discussed the proposal by the Stormont government that July 12th should be made a bank holiday, in 1924, Wilton suggested, "I would support the resolution if the 12th of August was substituted for the 12th of July".[28] Paralleling his political career, Wilton became more prominent in the Apprentice Boys during the 1920s and 1930s. In 1925 he briefly held the position of Lieutenant Governor and did so again during the war years 1939-45.

If anything, Maxwell Scott Moore was even more influential than Wilton within the Unionist party. Moore was a wealthy figure who derived his political influence from his position as one of the most substantial landowners in Co. Londonderry. Like Wilton, Moore was a long time member of the Derry corporation, representing the north ward as an alderman from the early 1920s and serving as mayor in 1925. Moore was a J.P., lieutenant of Co. Londonderry in the early 1930s and, first, vice-president and then president, of the local Unionist Association. In addition to these political positions Moore was also a long time member of the Apprentice Boys and held the position of Lieutenant Governor between 1936 and 1938.

The figure most readily identified with the Apprentice Boys movement during this period was, however, Matthew Kerr. Like many of those most involved in both the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order, Kerr was from a petit bourgeois background, owning a small printing works in Pump Street. From the early 1920s he was also a member of the council of the Londonderry Unionist Association and, from the late 1920s, a town councillor. In 1936 it was Kerr who introduced the gerrymander of the electoral ward boundaries that notoriously maintained Unionist control of Derry

despite the large Catholic majority within the population of the city. Even before he was a member of the local Unionist hierarchy, Kerr was already a leading member of the Apprentice Boys. In the 1910s he served as president of the No Surrender club and treasurer to the organisation as a whole. In 1925 he became the Governor, a position he was to hold until 1949. Significantly Kerr was also the most prominent figure within the local Orange Order. A member of the highly influential L.O.L. 871 and then a founding member of the Relief of Derry lodge in 1921. Kerr held the position of City Grand Master from 1925 to 1948.

Nor were these three Unionist politicians alone in their direct involvement with the Siege parades. Virtually all male members of the local Unionist Association belonged to one or other of the clubs and several of those occupying offices in the local party were also officials within the movement. From the 1920s onward it also became a prerequisite of both Stormont and Westminster Unionist MPs for the city, and the surrounding area, to join a club. Most local Unionist MPs over the next few decades tended not to come from the city and were not Apprentice Boys prior to taking up the seat; all were initiated on becoming MP. Other notable figures within the Unionist elite were both members of the Apprentice Boys and regular attendants of the anniversary processions.

The editor of the Sentinel, C.D. Milligan, was a highly active advocate of the Siege Myth from the 1930s and produced books and pamphlets on the history of the Siege and the Apprentice Boys movement.[29] J.C. Glendenning, the owner of the Derry Standard and long time member of the Northern Ireland senate, was prominent in the

parades in the 1920s and 1930s. Local Protestant clerics were not only present on the anniversaries but also acted as chaplains to the Apprentice Boys. All in all, there was a high level of cross-over between the Unionist party, the social, political and economically powerful within the Protestant community and the Apprentice Boys. Similarly, the Unionist dominated corporation gave clear and unequivocal public endorsement of the Siege culture as the public face of their own political outlook. Attendance, in their official capacity, by the mayor and Corporation members was a regular aspects of the Siege events from the 1920s.

This was not the whole picture, however, and there were limits to the involvement of the Unionist elite with the Apprentice Boys. A number of families and figures who dominated the local party had little or nothing to do either with the parades or the clubs. The McCorkells, a prominent shipping family, and the Andersons, who had substantial interests in shirt manufacturing, both patronised the Apprentice Boys on occasion but, by and large, kept their distance. John McFarland, the owner of the Lough Swilly railway and something of a maverick figure within Derry Unionist circles had been notable by his absence from the Siege parades (and from the signing of the Ulster Covenant) during the Home rule crisis and his son Basil continued in much the same vein.

If any single person controlled both the Unionist party and the local economy in Derry from the mid-1920s then that person was Basil McFarland. Mayor of the city on numerous occasions and president of the Unionist Association from the mid-1930s up to the late 1960s McFarland also developed a business empire that, as late as the

1970s, made him one of the richest men in Ulster.[30] McFarland's career "spanned the military, business and political worlds, pre-dated the establishment of the Northern Ireland state. In many ways he was a key figure in its development".[31] McFarland seldom, if ever, attended the Siege parades and found neither the Apprentice Boys or even the Orange Order as attractive an environment as the Freemasons, while holding no position in either of the former organisations McFarland eventually became Ireland's highest ranking mason. It was probably less a liberal sensitivity over the sectarianism of the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order than a distaste for the imagined egalitarianism of both movements that led to McFarland's absence.

What McFarland's position reflects is that, while the Apprentice Boys were integrated with local Unionism to an unprecedented degree, it was still regarded as a basically populist and lower class movement. Its most active leadership continued to be overwhelmingly drawn from the professional and the small business sections of the Protestant community and their advocacy of the Siege was still a means to gain access to political power, rather than simply a reflection of power they invariably controlled. When Matthew Kerr, leader of both the Apprentice Boys and the Orange Order in Derry at the time, introduced the 1936 boundary changes it is significant that one critic observed that far from being the originator of the scheme he had been "carefully tutored by the people who were its real creators".[32] The Apprentice Boys played very much a supporting role to the Unionist party rather than one where they wielded any dominant influence. This was, perhaps, best reflected in the fact that while the Apprentice Boys had representatives in the Ulster Unionist Council, they numbered a mere six in a council of over seven hundred.

In the wake of the 1912-14 crisis and the introduction of partition the Apprentice Boys expanded dramatically. Their political role may have been changing, but if the Apprentice Boys was becoming less in terms of direct political mobilisation the development of various cultural practices in relation to the Siege Myth emphasised that its symbolic importance was undiminished and if anything greatly enhanced. The parades were becoming the focus not only of popular Protestant politics in the city but also an expression of Unionist party hegemony and control over local municipal power to an unprecedented degree. The movement still tended to be dominated by certain social groups within the Protestant community and by certain elements within the local Unionist hierarchy, but the extent of Unionist party patronage, particularly from the early 1920s became an ever more prominent feature.

The Home of Protestantism and the Threat of the Alien: The Meaning of the Siege Myth for Unionism, 1910-1930

Within the rhetoric of Unionism Derry was wholly identified with the Siege and the Siege, in turn, identified as the great political myth of Unionism by the first decades of the twentieth century. The Siege as the primary site and moment of Ulster Protestant distinctiveness was so pervasive that the imagery emerged on the most bizarre of occasions. During a meeting of the Derry Bowling club in 1936, their guest speaker, the treasurer of the Irish Bowling Association, remarked that because of its history Derry was "a city which they in Belfast looked upon as the home of Protestantism".[33] More directly political references to the Siege were however easy to find.

