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### Similarities Between Groups on Irish Home Rule and Independence

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, political thought in Ireland began to shift toward the idea of greater autonomy from the United Kingdom. This came after centuries of history between the islands of Ireland and Great Britain, and not all of it positive. This created division and sometimes hostility between groups of people in the country, even if they were not really so different. Two major groups involved in discussing the idea of increased independence were the nationalists, who supported greater Irish autonomy in some form, and unionists, who argued that the government did not need that change. The nationalists often fell into one of two main groups, the parliamentary and revolutionary movements. Differences in the methods of these groups included issues of scope, the use of force, and attitudes toward England.

However, though they differed in these respects, both groups had similar overarching goals and ideals. Some of these similarities included concerns about religious freedom, political rights, national identity, and the need to be unified. These concerns were also sometimes shared by the unionists, though they believed in another path to address them. Where nationalists saw themselves gaining or improving these things through increased autonomy, some unionists feared losing them. For these people, they felt they already had religious protection, a political voice, an identity, and strength in the Empire. In this case, a new government would be more likely to threaten these privileges than to increase them and may have caused some to favor remaining in the Union.

Using these terms is sometimes difficult because they may have different associations and definitions according to the political background of the speaker. This has been a large issue in Irish historiography due to disagreements over how to explain these ideas. Another issue is the assumption that Catholicism and nationalism go together as opposed to Protestantism and unionism. However, while this was a common pattern, it was not always the case. Exceptions include Theobald Wolfe Tone and Sir Denis Henry. Tone was a leader of the largely Protestant United Irishmen during the 1798 Rebellion against British rule, and Henry was a Catholic politician who supported Union during the time of Home Rule. Finally, while some names and terms are still in use today, they do not always refer to the exactly same thing as they did in the past. Here, these terms are used as follows.

Politically speaking, both parliamentary and revolutionary nationalists believed Ireland should be governed as its own country. They also often emphasized the importance and uniqueness of Irish history, literature, and culture through poetry and song, recalling familiar legendary or historical figures, or the use of the Irish language. The increase of Irish literature later in the century would both influence and be influenced by increasing nationalism. Some emphasized Irish culture over others and resisted any foreign influence, but others encouraged both foreign and familiar to exist together. Irish nationalists are often divided into two main groups depending on their end goals and the methods they used.

Parliamentary nationalists used the methods of parliamentary action and debate to win greater Irish autonomy. They pushed for Home Rule, which would repeal the Union and create an Irish parliament while keeping Ireland in a close relationship with the remaining United Kingdom. Some influential figures in this category were Daniel O'Connell, a political leader well-known for his work in support of Catholic emancipation and repeal of the Union, and

Charles Stewart Parnell, an important figure in the Irish Parliamentary Party. Today, people who support Irish government and culture through non-violent means are sometimes called nationalists to differentiate them from republicans. This can be confusing because it makes a distinction between “nationalist” and “republican” specifically, but both groups can still fall under the general heading of “nationalism”. Modern Irish nationalists may favor incorporating Northern Ireland into the Republic of Ireland, but not necessarily. It may not even require a political ideology and may only include an emphasis on culture.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast, revolutionary nationalists often pushed for full separation between Ireland and the United Kingdom and were willing to use physical force to win it. Some important figures in this case were Arthur Griffith and Pádraig Pearse. Griffith was the founder of the republican political party Sinn Féin and a President of the Dáil Éireann, the parliament of the Irish Republic until 1922. Pearse is best known for his part in the 1916 Rising and in writing the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, but he also supported the Irish language and founded a boy’s school that focused on Irish history and culture. Today, Irish republicanism is often associated with revolutionary nationalism and certain modern paramilitary groups claim descent from the militant groups of the past, though they do not necessarily represent the same ideals. Usually, modern republicans want a united Ireland. Some republican groups have started to move away from political violence, but not all of them.<sup>2</sup>

Unionism is sometimes considered the antithesis of nationalism, though this may not strictly be the case. In Ireland, unionism is the belief that Ireland is part of the British Empire and should remain in the United Kingdom. In many cases, this comes from a strong feeling of national identification with the United Kingdom as well as Ireland, instead of being in

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<sup>1</sup> "Irish Nationalism," in *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia*, (Abington: Helicon, 2016).

