



LOYALISM AND THE MEDIA

TOWARDS EQUAL TREATMENT



E:
UVPS@UnionistVoice.com

www.UnionistVoice.com

FOREWORD

This report is produced by the Unionist Voice Policy Studies media sub-group, which focuses on obtaining equal treatment for the unionist/loyalist community in the mainstream media. The sub-group, which is made up of seven representatives from across the loyalist community drawn from our wider policy group, and two directors from our management board (including myself), engaged widely with many of those affected by negative media reporting.

This work was then brought together by the sub-group, with recommendations agreed and the report was then produced over recent weeks and is now published for wider consumption.

Whilst this report is critical of certain reporting, we do recognise that there are many excellent journalists and outlets in Northern Ireland. A central theme we have come to is that often the subtle bias or mistreatment is derived more from sub-conscious bias or simply having become accustomed to an orthodoxy whereby it is ok, popular even, to treat unionists, and particularly loyalists, in a negative manner.

The poor relationship of loyalism particularly in the media is not to say that those from within that community are blameless. There have been instances of poor behaviour towards the media (which, unsurprisingly, is then met with media negativity in coverage), an established reluctance and complete failure to properly engage with the media in a confident manner and, perhaps most fundamentally, there has been (until recent years) an abject failure to hold the media accountable through the established regulatory or legal processes. This has made loyalism an easy target.

Key recommendations are set out, and the next phase of the sub-group's work will be to seek to take them forward and partner with wider sections of the unionist/loyalist community to do so. This is important not only for the delivery of the desired outcomes, but also to build networks and, crucially, to identify and build the capacity of new voices within unionism/loyalism who can confidently represent their community in engagement with the media, and more generally within the political sphere.

This report is critical of much of the media and speaks in plain unambiguous language. It is not an 'academic' report designed to create a word-salad and blind the reader by science; it speaks to the grassroots unionist/loyalist community, but so too does it speak directly to the media.

The media, one suspects, will not welcome it. Indeed, it will I imagine, be met with much resistance, or outright dismissed. It may even be the case that some decide that for 'punishment', they will exercise their editorial power in a manner that excludes anyone who would dare to produce such a critical report or contribute to it. If that were to be the case, then that would demonstrate why there is a necessity for this report in the first place.

In the alternative, perhaps some within the media will digest the content- even if some of it is forceful in its language and critical of their practices- and give serious consideration as to whether there is merit in some of the points raised (I think they are

all meritorious). If there are those in the media who recognise there is a problem, or even instead wish to engage to contest that there is a problem and to push back on some of the criticisms, then in Unionist Voice Policy Studies they will find a willing partner to sit down and discuss these matters with.

It must surely be the case that all sections of the media wish to fairly represent the views of all sections of the community, and to ensure no part of society feels ostracised or demonised by the powerful institution that is the press. If that isn't the case, then it really ought to be.

In any event, this report is merely a contribution to public debate. But more importantly, the recommendations and principles of fairness herein are pertinent internally within the loyalist community, they raise challenges and propose a roadmap to correcting what the vast majority in our community plainly see as an inherent imbalance and persistent mistreatment and demonisation of our identity (both political and cultural).

I commend the sub-group, and was pleased to work with them on this report. The work must, and will, continue and, if nothing else, this report stands as the production of a written record of the concerns and feelings of much of our community. That, in of itself, has been a valuable exercise.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jamie Bryson". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first letters of "Jamie" and "Bryson" being significantly larger and more stylized than the rest of the letters.

Jamie Bryson

29 June 2023

OVERVIEW

The core objective, in terms of loyalism's treatment by the media, has been formulated by the sub-group in this way:

“The loyalist community must be treated fairly, equally and with due respect by the media. This must include equal opportunity to articulate and express the views of the loyalist community, without any impediment by virtue of undue editorial influence being exercised by social media activists or orchestrated political/civic campaigns pursued by opponents of loyalism.”

This report focuses on identifying and highlighting, in a thematic way, the issues which are at the core of what is perceived to be loyalism's unequal treatment by the media, each of which act as a barrier to achieving the core objective.

The report provides a general outline of issues of concern, and provides some recent examples. It also concisely and briefly touches on the influence of social media, and campaigns of 'de-platforming' which, consistent with the theme of the public arena and opinion-forming institutions being largely dominated by those opposed to loyalism, are used for purely political purposes to silence any loyalist voices deemed by nationalism to be 'unhelpful' (as in, not conducive to nationalism's political objectives).

