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A REVOLUTION WITHIN: LOYALTY, TREASON AND THE IRISH REVOLUTION, 1913-21

Submitted to the Department of History,
Trinity College Dublin, for the degree of
Doctor in Philosophy (Ph.D.)

2011

Justin Dolan Stover

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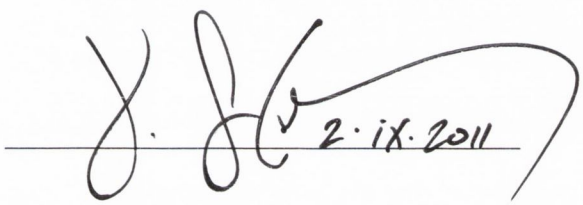

Justin Dolan Stover

SUMMARY

This thesis explores some important questions regarding the origins, definitions and applications of loyalty in Ireland between 1913 and 1921. More specifically, it is an inter-disciplinary examination of the often divergent interpretations of Irish loyalty within political, military and social contexts during the Great War and Irish Revolution. Methodological continuity of this thesis is achieved in several ways. Primarily, the loyalty of historical subjects was analysed through the methodological lens of historical loyalty, that is, through the examination of group influence and behaviour. Irish society's own contemporary observations and definitions of loyalty and treason helped to complement and guide this framework. The vast tracts of primary source material surrounding the Irish Revolution and Irish participation in the Great War also provided abundant historical evidence. In many cases this material revealed the primacy of loyalty in Irish society. Analysis of the ebb and flow of group participation in various political, military and social movements, and the circumstances under which it changed, also provided insight toward individual motivation and group behaviour.

Utilising loyalty as an historical methodology required the analysis of factors that influenced personal outlooks and group participation and resulted in observable behaviour. The subjects chosen for investigation here are therefore best viewed as a set of loose, though individually valuable, studies of Irish loyalty during the revolutionary period. The first chapter examines the origins of the Irish Volunteers, and confronts the established historical narrative that Irish Parliamentary Party members, particularly party leader John Redmond, were an unwelcomed addition to the ranks and were the sole arbiters of division within the movement. It analyses interpretations of the early Volunteer program, and supports the argument that the principles on which the Volunteers were founded were too vague, and membership too indiscriminate, to have produced any uniform ideal of loyalty amongst its members.

The second chapter carries forward the study of loyalty and mass participation by examining the Irish National Volunteers (I.N.V.), the body which remained under Redmond's leadership, throughout the period of the Great War. Conventional histories of the I.N.V. end following the Irish Volunteer split in September 1914. This chapter carries the study of the I.N.V. further by examining the organisation as a tool of Redmond, the Irish Party and their respective definitions of loyalty. This chapter also dissects the relationship between regional nationalist politics and I.N.V. participation. Most

importantly, this chapter explores the general history of the I.N.V. and examines key events that forced a reassessment of loyalty to the Irish constitutional movement, as well as those which contributed to the overall disintegration of the organisation.

The Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) is the subject of chapter three. This chapter examines externally-defined requirements of duty and loyalty that were affixed to the R.I.C. prior to and during the Great War. It begins with comment on the duties of the R.I.C. at the turn of the twentieth century, and the general integration of police into Irish society. Following the outbreak of the Great War, the R.I.C. was targeted for enlistment along with other branches of the civil service. Their reluctance to enlist in greater numbers drew criticism from the Irish public, and their loyalty to the empire and the allied cause was subsequently called into question. Overall, this chapter gauges government and public perceptions of the R.I.C. and their duties against the incessant need for recruits for the British Army. Most importantly, it highlights the liminal profession that was Irish policing – that is, one which placed the competing considerations of professional integrity, financial security, duty to the state and loyalty to the empire upon the shoulders of Irish constables.

Chapter four focuses on two concepts central to the study of historical loyalty: the transformation of established loyalties under duress, and the assumption that nationality produces a natural, uniform loyalty. More specifically, this chapter examines the conflicting and, at times, contradictory character of Sir Roger Casement – humanitarian, imperial consul and Irish nationalist – and the Irish prisoners of war in Germany he sought to recruit to form an Irish Brigade. Casement believed that Irish P.O.W.s would eagerly enlist for such an endeavour, and that an inherent loyalty to their native land would naturally supersede an oath of fidelity to the Crown. In undertaking a mission to Germany in search of Irish recruits, Casement believed he was contributing to the cause of Irish liberty. His diaries, however, reveal a man who incessantly struggled with his own treason. Casement's failure to recruit a Brigade ultimately resulted from a grave misreading of Irish mentalities and sentiments regarding the Great War. The chapter concludes by tracing the lives of Irishmen who did volunteer for the Irish Brigade – traitors to the British Army as well as ineffectual Irish patriots – and their experiences following the Armistice.

The final chapter again explores prison life, and examines its effects on creating and nurturing loyalty. Specifically, it analyses the types and frequency of violence committed by Irish political prisoners in Ireland throughout the Anglo-Irish War, and argues that violence in Irish prisons was a by-product of revolutionary loyalty, or loyalty to

a communal ideal. As this chapter explains, the majority of prisoners who committed acts of violence did so willingly; a minority, however, confessed to group loyalty being extracted through communal pressure. While establishing a base of camaraderie within prisons, and helping to maintain a connection with the wider revolutionary movement, prison violence is examined in this chapter as both a unifying force and, at times, an unwelcomed prerequisite of peer acceptance.

In addition to further examining familiar historical episodes of the Irish Revolution, this thesis evaluates the extent to which historical loyalty may be applied as a methodology. The subjects and themes which are examined in this thesis, therefore, not only present some new scholarship of the revolutionary period, but also act as a testing ground for these theories.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A.O.H.	Ancient Order of Hibernians
B.M.H.	Bureau of Military History
CSORP	Chief Secretary's Office Registered Papers
D.D.A.	Roman Catholic Diocese Archives, Dublin
D.R.R.	Defence of the Realm Regulations
DORA	Defence of the Realm Act
E.P.B.	Early Printed Books
G.P.B.	General Prisons Board
I.W.M.	Imperial War Museum
I.M.A.	Irish Military Archives
I.N.V.	Irish National Volunteers
I.P.P.	Irish Parliamentary Party
I.R.A.	Irish Republican Army
I.R.B.	Irish Republican Brotherhood
N.A.I.	National Archives of Ireland
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
R.I.C.	Royal Irish Constabulary
T.C.D.	Trinity College Dublin, Archives
T.N.A.	The National Archives, Kew
U.C.D.A.	University College Dublin, Archives
U.I.L.	United Irish League
U.V.F.	Ulster Volunteer Force
W.S.	Witness Statement

Note on the text: primary and manuscript source materials were integrated into the text in their original form unless doing so would have disrupted or confused its reading. In these instances, slight alterations were made and noted.

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INTRODUCTION

'Kevin O'Higgins got his because he was a traitor and a murderer'. So read graffiti scrawled in black block letters in Luke Street, Dublin, in 2006.[1] This statement may come with little shock given its location; a statue of Constance Markievicz, one of O'Higgins's foremost antagonists following the introduction of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, stands just around the corner from Luke Street, and the alleyways insulating the River Liffey boast numerous republican slogans. That O'Higgins was specifically targeted also elicits little reaction. The former Minister for Home Affairs has historically borne the brunt of republican condemnation; his name and the number seventy-seven are often intentionally entwined. What stands out, rather, is the casual yet confident tone in which such an explanation is given. It is provided as a possible warning to would-be traitors, and perhaps as a subtle declaration of unrelenting loyalty to the ideals O'Higgins was believed to have betrayed. However, such a definite statement contributes little to our understanding of Irish loyalty during the revolutionary period, or how its definition was altered during times of national crisis and profound social and political change.

This thesis will identify and analyse the theme of loyalty during the Irish Revolution. It will do so by examining several separate groups and episodes in which themes of loyalty were prominent, namely, the Irish Volunteers, Irish National Volunteers, Royal Irish Constabulary, Irish prisoners of war in Germany during the Great War, and Irish political prisoners during the Anglo-Irish War. Each subject contributes to a working methodological framework for historical loyalty. Each examines and attempts to answer several overarching questions. These include: what was it to be loyal in Ireland during the revolutionary period? How were loyalties demonstrated? Who defined the terms or criteria of loyalty, and how did these definitions change over time?