<sup>2</sup>Tom Stokes, "Republicanism Versus Nationalism(s)," *The Irish Republic*, March 8, 2011.

opposition. Some unionists used argument and legislation to protect the Union, while others used violent means. The term “loyalist” is sometimes associated with this latter group, but this is not always the case. Some important unionist figures were Sir Edward Carson and James Craig, two leaders of the Ulster Unionist Party, and Lord Randolph Churchill, who argued for Union in England. Unionism today tends to be more common in Northern Ireland, but is not exclusively found there.<sup>3</sup>

To understand the background of these different ideas along with the conflict between them, it is important to look back at history. This raises problems of its own because this is often complicated and full of contradictions, which makes it difficult to reach the root of the question. Another problem is that questions of nationalism in particular are highly controversial and interpretations vary widely even while looking at the same events. There is a long history of conflict which would eventually enter into popular memory, leading some to consider it a continuing legacy, while others considered this nonsense. A similar issue can be seen in recent times in the discussion about traditional or revisionist historiography and in histories implicitly or explicitly based on a political agenda. This can affect the way events are interpreted but is important for seeing how division and conflict came about.<sup>4</sup>

There had been some measure of English presence in Ireland since the twelfth century, with varying degrees of acceptance and resentment. In the seventeenth century, British monarchs began settling farmers in Ireland, where some eventually stayed and brought up families. The strongest English influence was in Leinster and Scottish influence was common in Ulster, especially in Counties Antrim and Down. Mutual fear and distrust between the groups created

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<sup>3</sup> "Unionism," in *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia*, (Abington: Helicon, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> John Hutchinson, “Irish Nationalism,” in *The Making of Modern Irish History: Revisionism and the Revisionist Controversy* (London: Routledge, 1996).

many problems and conflict. The native population resented losing their land and way of life, while the settlers feared retaliation. Laws that gave preference or protection to these settlers increased tensions and caused several armed rebellions. Gradually, the two groups drifted apart into the wealthier Protestant settlers of British descent and the poorer Catholic descendants of the native population. Each developed a separate identity and came to regard each other as long-standing foes, reinforced by questionable actions on both sides. This set the stage for the conflict and sentiment that would appear in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.<sup>5</sup>

In 1798, a revolutionary group called the United Irishmen staged a rebellion against British rule in the country. It was defeated, but later revolutionaries would look to continue their work. At the moment, however, it encouraged the government to pass the Acts of Union in 1800, which would bring Ireland into the United Kingdom. This was a controversial decision, but its opposition and support might be surprising from a modern perspective. For example, many Orangemen initially opposed Union, though the Orange Order is a unionist group today. However, County Wexford, where much of the recent Rebellion had taken place, may have supported the idea. At any rate, Ireland was brought into a formal political union with the United Kingdom in 1801 with the hopes of bringing stability to the country. One issue the new union had to deal with was the exclusion of Catholics from many public and legal positions based on laws held over from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries. Most of these were repealed by the nineteenth century, but some still remained. Originally, these were supposed to be addressed in the Act itself but were put off, perhaps from concerns about Protestant opposition. These issues would become an important political issue in the following decades. One of the men who were involved in promoting Catholic emancipation and Home Rule was Daniel O'Connell. Many

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Kee, *The Green Flag* (London,: Quartet, 1972), 6-20.

of the old restrictions on Catholics were lifted in 1829 and Home Rule would be passed in 1914, though it would be suspended until after the war ended.<sup>6</sup>

Famine struck Ireland in the mid-nineteenth century and had a devastating impact. Rightly or wrongly, some blamed English mishandling for their suffering. This encouraged forceful resistance and increasing displeasure with the current state of the government. In 1870, the Home Government Association was formed by Isaac Butt with the goal of restoring an independent Irish parliament. This created the issue that would later be called “The Irish Question,” referring to Ireland’s relationship with the United Kingdom. It would also bring Ulster’s relationship with the rest of Ireland into question, as Ulster had a very large Protestant population and many people were uncomfortable with the idea of a largely Catholic parliament. Coming from mixed British ancestry, some in Ulster also had a separate identity from the rest of Ireland that embraced both islands.<sup>7</sup>

Like the idea of Union early in the century, the idea of Home Rule was controversial. Even when Irishmen agreed it would be a good thing, they often disagreed on how to achieve it. However, forty-four years and three attempts later, the Home Rule Bill was passed. Opponents in Ulster formed an armed militia called the Ulster Volunteers to resist it. Fenian supporters responded by forming a militia of their own, the Irish Volunteers. Tensions were high, and now both sides had a militant force ready for action. These were the precursors of later loyalist and republican forces. Soon, Irish nationalism would undergo a shift from the parliamentary tradition of the nineteenth century to the revolutionary tradition of the twentieth.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Kee, *The Green Flag*, 154. Alvin Jackson, *Ireland: 1798-1998* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 27-29.