Considering the issues identified within this report, the following recommendations are proposed:

RECOMMENATIONS

1. A working group be established comprising of representatives from across the loyalist community to monitor media reporting, lobby for fair treatment and to produce thematic quarterly reports outlining areas of improvement and/or concern.
2. Those subject to adverse media reporting should utilise the Independent Press Standards Organisation complaints procedure. Unionist Voice Policy Studies holds regular training sessions on the code and how complaints can be brought effectively.
3. Loyalists should work collectively to hold the media to account and challenge unfair, biased, or pejorative reporting and/or negative stereotyping of the loyalist community.
4. Loyalist community groups and activist organisations should adopt the Media 'principles of fairness' (**Annex 1** of this report) and where there has been a failure to adhere to any of the relevant principles, should collectively challenge any such reporting.
5. To combat orchestrated social media 'trolling' and 'abuse', loyalists should develop an engagement network to share information and to counteract the orchestrated trolling or demonisation of anyone within our community. An attack on one is an attack on all.

6. In regards social media, a working group should be set up to identify opportunities to bring criminal complaints or civil legal cases against online ‘trolls’ or those who are persistently abusive. The focus of this strategy should be on identifying persons who can be easily traced, and ensuring they are prosecuted or subject to other legal process in order to begin to develop a deterrent factor.
7. There be monitoring of de-platforming attempts, and any media who are influenced by political/civic lobbying and/or orchestrated social media campaigns, seeking the deplatforming of any person within the loyalist community, be held accountable in the public arena, and asked to explain their decision making. This is particularly important in regards the BBC.

These recommendations are each designed to individually, and taken together collectively, contribute to improving the manner by which loyalism is treated in and by the media within Northern Ireland.

The sub-group will, in the coming weeks, be reaching out across the grassroots unionist/loyalist community to seek willing partners for the implementation phase, and to further consult on the recommendations and to establish whether there are any further steps which should be taken in furtherance of the ultimate objective.

BACKGROUND

This report is written in the context of ongoing and longstanding concerns around the treatment of the unionist, but particularly the loyalist, community. As media has changed, these concerns have amplified due to a perfect storm of social media vilification, central to which is individually and collectively loyalism being treated as the 'pantomime villain', colliding with the new media operating models.

The demeaning, mocking, deriding or criticising the loyalist community attracts much 'positive' online attention and 'clicks' (similar to the concept of Orwell's 'Two Minutes hate') for the perpetrator of such 'identity-based targeting'.

In a context, as will be discussed below, whereby much mainstream media in Northern Ireland now rely upon online traffic and 'clicks' for revenue and sustainability, this creates a toxic environment for the loyalist community who are, in many instances, monetarised in the sense that the vilification and derision of that community collectively, and individuals within it, is good for business.

This leads to ever increasing levels of sensationalism, toxicity, and dehumanisation. The thirst for content to 'hate-on' from an ever more angry, aggressive and toxic social media mob requires the mainstream media to push the boundaries ever further to keep feeding their online audience. As should be obvious, 'journalism' is now more often than not determined by what brings in the social media interactions or website 'clicks'.

The concept of the 'public interest' has been substituted for the subjective whims of the angriest and loudest social media mob. There is no media outlet, including the BBC, in Northern Ireland who can credibly claim not to be influenced, at least to some degree, by the social media 'noise'. The problem, of course, is that social media- and particularly platforms like Twitter in Northern Ireland- is totally unrepresentative of the real world. If it were real, about five people would vote for the DUP and there would be barely a unionist/loyalist in existence.

The business model of much of the print media in Northern Ireland, particularly the Belfast Telegraph/Sunday Life, Belfast Live and Irish News, is now plainly driven by attracting paid subscriptions, and advertising revenue, via 'online' content rather than the sale of traditional hard-copy newspapers.

It is obvious therefore that the driving factor for these outlets is now content which will attract online attention, particularly from social media such as Twitter and Facebook.

The online world is generally not given to careful nuance, long-read public interest journalism or painstaking detailed reporting, rather a simple observation of the Belfast Telegraph, Belfast Live or Irish News websites demonstrates that some really excellent long-read journalism finds itself languishing down at the bottom of 'most popular' stories (if it even makes the list), whilst sensationalist articles about flags, bonfires or the vilification of loyalists shoots to the top of online content.