Naturally, the subjects selected for investigation do not extend to all individuals, groups or periods that might constitute a more complete study of Irish loyalty. In lieu of providing an extensive list of excluded subjects, it may suffice to state that several of the more obvious choices were excluded from this study due to the constraints of time and space, methodological difficulties or a lack of adequate sources. These include, but are not limited to, the Ulster Volunteer Force, the Irish Republican Army, issues of sectarian

[1] The author observed this graffiti while attempting to find a shortcut between Trinity College and the Garda National Immigration Bureau. Photographic evidence of the message can be found in the appendix.

division, spies and informers, Labour, the influence of the Catholic Church, and the Irish Civil War. These will be worked into an expanded study.

This study stemmed from a desire to advance the agenda of Irish social and cultural history. Diarmaid Ferriter has highlighted what F.X. Martin referred to as a 'collective amnesia' in Irish historical memory which, although alleviated to a great extent by Keith Jeffrey, Timothy Bowman, Peter Hart and David Fitzpatrick, tends to overlook the complexities of allegiance in Ireland during this period.[2] The subjects that were selected were therefore chosen based on either their being downplayed within Irish historiography, the availability of relative source material, as they offer stark examples of historical loyalty or, as was common, some combination of these factors. The opportunity to produce original scholarship on both familiar and under-analysed episodes of Irish history, and the overall challenge of presenting this thesis as an exploratory study of historical loyalty during the Irish Revolution, also proved a guiding influence in their selection.

The process of research and investigation also helped to determine which subjects to analyse. Historical loyalty, as it is outlined and defined below, was best gauged when the actions of participating individuals and groups were set against contemporarily-defined standards of loyal behaviour. Group models were therefore essential, as was plentiful quantitative and qualitative source material. Toward this end, several large databases were created which detail individual participation in mass movements, enlistment demographics and records of imprisonment and violent behaviour. Individual narratives and memoirs complemented more distanced, official reports. The subjects included, therefore, carried with them an abundance of source material relevant to the period in question.

Perhaps the most practical reason for choosing these subjects was to test the application of loyalty as an historical methodology. The definitions of loyalty explored in each episode, as well as the extent to which they were adhered to by contemporary Irish society, may help to determine the feasibility of extending this method of study to other subjects and periods of the Irish Revolution. Because of these limiting factors and the experimental nature of the research methodology, the chapters presented here are best encountered as a series of separate, yet loosely linked studies. Nevertheless, the branches of enquiry utilised in this thesis all extend from the same overall question: what was it to be loyal during the Irish Revolution, and how may this phenomenon be studied?

This question has been only partially answered. The scholarship of two authoritative historians, who conducted regional studies on the social origins of the Irish

[2] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2005 edn).

Volunteers as well as their motivation for joining the Irish independence movement and their participation in guerrilla warfare, contribute greatly to our understanding of Irish loyalty. Joost Augusteijn and Peter Hart both examined the radicalisation of the Irish Volunteers in the years following the Easter Rising.[3] Each identified the development of group loyalty as stemming from communal intimacy and participation in revolutionary violence – factors that helped develop and nurture a sense of personal belonging, group exclusivity and overall interdependence.[4] Hart deconstructed this mentality:

> These men shared very real convictions and ideals, but it seems clear that, for the majority of Volunteers, the decision to join was a collective rather than individual one, rooted more in local communities and networks than in ideology or forming political loyalties. Young men tended to join the organization together with, or following members of their families and friendship groups. ... Loyalty to 'the boys' almost always proved stronger than loyalty to the organization.[5]

Most vital perhaps, both Augusteijn and Hart identified multiple, overlapping and, at times, conflicting loyalties as existing simultaneously. Two varieties in particular are examined throughout this thesis. The first considers the prioritisation of individual loyalties, such as those toward family or profession, as they were weighed against externally-applied or collective standards of loyalty, such as military enlistment or participation in revolutionary violence. For instance, Augusteijn comments that the increasing personal danger, the threat of losing one's livelihood or fear of endangering one's family often curtailed participation in guerrilla operations.[6] In a similar vein, this thesis identifies employment, personal safety, financial concerns and social status as reasons cited for withholding or limiting one's participation. In this sense, participation

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[3] Peter Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies: violence and community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1998), pp 132-3, 148; Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare: the experience of ordinary Volunteers in the Irish War of Independence 1916-1921* (Dublin, 1996), p.141.

[4] Joost Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 57, 62, 68-9; Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, pp 148, 208, 215. See also, Erhard Rumpf and C. Hepburn, *Nationalism and socialism in twentieth-century Ireland* (Liverpool, 1977). Rumpf argues that the social composition of the I.R.A., though certainly varying due to location and circumstances, also varied according to the concentration of Catholic and Gaelic culture in society.

[5] Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, pp 208, 215. Similarly, David Fitzpatrick has commented on group or communal loyalty as a strong factor in Irish enlistment for the British Army during the Great War: 'What drove most recruits into the war-time forces, apart from a desire for adventure and subsidised international tourism, was loyalty to their friends and families. ... Most recruits were influenced more by the behaviour of their peers than by self-interest, preferring to face massive personal risk than lose the esteem of those they admired.' David Fitzpatrick, 'Home front and everyday life' in John Horne (ed.), *Our war*, (Dublin, 2008), p. 134

[6] Augusteijn, *From public defiance to guerrilla warfare*, pp 110-11, 122.

itself may not have been a reflection of loyalty or ideological commitment. As this thesis demonstrates, some of the loyalty exhibited during the period was at times falsely provided or, to put it a different way, extracted through group pressure in an effort to maintain favour.

Second, Hart identified what can be termed alternative or conflicting loyalties in Irish nationalist society during the revolution. Many such incompatible outlooks preceded what he described as the 'new certainties embraced by the gunman',[7] referring to the radicalisation of the independence movement toward 1920. He used a poignant observation provided in Sean O'Faolain's memoir, *Viva Moi!*, to demonstrate this point:

> Men like my father [a member of the Royal Irish Constabulary] were dragged out in those years, and shot down as traitors to their country. Shot for cruel necessity – so be it. Shot to inspire necessary terror – so be it. But they were not traitors. They had their loyalties, and stuck to them.[8]

Hart argued elsewhere that contested or conflicting loyalties are in fact part of the revolutionary process.[9] They certainly inform arguments presented throughout this thesis, which attempt to explain revolutionary participation, and non-participation or indifference through the medium of loyalty.

The models and techniques set forth by other historians only partially guide the process of observing historical loyalty within this thesis. In attempting to conduct an objective study that considered the numerous variables that contributed to the idea of loyalty during the revolutionary period, it was essential to examine individual declarations, popular sentiment, and membership and participation in wider social, political and military movements and major events. Loyalty as an exclusively historical subject has only scarcely featured within Irish historiography outside discussions of Unionism.[10] Extensive

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[7] Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, p. 18.

[8] Sean O'Faolain, *Viva moi! An autobiography* (London, 1965 edn), pp 35-6. Also quoted in Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, p.1. Hart also identified the loyalty of other police to their duty, and how many ex-soldiers in Cork remained loyal to the Crown. Ibid, p.3; 16-17.

[9] Hart, 'Definition: defining the Irish Revolution' in Joost Augusteijn, *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (New York, 2002), pp 24-7.

[10] Two recent publications on loyalty fail to critically examine loyalty in a comparative historical context – or the scope to which it may be applied – and instead treat it as a simple relationship between two objects. See Adrian Weale, *Patriot traitors: Roger Casement, John Amery and the real meaning of treason* (England, 2001) and Brendan Clifford, 'Traitors-patriots in the Great War: Casement and Masryk' in *Belfast magazine* (2004). Similarly, Owen Dudly Edwards merely considers the trial of Casement and ironic circumstances of his prosecution, specifically highlighting the activity of F.E. Smith, Edward Carson and others during the Curragh 'mutiny'. He does not examine the psyche of Casement, or critically analyse the concept of loyalty.

primary source research was therefore conducted in order to establish both individual and societal views on loyalty. Such evidence includes various caches of correspondence, diaries, personal histories, committee reports, cabinet minutes and contemporary statistics taken from a variety of libraries and archives in Ireland and Britain. The perspective gained from these sources helped to expose attitudes toward individual participation, as well as group behaviour, and reveal personal motivations for involvement to be as diverse as the events themselves. John McCarthy, an I.R.A. commandant in Limerick during the Anglo-Irish War, spoke closely to this endeavour in the opening lines of his witness statement to the Bureau of Military History:

> To a degree depending on his branch of historical research, the historian recording his findings of cause and effect in Irish politics of the years, 1913-1921, will seek to delineate the type of characteristics of the individual men and women who played a part, great or small, in the events of that period. Whether his delineation be merely a composite picture, a visualisation to be kept in the mind's eye as events and motives are assessed, or a scientific classification in some specialised study of the many and varied personalities involved, *no mere chronicle of purely political or military matters will suffice as material for such a picture or study*.[11] [Emphasis added]

McCarthy's ensuing suggestion, that purely political and military matters of the period be supplemented with a focus on associations and environment, quite accurately describes the methodological process of research and writing undertaken in this thesis.[12]

Further questions arise regarding the process through which historical loyalty may be investigated and whether historically-responsible conclusions may be drawn. The influence of the social sciences on history does not necessarily mislead or rigidly direct research, although over-dependence on, or dogmatic adherence to specific branches of scientific inquiry may certainly do so.[13] Rather than producing a stiff template through

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Owen Dudley Edwards, 'Divided treasons and divided loyalties: Roger Casement and others' in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, xxxii (1982), pp 153-74.