<sup>7</sup> Jackson, *Ireland*, 81-86.

<sup>8</sup> Jackson, *Ireland*, 167. Thomas Hennessey, *A History of Northern Ireland, 1920-1996* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997), 1-4.

Before Home Rule could be enacted, however, war broke out in Europe. When Britain entered the war, the bill was put on hold until it was over. Meanwhile, the Irish Volunteers and Irish Republican Brotherhood made plans to use the confusion of the war to their advantage. It seemed increasingly unlikely that the bill would actually come into action and, in some opinions, did not go far enough anyway. The plan was that, while Britain was occupied with war in Europe, revolutionaries would stage a military rising and declare an Irish Republic. They did so, occupying the General Post Office in Dublin for a week before their suppression by British forces. The leaders of the rising, including Pádraig Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, and Joseph Plunkett, were executed in the following weeks.<sup>9</sup>

At first, the rising had not been popular with most people, but the British response increased revolutionary sympathy. However, rebellion further alienated unionists. They considered this rising treasonous and were appalled that the revolutionaries would stage a revolt while loyal Britons and Irishmen were being slaughtered in Europe. The revolutionaries resisted recruitment into a war for a government they wanted no part of or that they felt was ignoring their needs in favor of faraway lands. As a poem a few years later would say, some believed “’Twas better to die 'neath an Irish sky than at Suvla or Sud-El-Bar”.<sup>10</sup>

The next few years would see war between the new Irish Republic and the United Kingdom to establish the Irish Free State, and then between the Irish Free State and radical republican forces over the Anglo-Irish Treaty. By the time it was all over, the country was an independent state, but through a terrible loss of life. In addition, the conflicts increased the divisions already present within the country and can arguably still be felt today. However, despite deep feelings of animosity lasting many years, there was common ground between fellow

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<sup>9</sup> Jackson, *Ireland*, 201-202.

<sup>10</sup> Canon Charles O'Neill, “The Foggy Dew”, 1919.

Irishmen regardless of their personal politics. Even when dealing with the controversial questions, they may have been more alike than different.

One concern common to both groups of nationalists was about equality of religion. As mentioned before, most of Ireland was largely Catholic and had been for centuries. By 1911, 99% of the three southern provinces were Catholic, with an about 44% population in Ulster. However, it was only in the nineteenth century that the last laws persecuting them were finally overturned. Therefore, when discussing greater powers for Ireland, it was important for nationalists to be assured of religious equality. Daniel O’Connell reminded his audience at Mullingar of this in 1843 to encourage them that repeal of the union would benefit all Ireland. Even if they had different religious views, Irishmen could still benefit from the same legislation and work together for that end. He makes an important note that “there was no pursuit of Roman catholic views as opposed to protestant,” answering one of the objections to Home Rule. This also came up in the “Resolutions of the Home Rule Conference” thirty years later. It states that the Conference believes that an Irish parliament would be the best protector of the people’s rights, but wishes to make it very clear there must be no changes in property, any sort of religious ascendancy, or religious discrimination. Given the laws passed against their religion in the past, this would have been a very valid concern.<sup>11</sup>

This would also be a concern for some revolutionary nationalists as well. The “Proclamation of the Irish Republic,” delivered from the General Post Office in 1916, promised religious and civil liberties to all citizens of the new Republic. It also declared that the differences between the minority and majority that created conflict in the past were artificial and

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<sup>11</sup> Hennessey, *A History of Northern Ireland*, 1. Josef L. Altholz, “Daniel O’Connell: Speech at Mullingar, May 14, 1843” and “Resolutions of the Home Rule Conference, 1873” in *Selected Documents in Irish History* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2000), 86-87, 95-96.

