

good working relationship between Dublin and London. Haughey recognised this but as Bruce Arnold elsewhere argues, he concentrated on style over substance, especially in relation to Anglo–Irish bilateral summits. When Robin Haydon, the British ambassador, asked Haughey in 1980, ‘...(have you) put forward any specific ideas on the North, or on Anglo–Irish relations to Mrs. Thatcher, and he replied he had not. He did not elaborate’ (PREM 19/283). Indeed, his plan, if one could call it that, appears to have had little more substance than to charm Thatcher, as evident in his gift of a Georgian teapot and engraved tea strainer at their Anglo–Irish summit in 1980, and then oversell the outcome. The minister for foreign affairs, Brian Lenihan, told the press that, thanks to Haughey’s work with Thatcher, there would be a united Ireland within a decade. This led to a fundamental loss of trust on the part of the British prime minister. Her low opinion of Haughey was confirmed by his flip-flopping on the hunger strikes and, most catastrophically, his withdrawal of support for European Community sanctions over the Falklands crisis (1982), which many observers see as being primarily motivated by a by-election in Dublin that might strengthen his fragile minority government. A stark, handwritten note Thatcher left in PREM 19/1070 in 1982, not cited here, states that ‘events have changed ... Certainly I have no intention of having further bilateral meetings with the Taoiseach.’ The cynical opportunism of his dismissal of the Anglo–Irish Agreement in 1985 demonstrated his extraordinary lack of statesmanship in opposition on an issue of key national importance. It would be churlish to completely dismiss Haughey’s record in his third term in office. He made the Anglo–Irish Agreement work, though this was not without problems. Economic recovery began. Moreover, Haughey was certainly more open than his predecessor, Garret FitzGerald, to back-channel contacts with the republican movement. Much of the evidence on this last aspect has been long in the public domain in accounts of the peace process. I was not, however, entirely convinced that the case made here that Haughey’s encouragement of these secret talks was crucial in the development of the process that led to the 1998 agreement. His role strikes me as quite minor. Few historians give Thatcher much credit for MI5 contacts with the I.R.A. at much the same time. Perhaps future archival releases in Ireland and Britain may change my perception.

Overall, Dr Kelly usually, but not always, gives the benefit of the doubt to Haughey’s Northern Ireland policy. And while he is not afraid to point out the alarming incompetence of his first two governments, he certainly rejects the notion that Haughey was purely opportunist when it came to the issue of partition. However, his generous use of recently opened documentation, particularly of the 1979–82 years, could also be deployed to make a very strong case that Haughey’s policy and judgement on the issue were often very poor. As it is, this book is an important account of Haughey and Northern Ireland, and will be of interest to scholars of both the man and that conflict. The release of further archival material, in due course, may bring new material to light that may enhance or damage the late taoiseach’s historical legacy, something he apparently cared about deeply.

doi:10.1017/ihs.2017.54

FIONA MCKELVEY  
*School of English and History, Ulster University*  
 McKelvey-F1@email.ulster.ac.uk

UVF: BEHIND THE MASK. By Aaron Edwards. Pp 420. Kildare: Merrion Press. 2017. €17.99 paperback.

This book, a culmination of almost twenty years of research, provides a comprehensive new history of the Ulster Volunteer Force (U.V.F.), from its reincarnation in the mid-1960s to the present day. It is a necessary read for anyone interested in the Northern Ireland Troubles. Constructed in a chronological format, comprised of twenty

chapters, Dr Edwards's monograph provides a nuanced examination of a complex and controversial subject, generally neglected within the relevant historiography.

As the sub-title of this book suggests, Dr Edwards seeks to get 'behind the mask' of the U.V.F.'s activities over the course of the past fifty years or more. The book includes an organisational history of the U.V.F., but also provides detailed and occasionally disturbing analysis regarding the sadistic torture and murder techniques employed by members of the U.V.F., including the numerous murders (at least twenty-three) committed by the notorious 'Shankill Butchers' (see for example, pp 117–125). He also exposes the role played by some senior unionist politicians and those close to them in dealings with the U.V.F. Peppering his analysis with oral testimonies, and generally conscious of placing the activities of this Loyalist paramilitary organisation within the wider context of the period under examination, this is not a hagiographical project. It does not seek to airbrush out of history the numerous atrocities committed by the U.V.F., which was responsible for the brutal deaths of 564 victims, mostly Catholic civilians, during the Northern Ireland Troubles.