[11] John McCarthy (B.M.H., W.S. 883).

[12] Diarmaid Ferriter has also commented on the necessity of an interdisciplinary approach: 'Nor should they [historians] close their eyes to the fact that it is difficult for historical research alone to succeed in getting a society to come to terms with its own identity without the help of other disciplines.' Ferriter, *Transformation*, p. 7.

[13] For an overview of some of these shortcomings see Peter Gay, *Freud for historians* (New York, 1986 edn), Saul Friedländer, *History and psychoanalysis: an inquiry into the possibilities and limitations of*

which evidence must pass, the theories applied throughout this thesis in many ways only help nominally classify behaviour.

Loyalty is a prominent topic in psychological, psychoanalytic and sociological literature. The work of several scholars, mainly social psychologists, contributed to the construction of a loose scientific framework used to establish a base for exploring historical loyalty. This is not to suggest selectivity in the review of literature, merely synthesis and simplification of a complex topic. Four theorists in particular, Josiah Royce, Robert Wolfe, Andrew Oldenquist and George Fletcher provided the most comprehensible and applicable explanations of loyalty in this regard. Their scholarship establishes both a general consensus, as well as an observably evolving scrutiny of the subject. The earliest contributor, Royce, first published his views in 1908; the most recent, Fletcher, in 1993. All four concur on what may be naturally observed: loyalty may be gradually manifested in the individual, but gains expression through action, most commonly with a group of like-minded persons.[14] These loyalties initially develop, Fletcher explains, as individuals are drawn together by the experiences of a shared identity: 'Loyalties crystallise in communal projects and shared life experiences.'[15] They are strengthened and gain expression through what are termed 'communal projects',[16] undertaken amidst what other analysts, notably Erik Erikson, have termed the 'historical moment', or times of great social, political or cultural change. Royce provides similar comment to this process, and further criterion: 'You cannot be loyal to a merely personal abstraction; and you cannot be loyal simply to a collection of various separate persons, viewed merely as a collection. Where there is an object of loyalty, there is, then, a union of various selves into one life.'[17] The increasingly minute differences in individuals' life experiences and ideology are enough to divide such 'communal projects' – as demonstrated throughout the history of the Irish Revolution – but the notion that similar cultural, political and national outlooks prompt men and women to think and act similarly is not too abstract a thought.

Loyalty may be further defined by the object to which it is directed, that is, loyalty *requires* an object, person, and institution or ideal to which it can be given.[18] This concept is vital to observing and documenting loyalty through the medium of participation. It must

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psychohistory (New York, 1978) and David Stannard, *Shrinking history: on Freud and the failure of psychohistory* (New York, 1980).

[14] Andrew Oldenquist, 'Loyalties' in *The Journal of Philosophy*, lxxix, no. 4 (April 1982), p. 175; Josiah Royce, *The philosophy of loyalty* (New York, 1916 edn), pp 20-1; 137-8.

[15] Fletcher, *Loyalty*, p. 7, Royce, *Philosophy of loyalty*, pp 107-8.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Royce, *Philosophy of loyalty*, p. 52.

[18] Ibid., pp 14-5; Fletcher, *Loyalty*, pp 14-5.

be qualified that given the numerous variables which contributed to decisions to join the Irish Volunteers, enlist in the British Army, or participate in violent acts, it may indeed be beyond the ability of the historian to accurately gauge the 'loyalty' of an individual, group or organisation in any given situation. Nevertheless, Robert Wolfe divided this concept of loyalty and its outlets into two parts: natural loyalty, such as fidelity toward one's family or country, and contractual loyalty, or that secured through an oath or membership in an organisation.[19] This explanation helps explain why some mass movements in Ireland remained idle and disintegrated, while others grew and succeeded. Without an outlet for loyalty, interest wanes and the ties that bind are loosened and come undone.

Finally, it has been argued that loyalty given to one object or ideal must consciously reject a competing object or ideal. Fletcher considers this the 'bedrock idea in group loyalty'.[20] Oldenquist, however, explains the complexity of loyalties in contemporary society: 'modern man belongs to many tribes at once.'[21] Family, profession, finances, nation, country, culture and religion may coexist and even overlap within the individual, but all compete for primacy. While an individual's group associations and individual actions may ultimately reveal the direction of his or her loyalties, this does not eliminate the coexistence of multiple, perhaps even conflicting, loyalties.

How are these loyalties demonstrated? As this thesis makes no attempt to affix labels of 'loyal' or 'disloyal' upon the characters or organisations examined, it is important to clarify how loyalties may be demonstrated and how they were assessed. Various strands of Irish society made demands on the loyalty of its members; these members subsequently praised or condemned behaviour that resulted from these demands. In this light, verbal professions of loyalty – while an adequate though by no means absolute measure of opinion – do not allow for reliable quantification. In addition to devoting oneself to an ideal, Royce argued that man exhibits loyalty when it is expressed 'in some sustained and practical way, by acting steadily in the service of his cause.'[22] Enlistment, for example, was seen by many as a manifestation of loyalty to the empire during the Great War, and interpreted by wider Irish society prior to 1916 as necessary to secure Home Rule. Fletcher, however, maintains that simply harbouring divisive sentiments is not treasonous, but acting upon them may be.[23] This may partially explain why evidence of sedition in

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[19] Robert Wolfe, *The poverty of liberalism* (Boston, 1969 edn), pp 55, 60-1. See Wolfe for further analysis of natural versus contractual loyalties and their application to individual, group or institutional scenarios.
[20] Fletcher, *Loyalty*, pp 9, 33-5.
[21] Ibid., pp 177-8.
[22] Royce, *Philosophy of loyalty*, pp 16-17, 22.
[23] Fletcher, *Loyalty*, p. 48.

Ireland was prominent prior to the Easter Rising, but was for the most part overlooked by Dublin Castle.[24]

A final word concerning methodological process must be given on the minimal inclusion of Erik Erikson's theories throughout this thesis. There is no disputing that Erikson has influenced social scientists and historians alike. Tom Garvin has cited Erikson on occasion, and has certainly subjected his own scholarship to Erikson's arguments on the development of the individual through life stages.[25] In some instances, in fact, Erikson explains the development of group identity in ways strikingly applicable to the Irish situation. His observation that 'a historical period may ... present a singular chance for a collective renewal which opens up unlimited identities for those who, by a combination of unruliness, giftedness, and competence, represent a new leadership, a new elite, and new types rising to dominance in a new people' could not more accurately depict events in Ireland that occurred simultaneous to the calamity of the Great War.[26] Nevertheless, though providing an interesting framework for the progression and development of an individual's identity, or the impact of the 'historical moment', Erikson's theories are too broad, and at the same time require too intimate a knowledge of the individual to apply to this study of loyalty. Quantifying the formation of identity in individuals prior to the Irish Revolution against their actions during the 1913-21 period would be a difficult, if not impossible, task. Assessing some of the social and political factors, individuals and groups that helped form these identities and shape perceptions of Irish loyalty during this period provides a much more feasible approach, and is the overall aim of this thesis.