had been “carefully fostered by an alien government.” This goes along with the Proclamation’s call to unite the Irish nation and suggested that the real enemy was not the man with a different religion or political party, but the foreigner encouraging fear and hatred between countrymen. This particular sentiment may not have been widespread, but the promise of religious freedom would also be addressed in 1922 in the Constitution of the newly-formed Irish Free State (Saorstát Éireann). In addition to promising the free profession and practice of religion, it forbade laws privileging or restricting a particular religion, addressed questions of state aid and religious schools, and promised protection of religious and school properties. However, by the next constitution in 1937, this seems to have changed a bit. The Constitution of Éire recognizes multiple religious beliefs, but emphasizes Christianity and gives a special place to Catholicism in Article 44. A result of this can be seen in the article forbidding divorce. This article has since been changed, but only within the last twenty years.<sup>12</sup>

Another cause common to both groups of nationalists was getting “Ireland for the Irish”, as O’Connell said during his efforts for Repeal, or ensuring that the Irish people had control of their own affairs. This might not seem like a major problem today, but at that point, Ireland was being governed from another country that many felt did not have their best interests at heart. William Ewart Gladstone, the British Prime Minister in 1886, brought up this issue when introducing the first Home Rule bill to the House of Commons. Because the law came to Ireland “with a foreign aspect, and in a foreign garb”, it did not feel to the people to be truly Irish law or representing their needs. Because of this, even legislation with good intentions was met with distrust and displeasure. He argued that sometimes it was not enough that the laws were good; they needed to come from the right source as well. However, the Crown would still need to

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<sup>12</sup>Altholz, “Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 1916”, “Constitution of the Irish Free State (1922)”, and “Constitution of Éire (1937),” 111, 123-124, 126-128.

maintain certain powers, including imperial affairs, the armed forces, and foreign relations. He also said that an Irish Parliament should not pass a law favoring one religion over another. The Home Rule Conference agreed on these points, asking only for control over domestic affairs to be placed in the hands of an Irish Parliament. They also agreed in the belief that increasing Irish autonomy would strengthen and honor the Crown rather than weakening or degrading it.<sup>13</sup>

An Irish government was also a goal of the revolutionary nationalists, though they supported a different form, which will be addressed later. Arthur Griffith, who founded Sinn Féin in 1905, argued that all the members of government in Ireland were Britons, not Irish, and that no Briton in Ireland was a native. He seems to take this from the movement of English, Scottish, and Welsh immigrants into Ireland and their descendants. Even if they have lived in Ireland for generations, he still seems to consider them foreign because their ancestors were foreign and he insists on native government. Other revolutionaries may not have taken this stance exactly, but the prospect of putting Irish affairs into Irish hands was one of the biggest goals of their movement. The Proclamation made this very clear in its opening paragraphs, saying “We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible.” The Constitution of the Irish Free State echoed this belief in its assertion that the government’s authority came from the Irish people, and the Constitution of Éire even used similar language in describing Ireland’s right to choose its own government as “inalienable, indefeasible, and sovereign”. However, these governments insisted on greater powers than those originally proposed by Home Rule.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Altholz, “Daniel O’Connell: Speech at Mullingar, May 14, 1843,” “Resolutions of the Home Rule Conference,” and “William Ewart Gladstone: First Home Rule Bill Speech (1886)” in *Selected Documents*, 84, 95, 101-103.

<sup>14</sup>Arthur Griffith, “True and False Imperialism,” in *The Irish Review (Dublin)* 1, no. 6 (August 1911): 269. Altholz, “Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 1916,” “Constitution of the Irish Free State (1922),” and “Constitution of Éire (1937),” 111, 121-122, 127.

In contrast, unionists did not support a new Irish government but may have still believed Union would protect Irish political interests. In 1911, an unknown author who called himself “An Ulster Imperialist” wrote political essays in *The Irish Review*, sometimes exchanging essays with Arthur Griffith. In one of these, he argues against Griffith’s claims that the Empire is “England-over-All” and says that by remaining in the Union, Ireland will contribute to worldwide civilization and would have enough of a free hand to satisfy most of her citizens. In addition, knowing that they are part of a great Empire will cause Irishmen to willingly take pride in their union and not feel chafed by their partner.<sup>15</sup>