While the distinctiveness of the Ulster Protestant within the Siege Myth continued to be projected in either religious or racial-cultural terms, the rhetoric of Unionism, through the imagery of besiegement, inevitably called for internal solidarity as a necessary condition to oppose the external threat of the "Other". Such internal solidarity, while resting upon the actions of the population themselves, also required the allegiance of the collective to the leadership of the Unionist party. At the same time this rhetoric increasingly merged with a variety of other messages that saw, in the Siege, a defence of Ulster as a distinct entity and imagined the threat as not solely that of Catholicism or Irish Nationalism, but also in terms of the south and socialism. The development of this imagery can be seen both in direct references to the Siege, and to the sense of Siege that increasingly underwrote the character of Unionist ideology as a whole.

Calls for unity amongst Derry Protestants were particularly vociferous during electoral contests. In the midst of the Home Rule crisis a narrow by-election victory in the city for the Nationalist candidate tipped the balance of seats in Ulster in favour of the Home Rule party. If the impact of this nationally was to undermine the legitimacy of Unionist calls for the exclusion of Ulster from any Home Rule settlement, locally it represented a challenge to the hold of the Unionist party on political power in Derry. Certainly, the imagery of the Siege permeated the atmosphere that surrounded this election. Derry was, suggested one commentator, "a mecca to Ulster Protestants", and the electoral contest occurred at a period that was "in the opinion of Protestant Unionists...the most critical time in the history of Derry since the surrender of the town was demanded by King James". In the forthcoming by-election

Unionists looked to "their outvoters for the Relief of Derry".[34]

Significantly the focus of blame for this defeat, as far as local Unionists were concerned, was less the Catholic majority than those vehemently denounced as "traitors". In his post-election speech the Unionist candidate, Colonel Packenham, conjured up the figure of Lundy in a criticism of Protestants who may have supported the Home Rule party, and who did so having previously supported the Unionists:

> We lost the election because 25 to 30 Protestants of Derry have chosen to vote against the Unionist, and I will also say, the Protestant candidate. Most of these men have hitherto been regarded as Protestants and Unionists. They must now be known by the brand which they have put upon themselves.[35]

Calls for electoral support on the basis of Protestant solidarity and the need of Derry Protestants to "do their duty" would be a dominant feature of contests in aftermath of the 1914-18 war and during the early 1920s. The symbolic guarantors of such solidarity were, of course, the Apprentice Boys. In this vein the Marquis of Dufferin, the Speaker of the Stormont House of Commons, on a visit to Derry in the mid-1920s to unveil a memorial placed on the city walls to Browning, the captain of the Mountjoy, described the Apprentice Boys as "a magnificent example of the fortitude and steadfast dogged courage of our race", and confessed to a meeting held in the Guildhall:

> I have always had a sort of hero-worship for the Apprentice Boys of Derry, who, by taking the law into their own hands, first closed the wooden gates; and so as I arrived yesterday I instinctively looked out for their modern counterpart. I think I recognised the type - young men who would be equally prepared today to slam your

gates in the face of any threatening enemy.[36]

Defining the Apprentice Boys as the archetypal defenders of the Ulster Protestant population was a way of shoring up electoral support, but also of establishing a certain code for communal behaviour. Both these elements featured in the literature and speeches which accompanied the Siege Myth in the 1920s and 1930s. More direct calls for action to maintain communal solidarity were similarly to be found in the speeches of leading Unionists. In late 1922 James Craig visited Derry as the first Prime Minister of Northern Ireland. The tour was designed to emphasise Unionist commitment to border areas and Craig lionised the recently formed "B" specials and their local commander, Moore Irving, describing them as "men of Ulster [who] if the call comes to them, as it came to their forefathers, will be found just as willing... to take the responsibility of guarding this beloved province".[37] This clearly served the two-fold function of defining the values enshrined in the imagination of the past while at the same time representing that past as a template for social action.

Similarly, in order that internal solidarity was secured, it was imperative that support be given to the leaders of the Unionist party. Projecting the necessity of such political deference was possible through the Siege Myth only if the imagery of the Apprentice Boys was re-located from the popular crowd into the organisations of Unionism and even into the shape of the Unionist leaders themselves. On the occasion of his 1922 visit to the city, Craig argued that the predicament of besiegement emphasised "the absolute necessity at all times of trusting your leaders". Speaking in Derry, in late 1924, Sir Charles Craig, brother of the Prime Minister, explicitly drew comparisons

between the efforts of Unionists MPs at Westminster to prevent any change to the 1920 border settlement and the struggle of the Apprentice Boys:

> The thirteen Ulster members in the imperial parliament would fight to the last to defend Ulster's liberties... They were only thirteen but they would make it a good fight. (A voice - "It was thirteen closed the gates").[38]

The thirteen MPs, added the Attorney General of Northern Ireland, "will be just as good as the other thirteen". At the December parade three months later, the preacher of the anniversary sermon reflected on the work both of the Unionist party at Westminster and the party MPs in Stormont, arguing that the attempts by the South to gain control over parts of the North through the boundary commission would, "be met by the same spirit which animated the men of Derry in 1689", a spirit which motivated Unionist leaders and for which they "deserve and have the sympathetic support of all good citizens".[39]

If to endure the "Siege" of the 1920s Protestants had to avoid the possibility of internal division by staying loyal to the leadership of Unionism, then that state of siege was also clearly identified with the territory of Ulster. Craig's celebration of his "beloved province" reflected the fact that, though it continued to be a limited and partial component of Unionist ideology, there was a clear identification of the area of Ulster as the spatial and territorial entity to which the internally cohesive Protestant community should proffer their allegiance. That this was limited reflected the continued importance for many of the empire in the construction of Ulster Unionist ideology. Thus, the curate of Derry Cathedral, preaching the Shutting of the Gates sermon in 1922, argued that the Siege was an "inspiration not merely to Derry but to

Protestantism throughout this land - and away in the most distant dominion of our far-flung empire". In a service held in an Orange Hall in Belfast on the same day the Rev. Louis Crooks suggested "Derry's cry" of "No Surrender" was "for Ulster, for the empire" and that the Apprentice Boys should stand "shoulder to shoulder from God, faith, fatherland and empire".[40]

The desire to see Ulster as a distinct territorial unit and to construct a form of Ulster nationalism through the idea of an Ulster "spirit" led a number of authors to see the myth of the Siege as an epic tale of an definitively "Ulster" people. No where was this more apparent than in the work of one of the foremost proponents of an Ulster nationalism in the period, Herbert Moore Pim. In his book Unconquerable Ulster, Pim argued:

> the Sieges of Derry and Enniskillen and the Battle of the are events which have entered the very soul of the people of Ulster. They are as real to Ulstermen today as they were to those who engaged in the effort involved. The Ulster man clings to these events because they represent a struggle which has been part of their daily life for twenty centuries, the struggle to maintain his independence and the order of his ancient kingdom, in the face of countless efforts by the people of the south against him.[41]

In the "Ballad of Derry", Pim saw in the Siege a story of endurance on the part of the "Ulster people" in the face of "Southern" hostility and "English indifference", making the Siege a founding moment of the "Ulster spirit":

> Thus Derry fought and thus Derry won;
>
> And wrought for herself a lasting fame,

> In Derry the spirit of Ulster glowed,
>
> and that Ulster spirit is still the same.[42]

Pim was in many ways, as David Miller has described him, "the exception that proved the rule". Most Unionists did not see Ulster separation as a case for an Ulster nation.[43] Pim was certainly almost unique in arguing that the roots of the Ulster nation lay in the mythical era of Cuchullain, whose stand for Ulster against attack of the "southern and western tribes" reflected the "Ulster watchword... (of)... No Surrender".[44] The espousal of this mystical nationalism was undoubtedly a result of Pim's involvement with Sinn Fein prior to 1917, after which he became a vociferous supporter of the Unionist cause.