For example, this week a detailed and painstakingly researched Sam McBride article on the important issue of the suppression of public records, found itself trailing far behind sensationalist articles about an ex-loyalist prisoner walking in an Orange parade, an outrageous effort to link bonfires to drugs and other 'click-bait' stories which

add no true public interest value, but rather are sensationalist stories that the online generation will find interesting, which- of course- is something else entirely.

The type of toxic vilification directed towards unionists/loyalists that find its way to the 'top stories' section demonstrates another issue, touched upon in this report, around how social media is aggressively dominated by those of a nationalist/republican viewpoint and how even extreme supremacism from those of this viewpoint has become normalised and legitimised.

Any social media criticism, vilification or demonisation of loyalism or unionism attracts significant online traffic, and therefore is precisely the kind of 'click-bait' which is manna from heaven for the new media business model, which has as its objective the necessity to attract online clicks, new subscribers and then based on 'page views', advertising revenue.

Unfortunately, there is now a significant financial incentive for these media outlets to pursue click-bait, sensationalist headlines and vilification of those deemed 'popular villains' by social media 'noise'. In doing so, they feed their own model of driving online attention to their website.

That this leads, as this report will demonstrate, to the mass collective demonisation of a whole community, the vilification of individuals and to the media essentially orchestrating (knowingly or unknowingly) a daily Orwellian 'Two Minutes hate', appears not to raise any cause for concern. For much of the media now, it is purely business. The old ideals and fundamental principles of journalism are very much secondary to securing a sufficient level of online traffic.

THE VILIFICATION OF LOYALISM

The 'loyalist' identity- and all those who are affiliated with it- has been subjected to more than twenty-five years of demonisation, criminalisation and caricature. Loyalism has been viewed through the prism of the lowest common denominator, and the actions of a small unrepresentative minority who have used the banner of loyalism for their own criminal enterprises has been allowed to be attributed to the 'loyalist' identity collectively.

This is not accidental; the fundamental ethos of the political process post-1998 is to legitimise and politicise republicanism, whilst- via delegitimation and criminalisation- removing any impediment to the progress of that political ideology toward its ultimate end point of a United Ireland. It is unsurprising therefore that loyalism has found itself on the end of an orchestrated, intensive, and carefully constructed campaign of demonisation. This has taken the form of (wholly unfairly, as recognised in recent months by ACC Singleton on the Stephen Nolan Show) turning loyalism into a by-word for crime; the development of a tolerance for the mockery, caricaturing and dehumanisation of those who identify as loyalists and that identity; the relentless campaign against all aspects of cultural expression (the flying of the national flag, bonfires, parading) in order to break down the social cohesion and esteem of the working class unionist/loyalist community; the re-writing of the past in order to provide

a legitimacy to the actions of republican terrorists, whilst presenting loyalists as merely idiotic psychopaths or 'state sponsored murder gangs'.

This latter 'legacy' narrative has been carefully built up over more than two decades by well-funded nationalist activist groups (Relatives for Justice and Pat Finucane centre etc.) who have been dedicated to re-writing the past and seizing control of the conflict-narrative.

In equal terms, nationalism became energised and politicised in 1998 as the political settlement was sold to that community as a process towards advancement, both socially and politically. It was sold to the unionist, and particularly the loyalist, community as a settlement and therefore this had the opposite effect of de-energising and de-politicising the next loyalist generation.

The effects of this have been immeasurable as the working-class nationalist/republican generation of the mid- late 1980s/1990s have- energised by the ethos of a 'process' of advancement- benefitted from significant upward social mobility and have become prominent, and sometimes dominant, across much of the professional class and opinion forming institutions (media, law, justice and academia). The ideas, viewpoints and narrative of nationalism has therefore been injected into civic society and has become the dominant thinking across much of media, academia, and law.

There is no comparable counter-ideas being injected by those of a loyalist or even unionist viewpoint (because that community has no access to the infrastructure of the opinion-forming institutions) and so, whether intentionally or as an inadvertent consequence, the opinion-forming institutions and professional class has been wholly imbalanced in their prevailing orthodoxy, and so engrained as this become, there is often a clear intolerance verging on a dismissive disdain for unionist let alone loyalist viewpoints.

In terms of the media, the 'commentariat' (used to describe the pool of commentators used by mainstream media) is undeniably imbalanced in favour of the prevailing orthodoxy, which- for reasons set out above- is itself fundamentally infected with a bias toward one political identity (nationalism).