If a desire for increased political power in Ireland was the common goal of both parliamentary and revolutionary nationalists, then one of the most significant common methods for achieving this may have been their appeals to their audience’s sense of pride and love for their country. This seems to be a unifying factor regardless of personal political beliefs and was quite effective, if its use through many years and the response of the people are anything to go by. O’Connell used this by telling his audience the good things that would come if the Irish had their own country. They would be best able to manage their own affairs, to know their problems and needs, and would encourage their own growth. This encouragement was met with cheers and excitement. Others would claim legitimacy for Irish political rights by going back into its history. Some might argue this was not a valid claim because historical conditions were not like those experienced by the speakers and audience. Another objection is that their vision of Irish history may have been heavily romanticized and not necessarily true. This may have been the case, but it was still an effective method of persuasion.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>An Ulster Imperialist, “True and False Imperialism,” *The Irish Review (Dublin)* 1, no. 8 (October 1911): 383-389.

<sup>16</sup>Altholz, “Daniel O’Connell: Speech at Mullingar, May 14, 1843” and “Resolutions of the Home Rule Conference, 1873,” 84-85, 94.

Appeals to pride were especially among the revolutionary nationalists as well. Historical figures and events, from the ancient High Kings to executed Fenians, feature prominently in revolutionary speech and ideals. History is also invoked in a less positive light by recalling the suffering of past generations, though often also with descriptions of their strength, tenacity, and bravery. This past was an important part of the memory and culture of Ireland, and spoke deeply to many who heard it. In two of his essays in *The Irish Review*, Griffith reminds Irishmen of their past sovereignty and glory, as well as their perseverance. He tells how, despite “centuries of cruel punishment”, Irishmen have never given up. “In seven hundred years that cry [‘we surrender’] has never been forced from the throat of the Irish people.” He also reminds them of the High Kings of old in order to assert Ireland’s right to sovereignty and declares that, if the idea of an Irish nation was a foolish fable, then “it is the most potent fable in modern history. For through consecutive centuries, men have suffered poverty, oppression, exile, chains and death in preference to its renunciation.” For these reasons, he considers being Irish something to be very proud of, and encourages his audience to feel the same.<sup>17</sup>

Another revolutionary nationalist who used these appeals was Patrick, or Pádraig, Pearse. He was especially interested in the history and culture of Ireland and felt its study had been neglected. When he founded his own school, he made sure that Irish heroes such as Cúchulainn and Wolfe Tone were featured, as well as the Irish language. To encourage the use and preservation of the language, he wrote poetry and recopied older poems in Irish. But, one of the major appeals to Irish pride that he made was in the Proclamation. It lists several reasons why the Irish should be roused to action, including the past generations who fought and died for their

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<sup>17</sup> Altholz, “God Save Ireland (1868)” in *Selected Documents*, 91-93. Griffith, “True and False Imperialism,” *The Irish Review*, 171-172. Arthur Griffith, “Home Rule and the Unionists” *The Irish Review (Dublin)* 2, no. 15 (May 1912): 114.

freedom, the continued struggle against oppression, and the comradeship of those who believe in national sovereignty. This right, it says, has not been extinguished by its suppression and will never be destroyed “except by the destruction of the Irish people.”<sup>18</sup>

At a first glance, it might seem that it would be impossible for unionists to share this sentiment with the nationalists, since they are arguing against the creation of a nation that the others are fighting for. While this might be the case politically, it may not be so distinct on a personal level. The Irish nationalists wanted a state that they could identify with, that shared a common history and culture, and that would protect their needs. In a way, the unionists shared these goals, but with their national pride being from being British or both British and Irish. This did not have to be a contradictory sentiment, as An Ulster Imperialist explained, because a person could be proud of both countries in the same way that he could love his country without losing his love for his hometown. This rejected the idea that one had to drop Irish nationality to be a loyal British citizen or to hate England in order to love Ireland. An interesting point about the way he makes his argument is that he also recalls ancient Irish heroes and historic rebellions. These are the same figures and events that nationalists drew from for their inspiration, perhaps showing similar beliefs about history and what was considered to be brave or strong. He also places unionism in the context of national pride by arguing that being in the Union has not made its citizens less Irish than their ancestors, but more so because it allows Irishmen to focus their energies on better things than rebellion. The similarity between unionist and nationalist love for country can also be seen in a quote from Sir Edward Carson, a leader of the Irish Unionist Party, who said “if it be treason to love your King, to try to save your Constitution, to preserve your birthright, and your civil and religious liberty, then I glory in being a traitor.” This sounds very