Yet Pim's position is an extreme version that was, nevertheless, in more moderate forms more widely apparent in the expression of the Siege Myth in this period. Pim's book was, itself, introduced by a brief dedication from Edward Carson who contended that "the spirit of Ulster is not a poetic or political invention". For Robert Anderson, Stormont MP for Derry throughout the 1920s, speaking at a meeting in 1924, the imagery of the city walls stood for the Ulster border and, he suggested, there was only one response to the claims of the South to Northern territory:

> there can be only one answer, made by our forefathers in 1688 from behind the walls of this old city - "No Surrender" - We are proud of our citizenship in the British empire which we have done our share in defending and building up and to all those who would force us under the Union Jack and into a gaelic civilisation, our reply is "never, never".[45]

At the same meeting another speaker argued that it was "unthinkable" that Derry "would ever be a city of the Free State - the city to which England owed her greatness

- the Maiden City. The attempt was made to subdue the men of Derry in 1688. It failed. The attempt was again being made now, it would fail again".[46]

Whatever level of distinctiveness was imagined as the result of the internal character of the Ulster Protestant community, or of empire, the "imagined community" of Unionism was invariably predicated on the "Other", the difference from those who, supposedly, did not belong within the walls of the state. Certainly, this was a highly important and pervasive dimension of the Siege Myth in the period from 1912-25, and, if anything, became a more embedded element in Unionist ideology thereafter. Invariably, too, the distinctiveness of the Other was represented as a threat. The imagery of threat was apparent at a number of levels in Siege myth. Unionists constantly resorted to a vision of the Derry Catholic community, portrayed as rebellious and conspiratorial, sitting in the shadow of the walls biding their time to strike. This vision was a vivid source of symbolism for the imagined condition of the Protestant population.

Again, this image of the "Catholic threat" was most apparent during election campaigns. After the Nationalist election victory of 1913 one observer wrote:

> The bastions of the ancient ramparts containing the doric column to the memory of Walker, who was Governor during the Siege, commands a view of the Bogside where, outside the walls, the poorest and most aggressive section of the Nationalists have their habitation, and to those who stood there at midnight when the results of the division was generally known there came indication of rejoicing in the valley below.[47]

In the crucial 1920 local elections the Sentinel conjured up the imagery of clerical

conspiracy, so prevalent an aspect of Siege literature, to demand all Unionists to "do their duty" and vote because "the Nationalists will poll to the last vote, the Priests will see to that... the appeal to the Sinn Fein-Nationalist electors was that they should support the Roman Catholic candidate as matter of religious duty".[48] The imagery of conspiracy, and of a manipulative clergy, was not restricted to the local Derry hierarchy. For Derry Unionism the local clergy formed only part of a more widespread religious conspiracy. In the aftermath of the 1914-18 war the canon of Derry suggested that those who had died both in the war and during the Siege had sacrificed themselves to oppose "the Church of Rome... [because it]... claimed for the Pope sovereign power over rulers and kingdoms".[49] A year later a meeting in the Memorial Hall was given a dark and dangerous portrait of an all-encompassing state of siege: "from the bishop to the humblest servant girl in a Protestant house, they [Catholics] were doing anything and everything to advance the cause they had at their heart".

Such images were effective because they tapped into well-established beliefs and perceptions of the past. Through the imagination of the Siege a challenge to Unionism was represented as the long feared external threat of the "besieger", constituted through the vision of an undifferentiated mass of the Catholic population working at the behest of a conspiratorial cadre of priests and political enemies. Through such imagery, nuances of political debate disappeared. The mundanity of politics was metamorphosised into titanic metaphysical struggles. Through the besieger imagery the Catholic community could be seen as "misled", and, as a result, their expressed political wishes, which would only serve the interests of the "cabal",

could be ignored as essentially "illegitimate". Significantly, this imagery was not restricted to the "conspiracy of priests" in this period.

A changing world, with new social and political forces, could be seen through the Siege as old struggles in disguise. In the aftermath of the First World War the rhetoric of Unionists in Derry merged the image of the "besieger" with anti-socialism. At the 1919 Relief parade Canon King, having already denounced the conspiracy of the papacy, argued that the Siege needed to be remembered as a struggle for the Empire because

> the empire has rightly been called the home of liberty... shall we change this for the bloodshed and terror of Bolshevikism, for the tyranny of Sinn Fein, with its treacherous murderers and clerical patrons.[50]

The formation of the UULA in Derry in 1918 was occasioned, according to the then mayor, R.N. Anderson, by the need of the "Unionist men of the Province of Ulster" to "no longer remain silent" and that when they were faced with the option of uniting with Catholic workers, like the "ancestors", they knew this was nothing more than "a political game avowed by Sinn Fein to entice Unionists into the separatist fold".[51] In similar vein, the Belfast Apprentice Boys gathered in the Ballynafiegh Orange Hall for the Shutting of the Gates Anniversary in 1922 were informed that the Siege of their day was a struggle against "Bolshevists and socialists who were avowedly out to destroy the christian faith".

But if socialism could essentially represent, as Canon King suggested, the same threat as Catholicism, or as R.N. Anderson argued, as Nationalism, it could also be

represented in a much more ill-defined but in many ways more insidious way as being the threat of the unknown, the alien and the outsider. A fear of the alien was by no means unique to the discourses of Unionism in the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, as Denis Kennedy has shown in his study of Northern attitudes to the South in the inter-war period, the main focus for the notion of the "alien" in Unionism was the negative projection of Gaelicism of the southern Irish Catholic.[52] But this could appear in other guises. On a general level the threat of invasion from "without" was a pervasive element. In 1919 the Londonderry Sentinel suggested that there was "a rumour that an invasion of people... is being organised with the object of bringing Derry into line" and, following the outbreak of violence in the city in early 1920, a speaker at the Relief parade a few months later asked, "were they (the riots) the work of those who were natives of the country or was it, as has been suggested, possibly part of a great anti-British movement on Bolshevik lines?"[53]

The imagery of threat could be extended to include elements not normally associated with the Siege. This reflected the political power of the Siege symbols, which could incorporate and merge a variety of social and political challenges and turn them into the same threat. An acute period of crisis for Unionism in Belfast in 1919, for example, was presented by the Sentinel through a potent mixture of anti-socialism, xenophobia and anti-semitism, which was, in turn, constructed through the Siege imagery of defence and threat:

> While the war lasted they (labour activists) were powerless against the ingrained patriotism of the Belfast workmen. The cessation of hostilities has given them their opportunity. The doctrines of socialism have been so effectively preached that the city (Belfast) is in the grip of Bolshevikism... It helps to reveal the influences which

are at work to rob Belfast of its good name to mention that one of the strike leaders is a Russian Jew.[54]

The power of such a representation was it's ability to tap into a consciousness deeply ingrained in Protestant political culture. The Siege was in other words not just a story through which an image of society could be projected, "Siege" represented the very model of how Unionism as an ideology, and a Unionist perception of the world, was structured. Social change could be in this way be ordered into a pre-existing paradigm, a world view built around the stand of the besieged against the threat of the besieger.