This imbalance is amplified by the media itself, particularly the BBC, due to the disparity as to how they treat commentators from nationalist/republican background *vis-à-vis* those from a unionist/loyalist background. Whilst the former is introduced in neutral terms as 'commentators' (reflecting, probably, the fact the ideology they represent has become mainstream orthodoxy), the latter are introduced by political affiliation, as if the listener needs to know that the contributor is a unionist/loyalist, so is outside the new 'mainstream'.

There is simply no justification for this imbalance and disparity of treatment, and nor has there ever been a credible reason or explanation put forward. In most cases, the challenge has been dodged, primarily- I suspect- because to engage with it would require the intellectual honesty to explore why such bias so casually exists, and that would lead inevitably to the conclusion that there is a serious problem in terms of how one political ideology has seized control of the public arena and opinion-forming institutions.

It is, for all the reasons set out, deemed acceptable- and indeed popular- to vilify, collectively criminalise, mock and deride the loyalist community. This is not a new phenomenon, when the 'Loyalists Against Democracy' online hate site was operating, it was dedicated to the targeted mocking, bullying and harassment of the loyalist community. Not only was this not challenged by the professional class and mainstream media, but many of those from within those groups actively encouraged, promoted and glorified this discriminatory conduct. Indeed, the BBC gave one of those central to the orchestrated targeting and harassment of the loyalist community his own show.

This ethos has continued, with loyalists deemed fair game for mockery and derision. The pantomime villain, there for the new (nationalist) elite to poke fun at and trample underfoot. Who could possibly forget the mocking and abusive 'cartoons' in the Irish News caricaturing members of the loyal orders as invalids, and mocking those with a disability on parade?

In equal terms last week we saw how the Sunday Life/Belfast Telegraph ran an 'Exclusive' story (which they have ran- identically- for at least the last five years) that a loyalist ex-prisoner had taken part in a perfectly lawful Orange Order parade. The individual had paid his debt to society for the offences for which he was committed, had lived in peace within his own community since his release from prison and had not come to the attention of the authorities for almost forty years.

But yet, this 'click-bait' created a social media 'twitter storm'. This individual was the chosen 'loyalist villain' for the weekend, and the 'hits' on the Belfast Telegraph website (which hosts Sunday Life content) soared. This was the 'top news' story, attracting relentless online traffic. People wanted to click on this to be enraged, to tweet the story and spew their hatred and to deride the individual, demonise loyalism and more generally mock the Orange marching tradition. The author of the story most certainly served his employer well: he had identified a 'villain', a loyalist one to make it even more enticing for the social media mob, and had managed work this man doing something he had done for decades into an 'Exclusive' story. The social media traffic and website 'clicks' were, no doubt, good for potential revenue raising, but it can hardly be described as public interest journalism, can it?

This story was then knocked-off top spot. The new headline screamed that bonfires would have less pallets this year, due to drugs seizures from criminal gangs who, somehow, have come to be labelled 'loyalists'. Leaving aside the point already made about collective criminalisation and attributing purely criminal acts to a political identity, the whole purpose of this story was to tick every box in terms of the ideal stereotype and caricature of 'loyalism'. Drug dealers and bonfires, weaved into one story: manna from heaven for those whose job it is to produce the 'online hits' statistics.

Whether by accident or design, this type of reporting has a darker objective. It entwines crime (specifically the nefarious drugs trade) with culture, perpetuating the criminalisation of a political and cultural identity. The implication all bonfire builders are linked to drug dealing, and this expression of culture relying on drug money to survive is the epitome of the type of vilification, demonisation and toxic 'click-baiting' of a whole community.

This is derisory, offensive and downright abusive. Crime, and particularly the disgusting and harmful drugs trade, is the activities of criminals; it has no role in loyalist

culture. If we pause for a moment and imagine this: could anyone ever foresee a situation whereby the same publication would run a story and say that due to a clamp-down on IRA fuel smuggling, for example the West Belfast Festival will be scaled down this year?

We also see the yearly targeting of unionist/loyalist culture. The Alliance party and SDLP have become particularly effective at playing on the media, and social media, thirst for stories to demonise loyalism and unionism at the June/July time of year, so are on the ball nice and early each year seeking out (or self-creating) new flashpoints in relation to which they can become the 'hero' standing up against the loyalist 'villain', who is usually in reality some kid (or group of them) building a bonfire or who has put up a flag.