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<sup>18</sup> Altholz, “Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 1916,” 110-112.

much like the defiant last words of an executed rebel, but coming from an entirely different source. In addition, his concerns about civil and religious liberties and maintaining a constitution are also like those of the parliamentarians.<sup>19</sup>

A final factor that was similar between parliamentary and revolutionary nationalists was their need to be unified. If part of their argument for increased Irish autonomy was that the Irish people were a nation and had needs of their own, then it was necessary for them to have the support of that nation, whether it was for Repeal, Home Rule, or complete separation. Groups such as the parliamentary Home Rule Conference and Irish Parliamentary Party, revolutionary Irish Republican Brotherhood, and unionist residents of Ulster sought to reinforce this unity by creating declarations or pledges stating the goals and beliefs their members believed in. This was especially important from the nationalist perspective because the rest of the United Kingdom was considerably larger, wealthier, and more powerful, so it was critical that they stand united with one another to have any sort of success. In addition, some would argue that the reason Ireland was in the state it was in the first place was because it had allowed division between its people to spring up and create corruption.<sup>20</sup>

The need for unification was such that even groups who would usually oppose each other might consider working together to reach common goals. Two examples of this include Douglas Hyde's admonition for nationalists and unionists to work together to maintain Irish traditions and culture, and in Arthur Griffith's suggestion that Irish nationalists would be prepared to work alongside the imperialists if they readjusted their focus from a solely British Empire to a Hiberno-British one. He seems to be more prepared to accept an alliance between Irish

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<sup>19</sup> An Ulster Imperialist, "Nationalism and Imperialism" *The Irish Review (Dublin)* 1, no. 2 (April 1911): 63-71. Hennessey, *A History of Northern Ireland*, 3.

<sup>20</sup> Altholz, "Fenian Oath (1859)," "Resolutions of the Home Rule Conference, 1873," "Irish Parliamentary Party Pledge, 1885," and "Solemn League and Covenant, 1912" in *Selected Documents*, 90, 94-96, 100, 108-109.

nationalists and Irish imperialists than with Englishmen, though men working from both countries were still effective for Home Rule.<sup>21</sup>

Stressing the need for unity was also a method employed by the unionists, who believed Ireland's position in the world came from its union with Britain. Rather than emphasizing the differences between the islands, they emphasized the similarities and the part Ireland had played in their history. This may have been an especially convincing argument for the descendents of the settlers in Ireland because they shared many traits with Britons. They may have felt proud of these parts of their identity, but also of their Irish identity. An interesting explanation of this idea was presented in *The Irish Review* in 1911.

In this article, the author seems to argue that the best way to encourage unity in the Empire is to allow for diversity. He points out that attempts to force a foreign nationality upon a people who never considered themselves beaten are disastrous. This is especially problematic if, as the English unfortunately were prone to do, the conqueror behaves as though the new empire is his and his alone. The resentment that Ireland feels is not toward the Empire itself, he argues, but toward the assumption that it is the *English* Empire and has no room for other forms of patriotism. Love for one's own country is inevitable and proper, and should be encouraged rather than repressed if empire is to prosper. If this is taken to heart and Irishmen are allowed to have their nationality within the Empire, he says, then it will emerge the stronger for healing a centuries-old hurt and increasing unification.<sup>22</sup>

Although parliamentary and revolutionary nationalists had many things in common, and even shared ground with their opponents as well, they still had significant differences. In general,

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<sup>21</sup>Altholz, "Douglas Hyde: 'The Necessity for De-Anglicising Ireland' (1892)," in *Selected Documents*, 104-108. Griffith, "True and False Imperialism," *The Irish Review*, 272.

<sup>22</sup>An Ulster Imperialist, "Nationalism and Imperialism," *The Irish Review*, 65-66.

parliamentarians were more moderate than the revolutionaries. Some considered this a good thing because it remained within the established laws, while others considered it weak or ineffectual. Even though they may have agreed on certain major points, they often differed in the details of how to reach that goal. Some of these differences included disagreements about scope, whether or not violence was permissible, and attitudes toward England.