During the post-war period and in the early 1920s, the vividness and ferocity of this overarching sense of besiegement was at its clearest, but it did not simply disappear afterwards. Rather, it established, as the essential character of Protestant collective consciousness, the call for all-Protestant solidarity around the defence of the border and the support of the "loyal" Unionist party, necessitated by the inevitable threat of Catholicism, nationalism and socialism. That world view, the "Siege mentality", which would form the essence of Unionist hegemony for decades to come, was nowhere better signalled than by Edward Carson in his Orange day speech at Finagy in 1920:

> They (Nationalists) have all kinds of insidious methods and organisations at work. Sometimes it is the church. That does not make much way in Ulster. The more insidious method is tacking on the Sinn Fein question and the Irish Republican question to the Labour question... these men that come forward as the friends of labour care no more about labour than the man in the moon... Their real object and the real insidious nature of their propaganda is that they mislead and bring disunity

among our people... Our duty is absolutely clear. We have been handed down (great traditions) from the time of the Battle of the Boyne and the Siege of Derry - and there may be another Siege before long.[55]

Defining Identity in the New State: The Siege Myth and the Construction of Unionist State Hegemony, 1910-1940

To understand why Unionism saw itself so thoroughly through the imagery of the Siege in this period, and why the Siege parades and the Apprentice Boys became so enmeshed in the symbolism of the new state of Northern Ireland, it is necessary to understand the social and political circumstances facing Unionism from 1912 to the 1930s. Ulster Unionism as an ideology, and the Ulster Unionists as a political party, came of age and came to power. For the next fifty years Unionism, while certainly not unchallenged, would remain all but unassailable as the dominant power in Northern Ireland and in Derry. But if Unionism did so it was the result of intense social struggle because the period from 1912 to the early 1920s also saw the most acute crisis Unionism had ever faced, and nowhere more so than in Derry itself.

The response of Unionism to this crisis was to first construct a powerful, cohesive and armed political bloc. To do so Unionist ideology designed its hegemony around the imagery of besiegement. As a result when the state of Northern Ireland was formed the structures and organisations of Unionism were incorporated into the body of the new apparatus of authority and the Siege Myth and Orangeism became in a sense the official culture of the state of Northern Ireland; the public expression of

what the state was and how the relationship of the state to the communities of the North should be understood. To analyse this process in depth it is necessary first to view the various pressures and problems Derry Unionism faced in the period 1912-25 and to place these in the context of wider social and political change. This, then, provides the basis for an examination of the way Unionism cast the state in its own image and the extent to which the Siege Myth (and the cultural enactment of the Myth) became the ideological portrait of Northern Irish state and society.

Between 1912 and 1922 Unionist control of Derry came under pressure to an unprecedented degree. This was signalled by the by-election defeat of 1913 and further (and much more profoundly) marked by the loss of control of the Corporation, albeit briefly, in 1920. As Michael Farrell rightly suggested, "the effect [of the loss of municipal power] on the Loyalists in Derry was traumatic".[56] The possibility of the permanent loss of local political control, coming as it did at a time when Derry might even have been placed under the control of a Dublin parliament, represented the most profound challenge to the ruling class in the city and the consequent concentration within the Siege Myth on the need for (electoral) discipline and loyalty (to the party leaders).

The 1913 by-election defeat was important for a number of reasons. Coming only months after the Carson Trail meeting in the city and the mass signing of the Ulster Covenant and in the midst of the debate over Home Rule, that the "Maiden City", the bastion of Protestant presence in the North, had fallen into the hands of the Nationalist party, at least in terms of the parliamentary seat, was of great symbolic significance.

The Nationalist by-election victory also marked the build up of pressure on the Unionists within the city to maintain their control of local political power in the face of the rise in the Catholic population.

Derry politics had become dominated by contests over the registration of voters and the meticulous compiling of electoral lists The feature which most struck observers of the 1913 by-election was the zealous efficiency of the local party machines as they pressed their well-honed electioneering techniques into service.[57] There were virtually no set-piece speeches or public meetings held in a campaign dominated less by rhetoric than arithmetic. "The elaborate machinery of argument and persuasion", one commentator noted, "is entirely absent...all the work of electioneering is done behind the scenes". Electoral arithmetic was calculated on the premise that religious denomination implied political affiliation and, while the city by now had a Catholic majority of almost 4,000, the balance on the electoral register was divided almost equally between the two communities. As a consequence, in an extraordinarily high poll of 98.25% of the total electorate, the Home Rule candidate in the 1913 won by only 57 votes.[58] It was in this context that blame was placed so clearly at the door of any Protestant who did not support the Unionist party, as the "Lundies" who threatened to let the "enemy" in.

While there was virtually no violence just after the election, rioting did follow the Relief parade that August, with clashes between Nationalist and Unionist crowds and the army continuing for several days and one man being shot dead.[59] However tension, while high, rarely spilt over into open conflict, with local units of the UVF

and the Irish Volunteers being careful to avoid head on confrontation. To some extent this relative calm was a result of tensions within the political movements themselves. A struggle for control of local nationalism ensued, between the Derry Catholic clerical hierarchy and the militant elements within the Volunteers, and was mirrored in the Unionist camp by a business leadership which sought to control the degree of UVF independence. As Desmond Murphy argues, "the belief that the North-West was on the brink of war in August 1914 must remain unproven".[60] The post-war situation was, however, something else again.

The hiatus over the issue of Home Rule that accompanied the outbreak of the 1914-18 war left underlying tensions unresolved and the combined effect of the 1916 rising and the war itself transformed and radicalised Irish nationalist opinion, laying the hegemonic basis for the Irish Revolution to come. In Derry, Sinn Fein became a political force for the first time from 1917 onward, with the formation of the first Sinn Fein Club in August of that year.[61] By 1918 and 1919 the challenge to Unionist political domination on Derry was fully realised.

