



Abject Loyalty: Nationalism and Monarchy in Ireland During the Reign of Queen Victoria

James H. Murphy

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Finalist, American Conference for Irish Studies James S. Donnelly, Sr., Prize for Books on History and Social Sciences

Abject Loyalty challenges the view that Irish nationalists were necessarily hostile to the British monarchy. During Queen Victoria's reign, royal visits to Ireland were in fact generally met with great enthusiasm. Indeed, the strength of the opposition of some Irish nationalists to the monarchy was a sign of the purchase that it seemed to have on the allegiance of many people within nationalist Ireland. By the 1880s, however, the monarchy had become the focus for British imperial identity in England and for the denial of constitutional legitimacy to those in Ireland who wished for home rule. It began to face increasing opposition in Ireland both because nationalist politicians feared its influence might reconcile Irish people to the Union with Britain and because enthusiasm for monarchy in Ireland was used to feed a British discourse which saw Ireland as a country that could be appeased by concessions short of home rule and which did not take nationalist demands seriously.

The book traces Ireland's interaction with the British monarchy from King George III to Queen Elizabeth II but focuses on the reign of Queen Victoria. It deals with its topic on two levels. It explores Queen Victoria's interaction with Ireland and her influence on British policy towards Ireland. And it examines how Queen Victoria and monarchy were perceived in Ireland.

Whereas Queen Victoria's views and actions have previously been subject to historical analysis, no previous study has seriously explored how she was perceived in Ireland or the subtleties of nationalism's attitude towards monarchy. *Abject Loyalty* makes a significant and original contribution to the political and cultural history of Ireland and will be of interest to those concerned with understanding the historical development of Irish identity.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

James H. Murphy is professor of English at All Hallows College in Dublin and the author or editor of numerous works, including *Catholic Fiction and Social Reality in Ireland, 1873-1922*, and *Gender Perspectives in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (coedited with Margaret Kelleher).

PRAISE FOR THE BOOK:

"Murphy's book is a comparative rarity—a book that genuinely explores a fresh theme and does so in an entirely original fashion. . . . His analysis changes the context for interpreting the nationalist movement in Ireland and is a must for anyone interested in the Irish during this vital era."—Prof. Alan O'Day, Mansfield College, Oxford

"Well-written and provocative. . . . A creative, well-written, and significant book that undoubtedly will take a deserved place within the vast historiography of nineteenth-century Ireland. More than that, it is essential reading for any scholar interested in the evolution of Irish nationalism or Anglo-Irish high politics in the

Victorian age."? *American Historical Review*

"By bridging the gulf between Anglo-Irish politics and culture, *Abject Loyalty* provides a fresh take on the history of nineteenth-century Anglo-Irish relations, and Murphy deftly brings to light an aspect of Irish culture that provide to be equally difficult for both nationalists and pro-Union politicians to appropriate."? *History*

"[A] clearly-written and worthwhile study."? Frank A. Biletz, Loyola University Chicago, *Albion*

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