One of the biggest differences between these two nationalist groups was the scope of their goals. Parliamentarians often favored Home Rule that would give Ireland an autonomous parliament, but would still maintain close ties with the United Kingdom. They believed this would give Ireland the benefits of its own government without dismembering the familiar relationship with Britain. Even as he was arguing for Repeal, O’Connell stated that “They say we want separation from England, but what I want is to prevent separation from taking place” and he described the gains from an Irish parliament as becoming “solid golden links of connexion with England.” He argued that the present state of affairs was so bad that some might try to obtain outright separation, but this could be happily prevented by granting Ireland political powers.<sup>23</sup>

Others, however, believed this was not going far enough. Especially after the nineteenth century, revolutionary nationalists pushed for full independence from the United Kingdom. This had been a goal for a long time, as evidenced by Robert Emmet’s statement in 1803 that his goal had been to “effect a total separation between Great Britain and Ireland -- to make Ireland totally independent”, but it had not always been the favored position. When the Third Home Rule Bill was brought up, it included some of the agreements made by the Home Rule Conference, such as having an Irish parliament for domestic affairs while leaving imperial matters to the Crown.

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<sup>23</sup> Altholz, “Daniel O’Connell: Speech at Mullingar, May 14, 1843,” 86.

However, some nationalists felt this was still too little freedom. Arthur Griffith declared that it “does not alter the status of Irishmen by an inch” because it did not allow for an Irish Parliament to raise an army or manage its own economy.<sup>24</sup>

Some who were displeased with the bill may have accepted it as a stepping-stone for greater freedoms in the future, but others considered it shameful. A similar debate would come up again after the creation of the Irish Free State with conflict over the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which allowed for an independent Irish nation within the British Empire, included an oath of loyalty to the King, and allowed Northern Ireland to choose whether to be part of the Irish Free State or the United Kingdom. Some thought this was an acceptable compromise, some were less satisfied but felt it would be a path to greater freedom, but some believed it was a shameful betrayal of what they fought for. The conflict created a civil war between opposing factions, but eventually ended in favor of the Treaty and its more moderate supporters.<sup>25</sup>

Another major difference between these two forms of nationalism comes from the methods they employed; specifically, their position on the use of force. Many parliamentarians insisted on nonviolence and used the existing legal system to win their case through argument and debate. This kept its politicians within the bounds of the law, but was also a slow and tedious process, and was often difficult to pass. When speaking to his audience about Repeal, O’Connell emphasized that this was not to be a violent or lawless endeavour, saying “But what do I want you to do? Is it to turn out into battle or war (cries of no, no)? Is it to commit riot or crime (cries of no, no)? Remember ‘whoever commits a crime gives strength to the enemy’ ... I want you to do nothing that is not open and legal.” Using violence would not help their cause, but hurt it

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<sup>24</sup> Altholz, “Robert Emmet: Speech from the Dock (1803)” in *Selected Documents*, 75-76. Griffith, “Home Rule and the Unionists,” *The Irish Review*, 113-114.

<sup>25</sup> Altholz, “Irish Free State Agreement (1922) in *Selected Documents*, 118-119.

because it would weaken their credibility. If Irishmen could not be trusted to behave peaceably and not stir up violence, then how could they be trusted with government? Why would the United Kingdom wish to cooperate with lawless men? For these reasons, some nationalists believed that it was important to completely shun violence.<sup>26</sup>

However, some Irishmen disagreed with this position, including the Young Ireland movement, which split from O'Connell's faction over an absolute condemnation of physical force. Thomas Meagher, a leader of the Young Irelanders, agreed that peaceful measures were the best and most honorable ones to adopt. But, he stated that he could not assent to a complete renunciation of arms. There are times, he said, "when arms alone will suffice ... when political ameliorations call for a drop of blood" and that the sword was a "sacred weapon" if it was used for the proper defense of national liberty. Other examples of revolutionary support of force include the Fenian song "God Save Ireland," which honored the "Manchester martyrs" who had been executed for murder after killing a policeman during a jailbreak. In addition, language of the Proclamation is often militant and speaks of its secret and open military groups, asks a blessing upon their arms, and tells of their readiness to sacrifice themselves for the nation.<sup>27</sup>

Finally, nationalists sometimes differed on their attitudes toward Britain. This was more of a personal question than one of policy, so it did not always line up according to political beliefs. However, it does seem that parliamentarians were generally a bit less hostile, or perhaps just less vocal. This would make sense because they would have to work closely with Britons, so it was important to maintain a cordial relationship. One example of nationalist affability toward Britain is O'Connell's comment that "there is not a man in existence more loyally attached than I

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<sup>26</sup> Altholz, "Daniel O'Connell: Speech at Mullingar, May 14, 1843," 86.