In the general election of 1918 the Unionist, Sir R.N. Anderson lost the Derry seat, far more decisively than Packenham had done in 1913, to the Sinn Fein candidate, Eoin MacNeill.[62] Anderson was the most powerful figure in the Derry Unionist leadership, a local industrialist and ex-mayor, who had been the Derry Unionist representative at the Irish Convention in 1917. Anderson's defeat was felt particularly keenly, not only because of the national situation, which had seen Sinn Fein obliterate the old Nationalist party and sweep to a landslide victory, but also because it seemed

to mark the possibility that the Unionists would never regain control of the city's parliamentary seat again.

This was, however, only a precursor to the loss of Unionist control of the Corporation,in 1920. Proportional representation was introduced for all Irish elections by the Government of Ireland Act and this ensured that the Nationalist majority of Derry gained power in local government for the first time.[63] Immediately afterward the Derry Corporation vowed its allegiance to the Dail. The loss of parliamentary representation was significant enough, but to lose control of the Corporation was to undermine the very basis of Unionism as a power in the city. The sense of besiegement, of threat and the need for reaction in the rhetoric of Unionism in this period paralleled this loss of actual social and political authority for the city elite, and the challenge to the sense of status of the Protestant working class.

Political tension erupted into political violence less than four months after the nationalist victory and the collective consciousness of the Siege underwrote the militant reaction of Derry Unionism to the loss of local political control. In mid-April and May, 1920, rioting and gun battles broke out in the city, and this exploded, in the middle of June, into a week long state of virtual civil war.[64] Against a background of strikes and disturbances, triggered by the plight of Sinn Fein prisoners being held in Derry prison, the Derry brigade of IRA fought pitched gun battles with the recently re-established local UVF. At the same time up to 1,500 British troops were drafted into the city and the UVF operated with the semi-official sanction of these forces.

By the end of June over twenty people had been killed. The overwhelming majority of the dead were Catholic civilians, but they included Howard McKay, the son of the Governor of the Apprentice Boys.[65] Reinforcing the territorial dimension of communal division, the Sentinel reported evictions of families from certain areas in May, and in June the Journal asserted that a "systematic eviction campaign" of Catholics from certain areas "in which Unionists dominate" had also taken place.[66] A notice pinned to a tree in Prehen Wood in the midst of the conflict declared that any "Sinn Feiner" found in the area would be shot "by order of the Red Hand".[67] State control over the situation was only restored through the massive military presence and the establishment of a "Citizen's Conciliation Committee". Large sections of the local Unionist business class were involved in this committee, as they retreated from support for the UVF in the face of both a breakdown of their own control and the threat such open conflict represented to property and business activity.

Significantly, one of the first acts of the Conciliation Committee was to order the removal of all flags and insignia from the streets and to impose a ban on all parades and demonstrations for three months. As a result, for the first time in several generations, the Apprentice Boys were prevented from marching around the walls on the following Relief anniversary, though they still held a service in the Cathedral and afterward marched around the grounds of St. Columb as a gesture of defiance to the ban. Nor did the authorities remove the numerous arches and flags which were erected in the Fountain area and "other loyalist quarters". Restrictions on various other loyalist demonstrations and practices, through the Siege culture, were also not enforced.[68]

The move from confrontation to conflict, as Unionists lost local power, during 1919 and 1920 was seen very much in the context of Siege. But the battle with nationalism was not the only thing that concerned the leadership of Unionism in Derry. They felt equally threatened by a rise of labour militancy. There had been an organised labour presence in Derry for many years, but its ability to translate its presence in the workplace into electoral support was strictly limited. Despite a growth of trade union and labour activity in the city from 1910 onward, which had seen a wave of strikes and the recruitment in unions, particularly of women, on an unprecedented scale, organised labour failed to make any political breakthrough.

No labour candidate stood in the 1913 election, though two possible candidates had at one time or another been suggested; the first, a local Catholic trade unionist, James McCarron, the other Alexander Boyd, a Belfast organiser of the Independent Labour Party and former Labour member of the Belfast city council and a member of the Independent Orange Order.[69] The withdrawl of both prior to polling day indicates the extent to which any alternative to the constitutional and communal focus of local political activity had little chance of success or room to manoeuvre.[70]

The severe social and economic dislocation that accompanied the end of the war led however to a wave of labour activity between 1918 and 1920 and a series of strikes that, did indeed, challenge prevailing political allegiances and led the leaders of Unionism to accommodate the demands of working class loyalism to a far greater extent than ever before. In January, 1919, the rise in the number of the unemployed was raised by a Unionist "ex-soldier" on the Corporation, who claimed to represent

"the working classes" and who demanded that action be taken, "in regard to the dependents of the men who had sacrificed their lives in this war".[71] In response an election address in mid-February, H.T. Barrie, who stood in North Derry, noted that the danger of the "enemy within" was the threat to the employment of ex-soldiers:

> He [Barrie] was most anxious to make sure that where the slacker had slipped into the job of the absent soldier there will be no tenderness in removing the slacker to make room for the demobilised soldier.[72]

Against the background of growing industrial militancy, typified by the shipyard strikes in Glasgow and Belfast in early 1919 which triggered off sympathy strikes in Derry in February, the Unionist leadership responded by setting up a branch the UULA in Derry in early February, 1919. Shortly after the local UULA was reputed to have over seven hundred members.[73] From the middle of 1919 the UVF was also being re-organised in the city and confrontations in the workplace and in the street between groups of Catholic workers and members of the local IRA with elements of these organisations were increasingly regular. Both the UULA and the UVF combined with the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys as conduits of Protestant working class demands, directed against the labour movement as well as Sinn Fein, in favour of the cross class unity of the Unionist community. In May, 1919, when the Derry Trade and Labour Council called for a May day parade to show support for strikers in the city and elsewhere, R.N. Anderson, who had become president of the local UULA, declared that the "Orangemen and Apprentice Boys of Derry" along with the "members of the local branch of UULA" would not allow themselves to be involved.[74]

The tension in labour relations was also a significant factor in the crisis of 1920, and the aftermath of the June riots saw local employers use the opportunity to undermine industrial militancy. Derry industrialists, most of whom were leading members of the Unionist party introduced a lock out of local workers, through such organisations as the Londonderry Employers Federation, to undermine trade union activity, particularly in the shirt industry. The "Shirt Manufacturers Federation", founded only months before, threatened to close down all the city's shirt factories. By mid-July an estimated 8,000 were out of work as a result of this shut-out and in the longer term militant trade unionism found itself severely marginalised.[75]

The combination, through the imagery of the Siege, of the "threat" of labour activity with Nationalism and Catholicism, portrayed socialism as the antithesis of the "patriotism" of the Protestant worker, a powerful means of constructing the anti-labour politics of Unionism in this period. If the besieged community was solely that of the Protestant people, but included all classes of Protestants, it also meant that Protestants arguing for alternative political positions could be construed as "Lundies", the disloyal within. In the wave of workplace expulsions in Belfast during 1920, Protestant labour activists found themselves as much the subject of loyalist antagonism as Catholic workers. Similarly, the promotion of the parades, literature and memorials of the Siege culture by the local Unionist regime, in the 1920s and 1930s, associated the leaders of Unionism and the business class with the leader icons of the Siege Myth. The ideal community of the Siege was one where the interests of capital and labour could be happily fused in the new state.

