Abstract
Partition was a central feature of the Irish Revolution, and arguably its most significant outcome. Beyond the high-political narratives of the conflict, however, it occupies a curious position within the historiography, ever present though rarely at the forefront of discussion. The growing body of scholarly literature detailing the revolutionary experience in six-county Ulster has produced a few exceptions, most notably the work of Robert Lynch. Yet even in this context, acknowledgements of its importance tend to be implicit rather than explicit. This is particularly true with regards to its influence on political violence during the period, which has, understandably, been obscured by the ethno-religious dimensions of the conflict.

With this in mind, this paper will evaluate the impact of partition – as a threat, process and day-to-day reality – on republican violence along the border. Focusing on the activities of the IRA’s Fourth Northern Division in the borderlands of Armagh, south Down and north Louth, it will draw on a wide variety of sources, including government records, local and national press reports, contemporary republican documentation, and subsequent accounts recorded by IRA volunteers, to address three main points. Firstly, it will discuss the significance of partition as a stimulus for republican aggression at various stages in the conflict. Secondly, it will consider the ways in which partition shaped the types of violence employed by republicans, and the logic that guided such acts. Finally, it will explore the relationship between partition and republican violence against the Protestant community. In doing so, it will argue that a more thorough engagement with the context of partition is crucial to understanding republican violence during this period, both along the newly created border, and across Ulster more generally.

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