The Irish News devote much of their newspaper and online material in June/July to contrived flag/bonfire disputes. This year, they managed to turn a group of kids in a bonfire hut into daily front page news. This was well-rewarded with social media interactions and website 'clicks'; the more successful the demonisation, the more the crowd calls for more. And so, the reporting becomes ever more ridiculous, oppressive and dehumanising. The journalists behind it, and media outlet, then get carried away and behave as if they are breaking Watergate.

This treatment would never be directed towards the nationalist/republican community, or their culture targeted in such a relentless manner, or subject to such vilification.

It wouldn't happen, because the media wouldn't dare seek to casually criminalise and demonise the nationalist culture and identity.

There are many reasons for that (including, as discussed, the nationalist identity which now runs through much of the opinion-forming institutions), but one of them is that nationalism/republicanism is well-resourced with strong community, political and civic groups to provide a strong voice to represent that political ideology and its associated culture.

Unionism/loyalism lacks such infrastructure, and is therefore an easy target. You will see journalists self-proclaiming their bravery for 'taking on' loyalists. But this isn't brave, this is easy. The media, who have most of the power, are punching down at the easy targets who they think do not have the resource, capacity or infrastructure to mount any type of challenge in order to hold the media to account for their actions, so they do what they want, and if there is a page to fill, then the easy option is to pick a loyalist 'villain', and 'create' some news. If this can have the added advantage of going well with online 'hits', then all the better.

SOCIAL MEDIA

We have included a brief section on social media, given the role it plays in both influencing editorial decision making in terms of platforming, and in regards the disproportionate influence it has on shaping the news agenda.

In Northern Ireland, social media- in particular twitter- is largely dominated by those of a nationalist or 'other' political identity. There are varying reasons for this, but it is a matter of public record that in 2017, ostensibly to combat 'media bias', Sinn Fein began a campaign to recruit 'online activists'.

It will be notable that from this period onwards, there has been an army of online accounts, many anonymous, who are regularly- in an orchestrated manner- used to 'target' political opponents of Sinn Fein (it is, we note, at least welcome that the mainstream republican movement's targeting is now confined to trolling rather than murder).

The method is obvious to any casual observer. An army of mostly anonymous accounts will relentlessly pile on any person, or engage generally on a subject with similar messaging, in an effort to both shape and control the narrative in the social media sphere. A 'successful' outcome in this regard then has, due to the media's overreliance on social media to shape their own editorial output and viewpoint, the effect of actually going further and shaping/controlling the mainstream media narrative as well.

This strategy, as will be addressed in relation to de-platforming, is not only deployed to shape the news agenda and prevailing narrative, but is also used to relentlessly demonise, mock or deride those identified as political opponents whose views are not conducive to nationalist objectives. Therefore, the relentless targeting of such persons is designed to discredit them personally, and thus their ideas, and ultimately to force such persons to bow to the tsunami of orchestrated criticism and abuse, withdrawing from the public arena all together.

This must be combatted by the development of unionist/loyalist networks to counter-balance, and expose such campaigns. In addition, as proposed in our recommendations, there should be significant work put into identifying, exposing and seeking legal remedy (whether criminal or civil) against a range of the worst offenders, in order to create a deterrent.

DE-PLATFORMING

There are significant sections of the media heavily influenced by social media's prevailing narrative (which, as outlined in the previous section, is distorted by orchestrated campaigns) and therefore campaigns to demand the de-platforming of voices deemed 'unworthy' or who do not meet with the approval of the self-appointed 'mainstream' have often been effective. This is so because due to the deference many journalists show to social media, and how they adopt- unthinkingly- the prevailing narrative (orchestrated deliberately for political purposes) from that source which credentials or delegitimises various voices based on whether they fit into the orthodox political objectives of the dominant social media presence (nationalism).

This, in effect, creates a situation whereby due to social media influence garnered by their distortion of the platform by orchestrated campaigns, nationalism- to a large degree- can influence editorial decision making as to who should represent the view of unionists/loyalists.

That is why you see, for example, the regular identification of persons who identify as 'unionists' but who are, often unwittingly, helpful to nationalism in the approaches they adopt, being promoted as 'those who should speak for unionism', or nationalism will select a particularly young and easily influenced unionist and shower them with social media praise. The purpose is to 'credential' this person as an 'acceptable' unionist, and- for nationalism's own agenda- this person is then platformed by the mainstream media and used to try and shape unionism/loyalism in a direction which is conducive to nationalism's vision of how unionism/loyalism ought to behave and think.