In establishing that new state it had also been necessary for Unionism to jettison the idea that the whole of Ireland should remain part of the Union and to conclude that their best option was partition with the devolution of power to a Northern parliament. By 1919 most Unionists had come to recognise that some form of self-government for at least the greater part of Ireland was inevitable and their efforts increasingly turned toward securing the exclusion from any settlement of "those districts which they could control". The introduction of some form of partition was mooted as early as 1914, and the possibility that Derry might be excluded from a Home Rule parliament led to a vigourous local campaign by Nationalists.

Given the options of a four, six or nine county Northern Ireland, Unionists, in areas of south and west Ulster, feared that the border might be drawn to maximise the extent of the Protestant majority, concentrated most heavily in the North-East. Such fears existed in the minds of Unionists in Derry even after the border was established. The experience of the large Protestant population in East Donegal was a reminder that commitment to the Ulster Covenant did not necessarily assure inclusion in the new Northern state.[76] Through 1920 the Donegal Unionist Association campaigned unsuccessfully against the six county option and though, ultimately, Derry Unionists were pleased enough to accept the border, many were conscious that the loss of Donegal would undermine the economic base of the city. [77] The concept of Ulster distinctiveness and the evocation of the border through the imagery of the Siege walls clearly took shape against this background, providing an ideological legitimation for the new territorial arrangement. Craig's visits to border areas in the early 1920s were similarly designed to quell any doubts that the interests of Belfast would overshadow

those of other parts of the North. Speeches by Unionist leaders in Derry invariably included a commitment to the "Maiden City" as the "home of Protestantism" or, as Marquis of Dufferin confessed in 1926, "I have erred, with many others, who living near Belfast seem to forget that Belfast is not Ulster".[78]

Such commitment to the "Home of Protestantism" could also take practical form. On a visit to Derry in 1927 Craig, accompanied by Richard Dawson Bates, the Minister for Home Affairs, assured a public audience,

> they in Derry need never for a moment think that their interests were in the slightest overlooked. Nor need they imagine that the government's vigilance was a vigilance only for those midst whom they were living. Their vigilance was for all classes and creeds and all people inside the Ulster area.[79]

Shortly afterward Craig held a series of meetings with dozens of deputations from sectional interests in the city, including one with Basil McFarland in his role as chairman of the Lough Swilly railway. On his return to Belfast Craig reversed a civil service decision to remove a state subsidy from the Swilly railway that had threatened to close it.

The Unionist regime, instituted by Craig, was one in which populist demands could find avenues of redress within the bounds of the structures of state and party. Both he and Dawson Bates were very much to the fore within the populist wing of the Unionist party that designed the Northern state as a mechanism responsive to diverse interests within the Protestant community.[80] The Lough Swilly subsidy decision was an example of how that populist system worked. But the system operated primarily through the organs of municipal government. It was in that light that the desperate

need of the Unionist party in Derry to maintain control over local government power should be understood.

Populist elements within the Derry Unionist Corporation were also very much to the fore within the Apprentice Boys. The populist orientation of the Northern state was most evident in periods of economic and social crisis. The early 1920s was one such period, as was the early to mid-1930s, when the impact of the great depression had a devastating effect on employment in Northern Ireland, leading to a wave of labour activity and sectarian rioting. It is not insignificant therefore that the heyday of figures identified with the Apprentice Boys should coincide with this period of social and economic difficulty. Both Maxwell Scott Moore (with whom Craig stayed during his 1927 visit to the city) and James Wilton were mayor of the city at this time, and the introduction of the ward boundary changes by Matthew Kerr in 1936 cannot be divorced from this socio-economic contest.

Opposition to the Unionist regime from Orange populism within the Protestant community was at least a possibility at such times. Such anti-establishment sentiment also attempted to lay claim to the Siege inheritance. In July, 1935, a paper briefly appeared in Derry called The Maiden City Loyalist, published by a group calling itself The Maiden City Protestant League. In one of its few editions the paper called upon the leadership of the Unionist party in Derry to stop "dillying and dallying", to ensure that "the gates were closed" stand alongside "Murray" and "push back the tide of Papish supremacy".[81] Unionism was adept at responding to such demands swiftly and effectively by conjuring up the "spectre" of the Siege in its own defence.

The development of the Northern state had, in other words, seen the emergence of a state apparatus constructed to channel the cross class alliances of the Unionist political bloc into loyalty to the state itself. Unionism had been constituted on a series of organisations that consolidated this cross-class political bloc. During the 1912 to 1920 period the UVF and the UULA joined (rather than replaced) the Orange Order and the Apprentice Boys in Derry as institutional forms of popular political activity; although they did become far more involved in actual mobilisation while the Apprentice Boys, in particular, essentially ceased to serve that direct function. The workplace focus of the UULA and the paramilitary nature of the UVF made them more practical than the Apprentice Boys for Unionist political organisation in this period. The latter however maintained and increased its position as a symbolic body and would consequently continue to serve a specific social and ideological role when the logic of the UVF and the UULA had been superseded by the agencies of the new state.

It was in this context that the parades and the Apprentice Boys grew into a much larger, and state sponsored, cultural form in the 1920s and 1930s, even though the Apprentice Boys ceased to be the violent and active wing of local Unionism it had been in the late nineteenth century. The Siege parades became the cultural enactment of the imagined bonds that tied the state and Protestant community, a means to project the imagined egalitarianism of Orange culture and the paternalistic relationship of the leaders and the led. The huge influx of Protestants into the city for the parades was also a means for Unionism to evidence a commitment to the outer areas of the state and to publicly mark control of the border. As the parade mapped out the physical

boundary of communal authority and the territoriality of sectarian division in the city, so the collective boundary of the community was interlinked with the border itself. The Siege Myth became the imagination of the Northern state.

The Siege Mentality: The Siege Myth and Power in the Northern State

"In the eighteen years from the establishment of the state to the beginning of World War II", argues Bill Rolston, "the Unionist alliance was at its most secure".[82] That alliance was founded on the structured sectarianism of Northern Irish society, but it was reflected and bolstered by the cultural performance of collective belonging and division, and most clearly so in the symbol system of the Siege Myth. If liberty and Protestantism, populism and empire continued to form distinct elements in the construction of the Siege Myth, then these were now, like the Siege itself, identified thoroughly with Unionism as an ideology of state power.