Undoubtedly, the single greatest strength of this book lies in Dr Edwards's ability to gain intimate access to leading figures within the U.V.F. and compile a substantial oral history. As a native of Belfast, growing up in the 1980s in the predominantly working-class areas of Rathcoole and Carrmoney in Newtownabbey on the outskirts of north Belfast, Dr Edwards is well placed to provide a history of the U.V.F. He acknowledges that the person who originally suggested that he write this book was Billy Mitchell, the former U.V.F. staff officer, turned Progressive Unionist Party (P.U.P.) strategist. He describes Mitchell as a 'close friend and mentor' (pp xiii–xiv). Significantly, the author was able to gain 'unprecedented access' to high-profile members of the U.V.F. (pp iv–xiv). Those interviewed included: David Ervine, member of the U.V.F. in East Belfast during the 1970s and subsequent leader of the P.U.P.; Billy Hutchinson, member of the U.V.F.'s C Company in West Belfast and later a P.U.P. M.L.A. from 1998 to 2003; and Billy Wright, member of the U.V.F. in mid-Ulster, who was assassinated by the Irish National Liberation Army (I.N.L.A.) in 1997. Because of the nature of the events examined in the book, for ethical and security reasons, the author has understandably anonymised several of his interviewees. I commend the author for taking on this task. Given the controversy surrounding the Boston College interviews and the subsequent publication of Ed Moloney's best-selling, *Voices from the grave: two men's war in Ireland* (the second half of Moloney's book was comprised of a series of interviews given by David Ervine prior to his death in 2007), Dr Edwards is aware of the possible 'consequence of engaging in research on paramilitary violence' and the difficulties in addressing the legacy of violent conflict (pp iv). However, without conducting intensive oral histories, scholars interested in paramilitary violence during the Northern Ireland Troubles would find it an almost impossible task to compile a comprehensive analysis of their chosen subject matter. Along with these oral history interviews, he also demonstrates the archival skills necessary to conduct contemporary research in relation to the Northern Ireland Troubles, mining repositories such as the United Kingdom National Archives, the P.R.O.N.I., and the Linenhall Library, Belfast, as well as a plethora of newspapers, parliamentary debates and published secondary sources.

Despite the many positive features of this book, occasionally Dr Edwards could have provided further political contextualisation vis-à-vis the U.V.F.'s involvement and motivation behind its acts of violence. For example, as I read this work I wanted to learn more about the British government's attitude to the U.V.F. over the course of the past fifty years. While the author provides a good overview of Labour leader and British prime minister Harold Wilson's views in relation to the U.V.F. (see, for example, pp 48–9), the roles of Conservative Party leaders and British prime ministers Margaret Thatcher (1979–90) and her successor John Major (1990–97), are almost completely ignored. A similar criticism can be levelled at the author in relation to the Irish government, and more generally the impact of U.V.F. acts of paramilitary violence within the Republic of Ireland. For example, a mere three pages is allocated to the Dublin–Monaghan bombings of May 1974, including accusations of 'collusion'

between the U.V.F. and the British state (pp 72–4). It may have been prudent of the author to have utilised the relevant documents from the National Archives of Ireland, including the papers of the Departments of the Taoiseach, Foreign Affairs and Justice, to outline the U.V.F.'s attitude to the southern body politic and visa versa. The above criticisms, however, are only minor points of concern.

In the concluding chapters Dr Edwards leaves the reader with a passing word of warning. At the time of writing this book most of the structures of the U.V.F., he surmises, are 'still in place and, despite the hard work of some genuinely progressive people, shows little sign of withering away on their own' (p. xiii). To paraphrase Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams's statement regarding the Provisional Irish Army (P.I.R.A.) in 1995, 'They haven't gone away, you know'. Since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, Dr Edwards argues that some loyalists have started to reappraise 'their unqualified support' for this accord (p. 322).

Many working class Protestant communities feel that the Northern Ireland peace process has left them behind. Factors including economic deprivation, the continued polarisation of politics along ethnic-religious grounds and a loss of 'national identity' have reinforced a siege mentality among some within the Protestant community in Northern Ireland. Unsurprisingly, therefore, given the tribal nature of Northern Ireland in recent years, as Dr Edwards points out, some within the loyalist community have turned to the use of violence. The author cites a petrol bomb attack, in December 2012, on the offices of Naomi Long, the Alliance M.P. for East Belfast, as a possible example that the U.V.F. in north Belfast and north Down may not have gone away (pp 322–4).

Finally, I hope that Dr Edwards's new book helps to remove the taboo in relation to interviewing known active or retired paramilitaries involved in the Northern Ireland Troubles. If the academic community adheres to the strictest ethical guidelines, scholars should feel free to conduct such interviews. Yes, it may be uncomfortable sitting down beside someone who may have murdered innocent civilians, but the role of the historian is to find the truth, to ask the difficult questions. To quote Dr Edwards, himself paraphrasing the French historian Marc Bloch, history is the 'study of both the dead and the living' (p. xxi).

In fact, over the coming years, oral histories related to the Northern Ireland Troubles will become increasingly more important as those involved grow older and eventually pass away. Unlike the pioneering work undertaken by the Bureau of Military History between 1947 and 1957, in compiling over 1,770 witness statements, which covers the 'revolutionary period in Ireland' from 1913 to 1921 (thus excluding the Irish Civil War, 1922–1923), no equivalent project, to date, exists in relation to the Northern Ireland Troubles (except for the controversial Boston College tapes project). It is for this reason alone that Dr Edward's book is invaluable in helping to preserve of our recent history.

doi:10.1017/ihs.2017.55

STEPHEN KELLY

*Department of History and Politics, Liverpool Hope University*  
kellys@hope.ac.uk