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[24] Brendan Mac Giolla Choille, *Intelligence notes from Dublin Castle, 1914-1916* (Dublin, 1966).
[25] See Garvin's use of Erikson's *Childhood and society* in chapter eight, 'Elections, revolution and civil war, 1916-23' in Tom Garvin, *The evolution of Irish nationalist politics* (Dublin, 1983 edn), pp 114-34. And Garvin's examination of the childhood and influences of Michael Collins and Eamon de Valera in Garvin, 'Dev and Mick: the 1922 split as a social psychological event' in Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh (eds), *Michael Collins and the making of the Irish Free State* (Dublin, 1998), pp 146-54.
[26] Erik Erikson, *Life history and the historical moment* (New York, 1975), p. 21.

CHAPTER ONE
DELAYING DIVISION:
LANGUAGE, LOYALTY AND THE EARLY IRISH VOLUNTEERS

The variety of military, political and social influences that both prompted and curtailed revolutionary activity during the Anglo-Irish War, 1919-21, prevent the depiction of the Irish Republican Army (I.R.A.) as a uniform guerrilla unit. Political violence in Ireland during this period was uneven and irregular at best, and varying degrees of individual motivation and participation contributed to fluid and decentralised bodies of fighting men.[1] The political and military division experienced in Ireland following the introduction of the Anglo-Irish Treaty speaks to these differences and regional influences. This division, though occurring abruptly must not be identified as spontaneous, but instead as part of a maturation of revolutionary politics and paramilitarism in Ireland.[2] Mass-inclusion, ideological crisis, division and rebranding had in fact been staples of the revolutionary process. In this sense, reinvention of the Irish Volunteer movement following the Easter Rising prevents claims of legitimacy or continuity with the organisation founded in November 1913. The original Irish Volunteers possessed a plenitude of members, outlooks and interests. It was only after formal division in the autumn of 1914 that the movement became discriminate toward its membership.

Early cohesion within the Irish Volunteers was only temporarily achieved prior to the Great War. This was accomplished, in part, by exploiting the most common factors which would ensure participation and maintain enthusiasm for the movement. Several historians have identified how participation in the Irish Volunteers was based on its intentional inclusion of common political and cultural variables of Irish nationalism. Diarmaid Ferriter has observed that between 1912 and 1918, 'it seemed like a giant vacuum existed in Ireland, into which a variety of organisations and movements were being sucked, often with conflicting aims, personalities and visions for the future.'[3] Others, notably Joost Augusteijn and Matthew Kelly, have highlighted how the discussion

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[1] Joost Augusteijn, 'Accounting for the emergence of violent activism among Irish revolutionaries, 1916-21' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxv, no. 139 (May 2007), pp 327-44; David Fitzpatrick, 'The geography of Irish nationalism, 1910-1921' in *Past & Present*, no. 78 (Feb. 1978), pp 113-144; Peter Hart, 'The geography of revolution in Ireland, 1917-23' in *Past & Present*, no. 155 (May 1997), pp 142-76; Charles Townsend, *Political violence in Ireland: government and resistance since 1848* (Oxford, 1983).

[2] Bill Kissane, *The politics of the Irish Civil War* (New York, 2005), p. 28. Kissane observes that division within Irish movements, prompted by what he terms 'inter-nationalist' conflicts – particularly over issues such as the First World War or the Treaty debates – and exposed the 'existence of rival traditions within one movement'. He ultimately concludes that they come as no surprise in such mass movements.

[3] Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2005 edn), p. 110.

of finer points of policy, particularly in the Irish Volunteers, was avoided.[4] As a result, Home Rule for Ireland, and the Irish Volunteers who acted in its defence, both received pan-nationalist support. Established institutions with their own agendas, membership codes and outlooks, such as the Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association (G.A.A.), United Irish League (U.I.L.) and Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.), provided ready-made bases of support.[5] In addition, public spectacles, such as speeches, rallies, and the publicity surrounding the threatened repression and alteration of the Home Rule Bill, attracted thousands to the Volunteer movement and provided a solid, if vague, definition for members.

The division of the Irish Volunteers, which occurred shortly after the outbreak of the Great War, was based on the notion that their original purpose had been betrayed and that its orchestrators were traitors; the process of separation that followed was termed 'purification'. However, Kelly has argued that the conglomeration of outlooks within the Irish Volunteers represented 'incompatible political and ideological currents at work', and that the Volunteer manifesto was itself highly ambivalent.[6] This division was not a foregone conclusion, but has been documented as such following the intervention of the Irish Parliamentary Party throughout the summer of 1914. In fact, it was only following clarification of Volunteer objectives and policy, as well as a mass expansion of the Volunteer roll, that the movement was segregated along more distinguishable lines. This consensus has been reached due, in part, to the near-uniform recollections of men who 'remained loyal' to the original manifesto and committee of the Irish Volunteers following the split in September 1914. While the war certainly exposed the compromise reached between advanced and constitutional nationalists prior to August 1914 to be disingenuous, the fundamental factors which helped form standards and interpretations of Volunteer loyalty prior to and immediately following the outbreak of war require exploration. The origins of the Irish Volunteer movement and its indefinite foundations, as well as the events and personalities involved in its making and ultimate division, are the subject of this chapter.

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[4] Augusteijn, 'Motivation: why did they fight for Ireland? The motivation of Volunteers in the revolution' in Augusteijn (ed.), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (Hampshire, 2002), p. 104; Matthew Kelly, 'The Irish Volunteers: a Machiavellian moment?' in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *The Ulster crisis 1885-1921* (Hampshire, 2006), p. 64.

[5] Ferriter, *Transformation*, p. 36.

[6] Kelly, 'A Machiavellian moment?', p. 64.

I. Inclusion

Escalating tensions between the Ulster and Irish Volunteers over the question of Home Rule throughout 1914 evoked a sense of belonging based on open military participation and soldierly camaraderie – elements which had lain dormant throughout the later part of the nineteenth century. Arms were secured for both factions, though in disproportionate amounts; membership swelled in both camps, and each side vowed to defend their respective rights and resist both political and physical bullying. Volunteer differences were mainly political, but were accelerated by fear of religious domination. Shortly after the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill in 1912, nationalist Ireland encountered severe opposition from what Eoin MacNeill, a Gaelic scholar and Irish language enthusiast from Antrim, referred to as the 'Ulster Triple Alliance' – a conglomerate of the Orange industrial establishment, Protestant rural community, and remnants of feudal aristocracy all opposed to a native Irish parliament in Dublin.[7] Unionist opposition claimed that it would resist Home Rule by any means – an alternative government and civil war were two steps Sir Edward Carson, at the time chairman of the Irish Unionist Parliamentary Party, and his followers appeared willing to take in order to remain under the complete jurisdiction of Westminster. The Ulster Covenant and Declaration were manifest examples of this desire. The situation intensified further in January 1913, as Carson and his followers organised the Ulster Volunteer Force, a unionist militia nearly 50,000 strong whose aim was to resist Home Rule by force if necessary.[8]

These actions frustrated nationalists, particularly those who had supported the constitutional route toward legislative freedom, led by Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond. Irish Party supporters were distraught at the notion that their near forty-year worship at the altar of British constitutionalism might not bring salvation. By autumn 1913, advanced nationalists refused to continue wandering unfulfilled through the parliamentary dessert. Though still acknowledging Redmond as their Moses, they began on a different route – one which had allowed Ulster greater respect and consideration in government circles.

The man responsible for introducing an alternative was Eoin MacNeill. Between 1913 and Easter 1916, MacNeill's status in the Irish Volunteer movement ran the gauntlet between pugilist and puppet. He was both an admirer of Redmond and active cultural

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[7] Eoin MacNeill, 'The North began' in F.X. Martin (ed.), *The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915: recollections and documents* (Dublin, 1963), pp 57-61; *An Claidheamh Soluis*, 1 Nov. 1913.
[8] 'Sir E. Carson's loyalty: an illogical position', *Irish Independent*, 29 Sept. 1911.

nationalist. His article, 'The North began', invigorated nationalist sentiment. Its arguments were upheld by advanced nationalists as alternative to parliamentary debate. In a letter to Stephen Gwynn in May 1914, MacNeill reflected upon his motivation for writing:

> I felt that an Irish volunteer movement would have grand results in many ways. It would prevent despondency in National ranks. It would show the Tories that the alternative to Home Rule was a policy of repression and coercion beyond any they had yet experience of. It would show the Ulster minority that Nationalist Ireland could not be treated with contempt – for their whole strength lies in the contempt inspired by them. For these and kindred reasons, the article I wrote advocated an Irish Volunteer movement, and a complete readiness to join hands with the Orange party, but only on National grounds.[9]

Less than one year after the publication of 'The North began' Europe was at war and the Irish Volunteers had split. How and why had this happened? What factors had influenced this growth? What factors caused division? The answers lie, in part, in the vague purpose of the early Volunteers, the all-inclusive language and pan-nationalist inclusion evident in their membership, and their inability to reconcile the variety of Irish nationalist opinion prior to the introduction of a wider and more immediate national crisis, represented in the outbreak of the Great War. In nearly all cases concepts of loyalty – its definition, lack of definition or redefinition – contributed to the instability of the movement.