Nowhere was this process (and the security which the Unionist alliance had obtained) better demonstrated than in the opening of the new Apprentice Boys Hall in 1937. A huge rally was held to mark the event on July 12th, attended by James Craig and numerous other leading figures of the Unionist government as well as the local party. When he rode in an open carriage through the city Craig was accompanied by three members of the local elite; Maxwell Scott Moore, James Wilton and Matthew Kerr. A month later over 20,000 Apprentice Boys marched in the parent clubs and almost ninety branches "accompanied by at least an equal number of bands" for the relief anniversary.[83] The Fountain street and Wapping lane districts were

ablaze with colour [as] crowds watched energetic workers add the final touches to the arches and decorations. Hundreds remained outdoors all night and whiled the time away in the singing loyalist songs in the streets. There were also scenes of great rejoicing around several huge bonfires which blazed in the roadway and the sound of rockets being discharged echoed and re-echoed through the city during the night.[84]

The Siege represented a cycle of fixed political positions, re-iterated by numerous speakers at both events. Defending the borders and the Northern state was to defend the walls of Derry. "From these walls", declared the Unionist MP Sir Ronald Ross,

> we are within sight of the border, that alone should remind us of the dangers that still threaten our civil and religious liberties... let us stand together in the spirit of our forefathers and the gates of Derry will always remain closed.

Lundies were always on hand, suggested the city MP, E.S. Murphy, "false prophets" threatening to break down the unity of the Protestant collective, "the same danger as when Londonderry became a magic word". Matthew Kerr declared an abiding need for all Protestants, of whatever class, to stand "as our forefathers stood united in the grim days of the past". To stand together meant, argued Craig himself, loyalty to the leadership of the Unionist party; "rally round your leaders, stick together, show the world that if Ulster stands for anything it stands for loyalty and unity".[85]

With "enemies both within the gates and without" the memory of the Siege stood as a reminder to the present generation of the city's place as "an outpost of empire", the "ancient walls bore witness" to the struggles waged on behalf of the "crown", but, added Anthony Babbington, Solicitor General of Northern Ireland, "though loyalty to

the crown was always our first and guiding principle, we must recognise as loyalists that we were never able to achieve constitutional security until the year 1920".[86] Unionism, as a state ideology was articulated through this cycle of Siege: the alien threat of the enemy at the gate, the fear of Lundy's betrayal, self-reliance in the face of English doubt, the need for true leaders, the distinctiveness of place and people, the Maiden city as the home of the "saved". Through the Siege these abiding tenets of Unionist ideology could be cemented into a collective consciousness, the "Siege Mentality". In turn the "Siege Mentality" guaranteed the political hegemony of Ulster Unionism and provided ideological legitimacy to fifty years of sectarian rule.

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POSTSCRIPT

THE SIEGE MYTH,

LOYALTY AND REBELLION: THE CONTESTED LEGACY

On August 12th, 1993, as in virtually every year for over two centuries, thousands of Ulster Protestants gathered in Derry to march in celebration of the Relief of the Siege of Derry in 1689. The marchers, most of whom were members of the Apprentice Boys of Derry Clubs, carried banners and flags memorialising the hero-icons and episodes from the Siege story: Governor Walker, Colonel Mitchelburne, the "Brave thirteen" Apprentice Boys "Shutting the Gates", the "Breaking of the Boom". As well as those from Derry many of the marchers came from towns and villages throughout the North. A large number arrived by special trains from Belfast and a small number of clubs travelled from Scotland. There may even have been one or two from Liverpool or Manchester.[1]

Each Club and branch was preceded by a marching band playing Orange tunes. Many of the songs made direct reference to the Siege: "The Crimson Banner", "Derry's Walls", "The Shutting of the Gates", "the Siege of Derry" and "No Surrender" among them. A cacophony of sounds engulfed the whole parade dominated by the echoing retort of scores of lambeg drums, the staccato rattle of hundreds of side drums and the high-pitched whistle of several thousand flutes. The overall visual and aural effect was dramatic, rousing and, if your ears were attached to a Derry Catholic head, deeply intimidating.

The march no longer followed a route around the top of the city walls. The marchers might have gathered around the Apprentice Boys Memorial Hall in Society Street, but in the course of the parade, the marchers could no longer look down upon the Bogside. Since the early 1970s such a route has been banned, the triumphalism inherent in such a provocative and inflammatory display being regarded by the authorities as a threat to order in the face of insurgent Catholic opposition. Nor could they congregate in the shadow of Walker's Pillar, the huge statue which cast the Governor of the Siege in the mould of a "warrior-priest", a bible in one hand and a sword at his waist, towering over the surrounding landscape proclaiming, with an outstretched arm, imminent temporal and spiritual salvation. In 1973 the IRA blew up Walker's Pillar.

Now the parade crosses Craigavon bridge and only briefly goes inside the symbolic bastion of the walled centre of Derry before returning quickly to the Waterside where virtually all Derry Protestants now live. Large crowds lined the route of the parade, including many from outside the city, though the overwhelming majority of the spectators came from Derry's own minority Protestant community. For Derry Protestants, and particularly for the Derry Protestant working class, this is not only an important date in the annual calendar of the marching season, but an occasion to experience and display a particular sense of community, and one in which most of the community will in some sense be involved. Very few, if any, of the onlookers were Derry Catholics.

Briefly, through the Relief of Derry parade, Ulster Protestants could pretend that they

once again enjoyed control of this city that was, for so long, a symbol of their power. It was a power maintained by a system of social, economic and political discrimination against Northern Ireland's Catholic population, and nowhere was such power more notoriously clung onto than in Derry itself. For Catholics, too, the city, and the Apprentice Boys march, became symbolic, demonstrating year after year their status as second class citizens.

On October 5th, 1968, Catholics in Derry organised the first civil rights march in the city to protest against the discrimination practised by Unionism. The civil rights demonstrators planned to march into the forbidden walled city, to symbolise a break with the past and the politics of sectarianism.[2] They never got there, beaten by the police before they crossed Craigavon Bridge, and, because the events were captured on film and seen on televisions across the world, for the first time in generations the politics of sectarianism came to international attention. The following August, as the North spiralled toward civil war, the Unionist government refused to ban the Apprentice Boys Relief parade. As a result the most widespread rioting seen since the 1920s broke out, and within three days British troops appeared on the streets of Derry and Belfast. The most recent phase of the "Troubles" had begun, and there could be little doubt that the Siege Myth had played its part.

The conflict that erupted in 1968 rang in the changes for Unionism and for the culture of the Siege. If Unionism was never more secure during the 1920s and 1930s, it has never been more fragmented than today, nor has there ever been a time when sections of the Ulster Protestant community, and in particular the Protestant working class, felt

more alienated than they do now. This alienation is reflected in the contemporary meaning of the Siege Myth. The collapse of Unionist hegemony, the loss of power, both in Derry and within the Northern State, has had a profound affect on how the Siege Myth is seen by many Protestants and upon the organisations and events dedicated to its memory. The crisis of the last twenty five years has been marked by the retreat of the Protestant middle class from the institutions of Orangeism. The Apprentice Boys have witnessed the flight of many middle and upper class Protestants from their ranks, and the organisation has, since 1969, increasingly been seen as a populist and working class organisation.