<sup>27</sup> Altholz, "Thomas Francis Meagher: Speech, July 28, 1846," "'God Save Ireland' (1868)," and "Proclamation of the Irish Republic, 1916" in *Selected Documents*, 88-89, 91-93, and 110-112.

am to the Queen – God bless her. ... While I live, I will stand by the throne.” This is important because if Home Rule succeeded and Ireland became an equal partner of Great Britain, it would still need a friendly relationship with its neighbor. This also suggests the coexistence of love for Ireland and for Britain mentioned in the unionist essays.<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, while revolutionary nationalists were not always hostile to Britain, it does seem to be a bit more common. This may come from continued outrage at the harmful deeds of the past and resentment about prejudice. An especially striking example of this is the descriptions of England in the Fenian song “God Save Ireland.” The song focuses on the three executed men, who it depicts as brave, noble, and proud, in contrast to the English, who are described as “the vengeful tyrant,” “cruel foes,” and casting the men with “England’s fatal cord.” This is notable because the men were being executed for murder, on the basis that a policeman had been killed during their jailbreak, making them responsible for his death. In this depiction, however, the men are hailed as heroes cruelly killed in their youth and seems to suggest that it was really the English who were the murderers. It was not uncommon for local heroes to be commemorated through song and not all of them were obviously anti-English, but some do suggest a degree of resentment and anger.<sup>29</sup>

The position of Irish unionists toward Britain would naturally be somewhat different than that of the nationalists, but it does seem to bear some similarities to the parliamentary perspective. For one thing, they also advocated a close personal relationship between Ireland and Britain, though they would suggest a closer tie than nationalists might. They also seem open to the idea of being simultaneously Irish and British. This probably would not have gone over well

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<sup>28</sup> Altholz, “Daniel O’Connell: Speech at Mullingar, May 14, 1843”, 86. An Ulster Imperialist, “True and False Imperialism”, *The Irish Review*, 383-389.

<sup>29</sup> Altholz, “God Save Ireland”, 91-93.

with most revolutionary nationalists or even all parliamentarians, but it probably could have found some common ground in some cases. There were likely some differences in other areas, though, such as believing that Britain was already acting in Ireland's interests or that nationalism inevitably leads to imperialism. There were also cases of hard-line unionists in the same way there were hard-line nationalists, so this would have led to stronger differences as well.<sup>30</sup>

Two forms of Irish nationalism appeared during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, parliamentary and revolutionary nationalism. While they disagreed on certain points, including the scope of their goals and what actions should be taken to achieve them, both groups agreed on most of the main points of their argument. On the whole, the differences may have been less important than the overall beliefs linking the two. Even the unionist position, which might seem like the antithesis of nationalism in this context, may have sometimes been more similar than some might have wanted to believe.

This is important to consider because there has been a long history of conflict between groups in this case and it has been difficult to find common ground. Attitudes have changed over the years, but time has not fully gotten rid of fear and distrust between different political groups. For this to change, people will have to learn to trust and cooperate with each other despite long-standing conflict or opposing views. This is beginning to happen, and one way to help make progress might be to recognize and focus on the parts that are alike rather than those that are different. On the most fundamental levels, everyone is alike and similarities can be found even in the bitterest of foes, who may then seem far less unbearable than they did before. In the case of Ireland, recognizing the things that bind countrymen to one another will be an important part of moving forward to a better future.

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<sup>30</sup>An Ulster Imperialist, "Nationalism and Imperialism," *The Irish Review*, 63-71.

This is also applicable to the historiography because it looks more at similarities than differences. Many works in the past often would explain these events from obviously either a nationalist or unionist perspective, though more recent writings have tried to look at both sides. However, some have reacted by consciously challenging traditional assumptions, to the displeasure of those favoring a more familiar understanding, who may feel they are going too far in the other direction. These competing interpretations seem to focus on what makes them different from other ideas. While this does certainly have its place, perhaps something can also be learned by looking at unifying factors rather than dividing ones even between traditionally opposed groups. This may provide new opportunities for insight that might not be available from a divided point of view and allow the best points of both approaches to come together.

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