Prior to the inaugural meeting of the Irish Volunteers at the Rotunda Rink in Dublin on 25 November, 1913, MacNeill received the council of Sir Roger Casement, a renowned champion of human rights and an emerging voice of Irish nationalism. These two would continue a near-daily correspondence between November 1913 and June 1914. While in sympathy with the proposed movement and its aims, Casement warned against excluding or, in some cases including, specific national bodies that might allow alternatives to the Volunteers to form. What was necessary, he urged, was a clearly defined purpose, established in a constitution, and exercised through central control.[10] 'Even if nothing more resulted than this, that would be very bad', Casement warned, 'but far worse might

[9] MacNeill to Stephen Gwynn, 20 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204).
[10] Roger Casement to MacNeill, 24 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A1).

result; for in certain situations the outcome may very well be party conflicts and a disorganised rabble calling itself national.'[11]

Although Casement had been privy to MacNeill's thoughts and machinations prior to their publicity, the general public learned of the proposed Irish Volunteer movement from the daily press. On 21 November the *Freeman's Journal* informed its readers that those present at the upcoming meeting at the Rotunda 'will be immediately enrolled if willing, and will, if possible be informed before leaving the meeting as to the hour and place of their first drill practice.'[12] The *Irish Independent* and other dailies further clarified the pretences of the meeting. Laurence Kettle and MacNeill, as honorary secretaries to the self-appointed Volunteer provisional committee, assured readers that, 'Our constitution and flag are wide enough to cover every Irishman. The provisional committee includes representatives of practically all the organisations that play a leading part in Dublin at present. They have received promises of support from men of the most divergent political views'.[13] Potential Volunteers could thus expect to encounter wide acceptance of diverse and varied nationalist opinion, as well as instant gratification through immediate enrolment.

The provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers was selected prior to the Rotunda meeting, and certainly embodied the variety and inclusion propagated by the press. Bulmer Hobson, a Belfast Quaker and well-known nationalist in his own right, provided a breakdown of its affiliation with leading nationalist organisations, secret and open. Of the thirty men who comprised the committee, eleven were members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (I.R.B.), four were associated with the United Irish League (U.I.L.) and Irish Parliamentary Party (I.P.P.), four were members of the moderate Board of Erin branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians (A.O.H.) and a further eleven had no affiliation to any organisation at the time of the organisation's inception.[14] To this last

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[11] Casement to MacNeill, 24 Nov. 1913 [separate letter of the same date] (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A2). MacNeill rejected Casement's plea for a slow, definite plan of action. He explained that a deliberating stage would have allowed time for dissidents to emerge and for opposition to divide the movement. MacNeill explained that 'The only way to prevent this was to get a strong and early endorsement of public opinion.' MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A3).

[12] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Nov. 1913.

[13] *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1913. David Fitzpatrick has also identified the rhetoric of incorporation apparent in the early Volunteer programme. Fitzpatrick, *The two Irelands: 1912-1939* (Oxford, 1998), p. 48.

[14] Bulmer Hobson, Seán McDermott, Piaras Béaslaí, Seamus O'Connor, Eamon Martin, Pádraig Ó Riain, Robert Page, Con Colbert, Michael Lonergan, Peadar Macken and Liam Mellows were members of the I.R.B. John Gore, Laurence Kettle, Maurice Moore and Tom Kettle were associated with the U.I.L. and I.P.P., Peter O'Reilly, Michael Judge, James Lenehan and George Walshe were Hibernians and Patrick Pearse, The O'Rahilly, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Roger Casement, Eamon Ceannt, Eoin

grouping belonged Patrick Pearse, The O'Rahilly, Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett – all would later join the I.R.B. and be killed either during the Easter Rising, or in the executions that followed. Other notable non-affiliates were Eamon Ceannt, Casement and Seán Fitzgibbon – they, too, would play vital roles in the lead-up to the to Rising.[15]

The reputations of several committee men as advocates of the Irish language and culture provided essentially effortless propaganda. Some who left witness statements to the Bureau of Military History noted how certain areas of the country became excited about the Volunteer movement based on the fact that men who shared similar interests in the Gaelic revival were on the provisional committee. For instance, Patrick Higgins noted how the formation of the Volunteers 'electrified' all Gaelic League and 'Irish-Ireland circles' in Cork because of the involvement of advocates like MacNeill and Pearse.[16]

Others who joined the Volunteers had simply been open to suggestion due to their family history and its influence, and were therefore ripe for involvement. As Tom Garvin notes, 'There is an interesting psychological hypothesis to the effect that beliefs acquired early in life tend to be held more firmly, and tend to be served by beliefs acquired later.'[17] Many individual narratives speak of the inheritance of a nationalist tradition, of fathers and grandfathers having been Fenians or engaged in the Land War in previous generations.[18] Art O'Donnell, who became a commandant of the West Clare brigade of Volunteers, recalled the influence of his mother: 'My late mother ... was very well versed in Irish history, local and national, and her knowledge, coloured by an intense longing for Irish freedom, [she] set us all on the warpath long before the actual struggle started.'[19] The variety of outlets for participation in political and cultural organisations prior to the inauguration of the Volunteers, in addition to the degree to which many young men and women had been exposed to nationalist traditions – however selective or romanticised they may have been – helped to prepare a large, loosely-interwoven body of potential supporters prior to November 1913.

While nationalist Ireland may have been primed for a mass movement following Ulster unionist demonstrations against Home Rule, each shade of the Irish nationalist

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MacNeill, John Fitzgibbon, Peadar White, Liam Gogan and Colm O'Lochlain were not affiliated with any organisation.

[15] Bulmer Hobson (B.M.H., W.S. 51); Hobson, 'Foundation and growth of the Irish Volunteers, 1913-14' in Martin, *Irish Volunteers*, pp 30-1.

[16] Patrick Higgins (B.M.H., W.S. 25).

[17] Tom Garvin, *The evolution of Irish nationalist politics*, (Dublin, 1983 edn), p. 115.

[18] Michael Fitzpatrick (B.M.H., W.S. 1,433). Augusteijn has also explored the 'tradition of political activism in the family'. Joost Augusteijn, 'The importance of being Irish: ideas and the Volunteers in Mayo and Tipperary' in David Fitzpatrick (ed.), *Revolution? Ireland 1917-1923* (Dublin, 1990), pp 25-9.

[19] Art O'Donnell (B.M.H., W.S. 1,322).

spectrum nevertheless required courtship by the Volunteers. In this regard, the message employed by MacNeill proved to be of vital importance. What was this message? How did it encourage or deter support from the numerous strands of Irish society? Can the support given to the Volunteer movement, evident in its numerical participation, be considered a form of loyalty?

The manifesto of the Irish Volunteers, penned jointly by MacNeill and Tom Kettle,[20] equated inactivity against 'the party which has thus substituted open force for the semblance of civil government', that is, Ulster unionists, with nationalist surrender. The Volunteers, the manifesto continued, were to be developed to serve as a 'prominent element in the National life under a National Government'; their duties were to be both 'defensive and protective', and they were not to 'contemplate either aggression or domination.' Personal sacrifice and self-discipline were identified as essential duties to the revitalised nation, to be undertaken with the aim of restoring a consciousness amongst freemen 'to defend the cause of freedom'. Membership was outlined as being open 'to all able-bodied Irishmen, without distinction of creed, politics or social grade'.[21] In sum, the Volunteer program argued for the establishment and preservation of Irish freedom through a non-aggressive, yet armed and active, body of self-sacrificing men derived from the patronage of nationalist Ireland in all its forms. Although he had communicated to Casement following the Rotunda meeting that, 'I have no faith in vague patriotism, except as the raw material for definite constructive patriotism',[22] MacNeill confessed that in constructing the manifesto he had been deliberately vague: 'We had to draw up a statement to which all national opinion would consent but still one that would appeal most strongly to the great majority whose only share, effectively, in national affairs ... is the exercise of the parliamentary franchise.'[23] In this sense, exclusion as well as exclusivity was eliminated in an attempt to garner participants. In turn, any clear understanding of the practical program of the Volunteers became forfeit.