The moment, of course, any such young person was to adopt a view that was unconducive, the same nationalist 'supporters' who had lifted them up and praised them, would turn on them. There should be engagement amongst and with young unionists/loyalists to alert them to the potential for this manipulation, and to guard against them being used by these type of politically motivated campaigns.

In addition to the manipulation of social media to influence editorial decisions, particularly around the use of commentators, political parties also directly, via lobbying editors or institutions like the BBC, seek to influence the editorial output, or- as is often the case- use surrogates who are ostensibly voices from respected opinion-forming institutions (academic, law or civic society) to lead on the de-platforming campaign.

The objective, in all the aforementioned pursuits, is clear. It is to seize control of the public arena, and to ensure that the only unionist/loyalist voices heard are those deemed 'acceptable' by nationalism and/or conducive to that ideology's political objectives.

There needs to be a sustained, coordinated and resourceful push back against this, with counter-pressure applied to media outlets not to allow themselves to be unduly influenced by such orchestrated campaigns.

ANNEX 1

THE PRINCIPLES OF MEDIA FAIRNESS

Restoring equality of treatment for the loyalist community

Principle One

Equal treatment under the IPSO Editors Code

All members of society, including members of the loyalist community, should be treated equally and afforded the same rights under the Independent Press Standards Organisation ('IPSO') Editorial Code¹. This includes that when there is a damaging allegation to be made against any individual that, save for exceptional circumstances whereby the basic presumption can be dislodged, the person- either directly or through a representative- be afforded an opportunity to comment on the allegation/s in advance. This is a basic tenet of good, responsible journalism.

Principle Two

Equal standards applied to contributors

The media should apply the same standard to contributors across the board. Therefore, either everyone, when relevant, should be introduced and/or described by their political affiliation/belief, or no one should be. It is unsustainable that unionist/loyalist commentators are labelled by political affiliation, whilst those from nationalist/republican backgrounds are afforded the veil of neutrality by being described simply as 'commentators'. This is a particular issue on the BBC as a public service broadcaster.

Principle Three

No collective criminalisation

Those involved in crime, particularly the nefarious drugs trade, have no 'political cause' and therefore should not be labelled with a political identity or background. A criminal should be described as a criminal, rather than as a 'loyalist' criminal, thus smearing an entire political identity because a small number of persons who purport (or sometimes do not even purport) to claim affiliation with that political background. Collective

¹ See *Eddie Rainey and Ewart v Sunday World*, [2019] IPSO 07965; *Ronnie Nelson v Sunday Life* [2020] IPSO 07356; *A man v Sunday World* [2022] IPSO 11921

criminalisation and demonisation must end. In any event, whichever standard is deployed, must be applied equally to all communities. At present, that is not the case.

Principle Four

Cultural Equality

Cultural expressions within the unionist/loyalist community should be afforded the same level of respect- in terms of coverage and style/tone of reporting- as that afforded to nationalist/republican cultural identity (i.e., GAA, Irish language etc.). Isolated negative acts within nationalist/republican culture are never used to collectively smear or delegitimise that entire cultural expression, whereas the opposite is true in regards unionist/loyalist cultural expression: every isolated negative incident which can be tenuously linked, is amplified and used to demonise the entire culture.

Principle Five

All persons treated with dignity

The media should treat everyone with respect and dignity. They ought not to use pejorative or demeaning 'nicknames' to demean or run down individuals based on personal characteristics, appearance, or background. Whilst such tabloid style creation of 'pantomime villains' may pass for cheap entertainment, it is dehumanising and allows unwarranted attacks on the human dignity of real people who become caricatured and are no longer afforded basic respect or courtesy. The media ought not to be tolerated in reserving for themselves the right to do that to anyone.

Principle Six

Loyalist ex-prisoners should not be subjected to a different standard

Those from a loyalist background who are ex-prisoners should not be held to a different standard, labelled differently or subjected to more intense scrutiny or demonisation than that which is applied to former IRA prisoners. The persistent hounding of loyalist ex-prisoners in every aspect of their life, whilst former IRA prisoners are subjected to no such comparable treatment, demonstrates an inherent imbalance and bias.

These principles are designed to create a broad framework for the rebuilding of trust and relationships between loyalism and the media. There is nothing unreasonable or unrealistic about that which is requested.



E:
UVPS@UnionistVoice.com

www.UnionistVoice.com