The marches too have changed in character. The altering of the route of the parades has reflected the shifting sectarian topography of the city and symbolised the fact that control has been (legitimately) wrenched from Unionist hands. There have even been years when the parade was almost stopped altogether. Militant loyalists always ensured, however, that no matter how sensitive the political environment has been, the local Catholic community were going to be told to whom the Siege city was "supposed" to belong. Disputes over the nature and route of the parades has also, however, provided a focus for the rift between the British state and sections of the Protestant working class in the last two decades.

The growth of loyalist paramilitaries has been the starkest evidence of shifts in the position of the Protestant working class and their relationship to the state, as well as showing that popular anti-Catholicism is as fervent today as it has ever been. The extent and nature of popular Loyalism has also been reflected in the Siege culture.

Any Siege parade today is marked by a large number of flags and banners bearing the insignia of loyalist paramilitary groups. Marching bands named in memory of dead UDA and UVF men are not had to find. Members of the Apprentice Boys have also certainly been among those involved in such organisations. When, for example, in 1990, two men, widely regarded as leading figures in the local UDA, were killed, after the murder of a Donegal Sinn Fein councillor, two gaps appeared in the Apprentice Boys ranks the following August.

This populist and militant dimension to the Siege Culture is evidence of the alienation and sense of betrayal which characterises the attitudes of large numbers within the Protestant working class today. Such attitudes have also, certainly, featured in much of the literature produced to commemorate the Siege over the past twenty five years. The Siege has been identified as a story of popular Protestant resolve in the face of betrayal from Britain and the Protestant elite, and marked at times by rabid anti-Catholicism. For years a mural in the Fountain area, the last (and oldest) Protestant working class estate on the city side of the Foyle, declared that the Protestants of Derry were "Still Under Siege". By no means representative of all opinion, the extreme loyalist stance on the meaning of the Siege is nowhere better typified than in parts of a poem entitled "The Loyalist's of the Foyle's West Bank", which appeared in the official Apprentice Boys brochure published to commemorate the three hundredth anniversary of the Siege in 1989:

> Are you a Prod who celebrates, as the anniversary falls,
> The Closing of Old Derry's Gates, the Siege within her Walls?
> Are You a Prod who shuts his eyes and turns his face away,
> Because you will not recognise, it's happening here today?

Their Heads are bloody but unbowed,

Though battle-scarred they're still not cowed,

Besieged, beleaguered, on their own -

Like the Prods upon the Frontier Zone,

By terror stalked on every flank,

The Loyalists of the Foyle's West Bank.

For Years assaulted and abused, their right to life denied,

Battered, butchered, bleeding, bruised with nothing left but pride,

In Derry's dark satanic sewers, where the slimy serpents crawl -

The Fountain spirit still endures - a lesson to us all.[3]

This picture of intransigent, and often truculent, loyalist militancy is not, however, the whole story of the Siege parades today. The Siege anniversaries continue to be, for many Protestants, akin to a public holiday, occasions for socialising and taking time out from the mundane circumstances of everyday life. The Siege culture offers numerous opportunities for such social activity. That these continue to take place within the framework of a culture which cannot be understood as anything but political, and organised on a communal basis, underlines the extent to which sectarianism and political division as a intrinsic to civil society in Northern Ireland.

The political meaning of the Siege is also deeply contested, and the militant version of the Siege inheritance is only one option among many possible interpretations of the Siege Myth. Certainly the Tercentenary celebrations were marked by great efforts to promote the Siege as part of a shared cultural inheritance for all Derry's inhabitants. The "Relief of Derry" project, established just before the 300th anniversary of the

Siege, sought to represent a history of the Siege devoid of its overtly political and sectarian connotations. The Relief parade of 1989 was marked by a pageant, with a re-enactment of the Shutting of the Gates in historical costume. The Apprentice Boys even applied to the International Fund for Ireland to help finance their plans for a "Siege Interpretative Centre". The nationalist controlled Derry City Council commissioned a "Relief of Derry" symphony, written by Shaun Davey and first performed in the city in May, 1990. A "heritage centre", the Tower Museum, was opened in 1991, to celebrate the history of Derry, and the Siege is very much central to the display.

Many reasons gave rise to these attempts to redefine the Siege, not least of which was the desire to promote the city as a heritage site for the burgeoning tourist industry. They do also, represent a desire to reconstruct a sense of the past that might underwrite a new political and cultural hegemony. Certainly the Siege has been opened up to a variety of interpretations and has been celebrated in some far from familiar quarters. A spokesperson for Sinn Fein in Derry in 1989 described the Siege as "an act of truly revolutionary self-determination which can only be admired".[4] This is as valid a description of the Siege as any other, and far more valid than some.

Yet, it would be dangerous not to recognise the limits to cultural rapprochement. The efforts by certain sections of the Apprentice Boys to re-define the Siege during the Tercentenary celebrations, toward a more conciliatory interpretation, met with fierce resistance. While the Apprentice Boys did indeed apply to the International Fund for money, they subsequently withdrew the application after a campaign was waged

against this move, led by Ian Paisley, himself a long-time member of the Apprentice Boys. The International Fund had been set up in the wake of the Anglo-Irish Agreement and was regarded by many Protestants as "IF-fy" money. For the first time, since the days of John Hempton, a rival parade to the Apprentice Boys was staged by those who, along with Paisley, were expelled from the movement over the International Fund issue.

The Siege remains, then, crucial to a sense of identity for Ulster Protestants. It is an identity which is not, however, ready-made, but one which is constantly being re-worked and re-articulated. It is an identity which continues to re-live the Siege, though, as has been the case for centuries, it does so in a way which is particular to different moments in history. The Siege Myth of the 1790s was not the same as the Siege Myth of the 1890s, nor is it the same as the Siege Myth of the 1990s. While common features, themes and symbols recur again and again in the celebration of the Siege, their meaning is not only different at different times, but often totally contradictory. The Siege Myth of the 1710s was a nostalgic voice of a disenchanted generation, in the 1880s it was the vehicle for the politics of empire, in 1912 the Siege Myth meant rebellion.

The symbolism of the Siege Myth continues to be a terrain on which the values, actions and identity of Derry's Protestant inhabitants are given shape and form. The icons of the Siege - Walker, Mitchelburne, Lundy, the Apprentice Boys and the Walls - continue to be signs bearing a diversity of meanings, but providing a language through which the Protestant community is "imagined" into existence. Protestantism,

liberty, loyalty and the Crown remain touchstones for that imagined community in the songs, books and speeches on the Siege Myth. The parades of the Siege anniversaries are still annual landmarks for Ulster Protestant political culture. What those symbols, ideas, songs and marches mean now, and will mean in the future, is not, however, the same as they have meant in the past. Certainly, interpretations of the Siege Myth operate within certain limits, the "material conditions of possibility", as Terry Eagleton has put it, and whether the Siege story can ever truly escape from its identification with sectarianism is certainly open to question. Yet, the social and political role of the Siege Myth has certainly changed in the past three hundred years, and will undoubtedly do so again. The Siege Myth, riddled as it is with contradictions, is likely to remain one of the few things it has always been; a contested legacy.

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