The inauguration of the Irish Volunteers in Dublin on 25 November received a huge response. Whether the public was ignited by the opportunity to oppose the Ulster Volunteer Force, to defend Home Rule, or simply to participate in a mass meeting is

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[20] MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A5).
[21] 'Manifesto of the Irish Volunteers. Promulgated at the Rotunda meeting, November 25th, 1913' in *The Irish Review (Dublin)*, iii, no. 34 (Dec. 1913), pp 503-505.
[22] MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A4).
[23] Ibid. (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A5). This theme would endure. A poster later issued by the Volunteer provisional committee stated: 'every Irish Volunteer will recognise the duty as binding of endeavouring to secure the unity of all Irishmen on the ground of national liberty. "They will, therefore, discountenance all manifestations of ill-will between Irishmen."' *Irish Independent*, 9 July 1914.

unclear, but sources suggest a combination of the three. In either case, the meeting in Dublin, and those that followed throughout the country, were representative of MacNeill's intention: they were well-attended by men of various nationalist leanings, and the language employed was vague.

Seán Milroy, an attendee at the Dublin meeting, wrote to Liam de Róiste in Cork in early December 1913. He described the in augural meeting as 'a regular staggerer [sic]', attended by 'one of the most virile collections of animated humanity'.[24] The crowd was so thick that it spilled out of the rink and onto the street. One 'joker', stated Milroy, observed that 'if Napoleon had been similarly circumstanced during his retreat from Moscow he wouldn't have felt the cold so much.'[25] Patrick Egan was also present, and recorded: 'I remember being jammed in the huge crowd gathered outside the entrance and seeing the large doors being forced open by the weight of the people and the broken glass panels showering down on us as we surged into the hall.'[26] The *Irish Independent* and *Freeman's Journal* also provided evidence as to the size of the meeting. Attendance was estimated at 7,000, with excess overflowing into the Rotunda Gardens.[27]

Milroy's letters provide further insight into the emotion and elation attached to the inaugural meeting. 'I feel tonight is the beginning of a history making movement', he wrote to de Róiste: 'The Volunteers have come to stay'.[28] Milroy subsequently announced himself as 'one of the recruits – a full-fledged Volunteer,'[29] and even went so far as to write several pages of amateur poetry at the prospect of a nationalist Volunteer branch forming in Cork:

> To Ireland armed and belted Volunteers
> Be they from Cork or Belfast, Dublin or Galway
> Then let your lusty lungs ring to the skies
> And with a heart that loves our motherland
> Shout this bold message of good will around:
> Ireland Hurrah! Hurrah her Volunteers![30]

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[24] Seán Milroy to Liam de Róiste, 11 Dec. 1913 (T.C.D., Liam de Róiste papers, MS 10,539/346).
[25] Milroy to de Róiste, 11 Dec. 1913 (T.C.D., Liam de Róiste papers, MS 10,539/346).
[26] Patrick Egan (B.M.H., W.S. 327).
[27] *Irish Independent*, *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1913.
[28] Milroy to de Róiste, 25 Nov. 1913 (T.C.D., Liam de Roiste papers, MS 10,539/342).
[29] Ibid.
[30] Seán Milroy, 'Uncopywrited in all the civilized and uncivilized of the world', 16 Dec. 1913 (T.C.D., Liam de Róiste papers, MS 10,539/347).

What was said to cause such excitement? MacNeill remained unclear, calling on the 'courage, vigilance and discipline' of those who would volunteer.[31] Pearse, a 'brainy fellow', according to Milroy, who made a 'rattling fine speech', was more direct. Pearse explained that citizenship naturally bestowed rights upon the individual, but in turn required an acceptance of specific duties. 'The bearing of arms was not only the proudest right of citizenship', he explained, 'but it was a most essential duty'.[32] Pearse reiterated the necessity for nationalists to arm well into the New Year, a provocative stance considering the importation of arms had been proclaimed in December 1913.[33]

Labour also featured prominently at the meeting, though in a disruptive context. Labour advocates, observed Milroy, though 'boisterous ... did not detract from the splendid emphatic earnestness of the proceedings.'[34] MacNeill blamed Larkin and Connolly's use of Dublin as a stage for socialist propaganda for the agitation, as opposed to the Dublin working class.[35] The variety of speakers and their respective messages was recalled by John Kenny who, many years after the event, stated that 'Although there were many speakers on the occasion [of the Rotunda meeting], I can only remember Jim Larkin and Tom Kettle, which is passing strange in the light of later events.'[36]

MacNeill was pleased that the inaugural meeting of the Volunteers was viewed in Dublin as 'a tremendous and astonishing success'; 'the more so', he wrote to Casement, 'since not a single leader of public opinion was associated with it.'[37] It was estimated that between three and four thousand men enrolled in the Irish Volunteers on that first night.

The launch of the Irish Volunteers in Galway in early December 1913 was met with equal enthusiasm. The *Connacht Tribune*, however, questioned whether the sentiment was genuine, or whether it was stimulated 'by that glamour which invariably heralds the birth of a new movement'.[38] During the course of the evening it was reiterated that the Volunteer movement aimed to unite all Irishmen under one flag, a sentiment which drew loud cheers. MacNeill introduced himself as an Ulsterman who had come to Galway to

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[31] *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1913.
[32] Ibid.; *Irish Times*, 26 Nov. 1913. Casement also considered arming to be essential. In a letter to George Berkeley in July 1914 he stated that, 'The test of loyalty to the Irish nation and the Irish Volunteers is to get rifles into their hands – that and nothing else.' Casement to Berkeley, 19 July 1914 (N.L.I., George Berkeley papers, MS 7,879).
[33] *Irish Independent*, 27 Jan. 1914. For additional insight into Pearse's concept of the Irish Volunteers, see Pádraic H. Pearse, *The psychology of a Volunteer* (small reproduced pamphlet in author's possession).
[34] Milroy to de Róiste, 25 Nov. 1913 (T.C.D., Liam de Róiste papers, MS 10,539/342); 'Scene of disorder', *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Nov. 1913.
[35] MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A5).
[36] John Kenny (B.M.H., W.S. 1,693).
[37] MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A5); Hobson (B.M.H., W.S. 51).
[38] *Connacht Tribute*, 6 Dec. 1913.

speak of Irish unity. Casement read a letter addressed to him by Maurice Moore, in which the retired Irish colonel outlined the danger of invasion faced by Galway which resulted from lack of defence. 'In Britain', Moore wrote, 'it is considered a loyal and patriotic duty for every man, English, Scotch or Welsh, to engage in a bond to defend the soil of his country'. Ireland, he claimed, had been denied that right.[39] An estimated 1,000 men signed on as Irish Volunteers following the meeting.[40] George Nicholls, a local solicitor who had acted as chair, was elected president of the company.[41]

Similar Volunteer launches featured men of local standing, along with featured speakers such as Casement, MacNeill and Pearse. While speeches were no doubt designed to appeal to the widest nationalist audience, certain messages were extensions of an individual outlook, such as Pearse's call to arms, mentioned above. Unity and the establishment of common political ground became such an ideal for MacNeill that he habitually called on his audience to applaud Edward Carson and the Ulster Volunteer Force as a show of veneration for their protest. At times this concept escaped the capacity of the audience. In Cork, for instance, MacNeill announced to the audience that,

> The action of these men [U.V.F.] deserved the commendation of every Irishman, because they had broken the ice for our ship to pass through. They had set the model and standard of public duty for us. ... 'The North began. The North held on. God bless the Northern land.'[42]

Although his tribute did not exceed the sentiment expressed in *An Claideamh Soluis* a month previous, when pressed to give 'three cheers for Sir Edward Carson's Volunteers', MacNeill was met with groans and 'boohs', and was told to 'shut up' by the Cork audience.[43] Patrick Higgins was in attendance at the City Hall in Cork when MacNeill made his appeal. 'I thought the Cork audience extremely stupid not to see MacNeill's joke about the Ulster Volunteers', he later stated to the Bureau of Military History.[44] Higgins

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[39] Ibid.
[40] *Irish Independent*, 9 Dec. 1913; *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Dec. 1913; Frank Hardiman (B.M.H., W.S. 406). Hardiman cites 600 men enrolling, 200 of which could be considered active.
[41] Frank Hardiman (B.M.H., W.S. 406).
[42] *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Dec. 1913.
[43] Ibid. Cheers for John Redmond were enthusiastically given. Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea, in their analysis of the birth of the Volunteers in Cork, remark that faction fights among even moderate national organisations were not unknown in the city. This is somewhat explained by the varied nationalist political representation evident in Cork. Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea, *'Baptised in blood': the formation of the Cork Brigade of Irish Volunteers 1913-1916* (Cork, 2005), p. 15.
[44] Patrick Higgins (B.M.H., W.S. 25).

attributed the disorder to the A.O.H. who, similar to Labour in Dublin, was looking for any pretext to wreck the meeting. The presence of Hibernians would certainly explain why cheers for John Redmond were enthusiastically given on the same evening, but the presumption that MacNeill was joking displays both a misconstruction of his nationalist vision, and ignorance of the Volunteer program as outlined in its manifesto and articulated in 'The North began'.[45]

Higgins was but one man from one region and certainly subject to the bias of his own experiences. His observations nevertheless illuminate an important component of when gauging the mentalities of those who attended inaugural Volunteer meetings: many already belonged to political societies, cultural organisations or clubs sectionalised by social political outlook. These pre-existing influences would complicate any attempt to construct an overall loyalty toward the Irish Volunteers, and challenge the cohesion of a body which was said to represent all national interests.

Evidence from numerous attendees and observers reveals the various influences, local and national, which were exposed during Volunteer meetings and enrolments. First and foremost, the influence of the Irish Parliamentary Party was apparent, even though its leaders had been purposefully excluded from the provisional committee. Attachment of the Irish Party to the Home Rule struggle in the public mind is quite understandable at this time. Reunited in 1900 under the leadership of John Redmond, the I.P.P. maintained a near complete monopoly over the nationalist vote. Although never holding government office despite positive election returns in 1906 and 1910, the Liberal Party courted the I.P.P in order to form a majority.[46] Constitutional nationalism had therefore brought Home Rule back to into British political concern. MacNeill himself confessed to have the 'highest admiration' for Redmond, and conceded that if the Irish Party leader had come out against the Volunteer movement it would have put him in a 'terrible difficulty' regarding the principle of national unity.[47] 'Would it be right to do or say anything that would weaken Redmond's position either here or over there [in London]?' he asked Casement shortly after the Rotunda meeting.[48] Furthermore, in early January 1914, when addressing

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[45] The *Leitrim Observer* later ran a letter from MacNeill and Laurence Kettle that clarified the misunderstanding which had occurred at Cork: 'The Provisional Committee is obviously, absolutely, and directly in opposition to the Anti-Irish and Anti-Democratic attitude of Sir Edward Carson and his followers.' *Leitrim Observer*, 27 Dec. 1913.

[46] George Dangerfield, *The strange death of Liberal England* (California, 1997 edn), pp 20-36.

[47] When interviewing a number of 'representative public men' in Dublin prior to launching the Volunteers, MacNeill noted that 'They all wanted to know what John Redmond or somebody else would think.' MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A4).

[48] MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavan Duffy, C.D. 45/1/A5). After meeting privately with Redmond in April 1914, Maurice Moore wrote to MacNeill stating that Redmond had

a meeting at Gorey, Michael Judge, member of the provisional committee, identified the Irish Volunteers as a means through which Redmond could 'back up his demands' for Home Rule.[49] Finally, Michael Brennan revealed that the influence of 'Redmondites' was so great in the Limerick Volunteers that they were simply allowed to take the lead, 'to appear as the moving force.'[50] Consideration for the Irish Party therefore featured prominently in the Volunteer program well before the summer of 1914.

Party influence was also indirectly exercised through the U.I.L. and A.O.H. – organisations whose members attended Irish Volunteer meetings in abundance.[51] Many within these groups downplayed any emphasis on physical violence associated with the Volunteers, and instead maintained that the movement was strictly defensive.

While not overtly sectarian, Hibernians were fiercely protective of constitutional nationalism.[52] Liam Gaynor, a Belfast Volunteer, noted the hostility of Hibernians toward opponents of the Irish Party, or advocates of physical force toward the achievement of Irish freedom.[53] The report of Royal Irish Constabulary (R.I.C.) Inspector General Sir Neville Chamberlain (K.C.B., K.C.V.O.) for March 1914 noted that since the Volunteers had not secured the support of the Catholic clergy or of 'official Nationalists', Hibernians in areas of Belfast were forbidden to join.[54] The U.I.L. branch of Tydavnet, in Monaghan, withheld its support for a Volunteer company to rival the U.V.F., and instead moved that organisers 'should first show their loyalty to the National cause by paying their subscriptions to the Parliamentary Fund.'[55] This selectivity was neither new, nor limited to Ireland. Daniel Braniff and others were expelled from the A.O.H. (Board of Erin) in Jarrow-on-Tyne in Scotland in 1907 after they were found to entertain 'advanced separatist opinions.'[56]

The I.R.B. also exerted itself within Volunteer circles, but in a less public manner. As Volunteer companies were organised throughout Ireland, I.R.B. members were

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privately approved of the Volunteer movement. MacNeill to Casement, 8 Apr. 1914 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy, C.D. 45/1/A14).

[49] *Irish Independent*, 8 Jan. 1914. Reflecting on the same meeting years later, James Gleeson noted Pearse's speech but made no mention of Judge's advocacy for Redmond. Gleeson would subsequently side with the MacNeill faction of Volunteers in late 1914. James Gleeson (B.M.H., W.S. 1,012).

[50] Michael Brennan, *The war in Clare 1911-1921* (Dublin, 1980), p. 8.

[51] Joseph Kenny (Seosamh Ó Cionnaigh) recalled that the Bray Volunteers were 'swamped' with A.O.H. men, particularly after the landing of guns at Howth. Joseph Kenny (Seosamh Ó Cionnaigh) (B.M.H., W.S. 332); Patrick Garvey (B.M.H., W.S. 1,011).

[52] By 1914, the A.O.H. had established chapters all over Ireland. Its popularity can be attributed to its providing outlets for patronage and recreation, as well as its Catholic and nationalist appeal. Ibid., p. 97.

[53] Liam Gaynor (B.M.H., W.S. 183).

[54] Inspector General's monthly reports, Mar. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/92).

[55] *Irish Independent*, 17 Dec. 1913.

[56] Daniel Braniff (B.M.H., W.S. 222).

instructed to capture as many key positions as possible.[57] I.R.B. circles operated independently of the Volunteers, and membership naturally overlapped. Similar to members of the I.P.P. or U.I.L., the Irish Volunteer organisation provided the I.R.B. a front behind which it could promote separatism, as well as a vehicle through which it might bring it into reality.

The Irish Volunteers were thus comprised of numerous nationalist elements at their inception.[58] Despite aspirations to unite all Irishmen, however, the initial growth of the Irish Volunteers only served to fortify unionist opinion. Chamberlain reported to Augustine Birrell, the Chief Secretary, in February 1914 that:

> The state of political unrest in the province of Ulster showed no sign of abatement during the month of February. In fact the Unionist preparations to resist Home Rule were pushed forward with renewed vigour, and party feeling could hardly be more intense than it is at present.[59]

Civil war in Ireland very quickly appeared not only feasible but probable. The incident at the Curragh the following month, most popularly described as the Curragh 'mutiny', illustrated the depth with which Home Rule politics had permeated society and affected the rule of law.

Casement sought to prevent a possible clash between the Irish and Ulster Volunteers by promoting unity through the 'bringing about a spirit of camaraderie ... spread by a spirit of emulation and health rivalry between the "rival armies" ... bringing them into one camp – an Irish one.'[60] Casement was in fact revolted by the idea of the Irish Volunteers being overtly nationalist, and advocated an apolitical Volunteer organisation that would 'not tolerate political intrigue.'[61] The best way to achieve this, he suggested, was 'to simply deal with the Volunteers as soldiers.'[62] The name of the organisation was also to prevent any isolation of political opponents, and welcome Volunteers from throughout Ireland. 'Please always bear in mind the correct title – Irish

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[57] Peter Paul Galligan (B.M.H., W.S. 170); Thomas Furlong (B.M.H., W.S. 513).
[58] Members of the Gaelic League and Gaelic Athletic Association also comprised a significant portion of early Volunteer membership, and the Irish language featured prominently in recruiting. MacNeill was cited as opening several of his recruiting speeches throughout November and December 1913 in Irish before switching to English.
[59] Inspector General's monthly report, Feb. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/92).
[60] Casement to Berkeley, 24 June 1914 (N.L.I., George Berkeley papers, MS 7,879).
[61] Casement to Moore, 2 June 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,561/4).
[62] Ibid.

Volunteers', Casement wrote to Maurice Moore in the summer of 1914; 'Not "National" or "Nationalist" Volunteers (the latter wholly damnable).'[63]

II. Expansion

The initial growth of the Irish Volunteers was silently observed by the Royal Irish Constabulary, whose reports were passed up the chain of command from county inspectors to the Inspector General, Sir Neville Chamberlain (K.C.B, K.C.V.O.). Chamberlain then summarised the situation in each county before passing his views on to the Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell. Returns for November and December 1913 fail to mention the Irish Volunteers as causing any great impact in the country, making detection and analysis of the organisation's early growth difficult. Newspaper reports of meetings and rallies instead serve as evidence for pockets of enthusiasm and participation throughout Ireland. In early December 1913, the *Irish Independent* questioned: 'Will the Irish National Volunteer movement, which was inaugurated in Dublin last week, flourish in the provinces?'[64] A survey of forty-six provincial centres was conducted to answer the question, and measure general feeling toward the Volunteer movement. Twenty-one centres provided positive returns; twelve centres opposed the movement and thirteen were indifferent.[65]

The police explained this slow growth as resulting from the absence of Irish Party members in important positions. Two reports from the early months of 1914 illustrate this outlook. The first is from January:

> The proposal to form an Irish Volunteer Corps in support of the Nationalist demand for self-government ... has made little tangible progress. ... The movement is still advocated by extremists, but it is not expected to develop to any extent so long as the Home Rule Bill is in suspense, unless it receives encouragement from the Irish Party.[66]

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[63] Ibid., Kelly, 'A Machiavellian moment?', p. 69.
[64] *Irish Independent*, 1 Dec. 1913.
[65] Those for included (Leinster): Ardee, Monasterevan, Athy, Bagenalstown, Kilkenny, Wexford; (Ulster): Armagh, Belturbet, Banbridge; (Munster): Carrick-on-Suir, Limerick, Holycross, Waterford, Cashel; (Connaught): Portunana, Claremorris, Carrick-on-Shannon, Ballina, Galway, Boyle, Castlerea. Those against, (Ulster): Dungannon, Ballymoney, Stewartstown, Lurgan, Maghera, Magherafelt, Omagh, Donegal, Derry; (Munster): Thurles, Macroom, Tipperary. Those doubtful or indifferent, (Leinster): Mullingar, Maryborough, Birr, Edenderry, Drogheda, Naas; (Munster): Clonmel, LIstowel, Dungarvan, Ennis, Glin, Fermoy; (Connaught): Ballinasloe.
[66] Inspector General's monthly report, Jan. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/92).

The second report, from February, concedes that growth has occurred, but again suggests its restraint as associated with the absence of Irish Party approval:

> Branches of the Irish National Volunteers have been formed in seventeen counties in Ireland, including Ulster, but the difficulty in procuring arms is embarrassing the promoters, and unless the movement receives the approval of Mr John Redmond's Party, it is not likely to become formidable at present.[67]

There was in fact little Volunteer activity recorded in the Inspector General's reports prior to July 1914, that is, prior to the addition of John Redmond's nominees to the provisional committee.[68]

The Irish Volunteer movement expanded exponentially following the approval and patronage of the Irish Party. While the Irish Party's influence spoiled the non-political atmosphere MacNeill had promoted, its support became necessary in the politically-charged atmosphere of early 1914. The Irish Party lent respectability, fundraising capacity and political access to the Volunteer movement. As a result, the Volunteer role expanded as loyal Party members and sympathisers expressed themselves through direct, visible participation. While this allowed the Volunteers to meet and eventually surpass the U.V.F., in bodies at least, its outlook eventually became subject to the Party line. This greatly frustrated members of the provisional committee – particularly as the purpose of the Irish Volunteers became reinvented following the outbreak of the Great War.

How and in what capacity was the Irish Party integrated into the existing structure of the Irish Volunteers? And why, in a movement that promoted the widest degree of national representation, was this viewed with disdain by many Volunteer leaders? The addition of the Irish Party was retrospectively referred to by many Volunteers as a 'take-over'. J.J. Lee rationalised that Redmond, though initially not 'grasping' the function of physical force, realised that he had either to stand aside in the face of the unionists and Tories, hope the British Army would enforce Home Rule, or raise an army of his own.[69]

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[67] Ibid., Feb. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/92).

[68] Returns from Donegal, Kerry, Limerick, Longford, Mayo, Westmeath and Wexford prove the exception, but accurate numbers remain elusive. Deviating standards for what constituted a 'branch' of Volunteers also complicate estimates. The excitement which accompanied the landing of arms at Howth, as well as the indignation experienced following the shootings at Bachelor's Walk, also contributed to an immediate rise in Volunteer activity. Inspector General's monthly reports, May-July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/93-4).

[69] Lee describes Redmond as a 'romantic Commonwealth man, too much a genuine Westminster parliamentarian' to resort to physical force. J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), pp 17-18.

This explanation, perhaps as simple as it is accurate, fails to consider the degree to which Volunteer leaders had sought approval from the Irish Party, and the negotiations which occurred between leading Party members and Volunteers to this end. In reports of these meetings, and within consequent correspondence, lie the roots of personal conflicts: misunderstandings that would later plague the Volunteer movement and prompt its division.

As a constitutional nationalist, Redmond possessed both political reputation and public mandate. He was popularly acknowledged not only as Irish Party leader, but the man who had again brought Home Rule to the table. In fact, many Party supporters professed their faith and admiration in personal letters to Redmond; many others noted the ways in which Redmond commanded the attention, respect and admiration of nationalist Ireland.[70] Of the thirteen provincial centres previously identified by the *Irish Independent* as being indifferent to the Volunteer movement in December 1913, following Redmond's approval of the Volunteer movement nearly all reported activity in some form.

Within this vein it is easy to see why the early Volunteers sought the endorsement of Redmond and other members of the I.P.P. Just as Gaelic Leaguers had been excited about the involvement of MacNeill and Pearse in the Irish Volunteers, Redmond's endorsement released much previously withheld support. The personal loyalty given to the Irish Party, and Redmond as its leader, existed as a portal to the ideal of Home Rule and Irish freedom. The communal mentality of nationalist Ireland regarding Home Rule represented a shared, communal project amongst nationalists – one that had dominated Irish life for over forty years and shaped the outlooks of thousands.[71]

It is false to assume that MacNeill did not anticipate I.P.P. involvement with the Volunteers in some form.[72] He had previously confessed to Casement the difficulties that would befall the movement if Redmond were to oppose it, and had shaped the Volunteer manifesto around this reality.[73] Early consensus between MacNeill and Redmond was achieved through mutual condemnation of a demonstration in Derry city in March 1914. 'I had already last night arranged to telegraph to Derry a warning against such action', wrote

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[70] Unknown to Redmond, 8 Apr. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,257/2)
[71] John Sabini and Maury Silver, *Emotion, character and responsibility* (New York, 1998), p. 75.
[72] Michael Tierney also suggested that communication between Redmond and the Volunteers did not suffer between January and June 1914, and that the introduction of the Home Rule Bill in its final stage actually re-ignited dialogue. Michael Tierney (F.X. Martin, ed.), *Eoin MacNeill: scholar and man of action, 1867-1945* (Oxford, 1980), p. 128.
[73] MacNeill to Casement, 27 Nov. 1913 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A5).

MacNeill, 'and on reading your telegram in this morning's *Freeman* [*'s Journal*] I wired "Thoroughly support Redmond's message" to Alderman Charles O'Neill'.[74]

Despite aloof concurrence, MacNeill's letters from this period reveal a man fearful of losing control of the Volunteer movement to Irish Party influence, while at the same time anxious to appease Party interests and avoid a split.[75] The unity and diversity of the Volunteers was at all times stressed, at times aligning popularity with paradox. The MacNeill-Redmond correspondence from the period perhaps best illustrate the unease and distrust displayed by MacNeill, as well as Redmond's anxiety over Party inclusion. By May 1914 the Home Rule Bill had passed the House of Commons but had yet to reach the statute book.[76] Certain realities, specifically the exclusion of certain Ulster counties from the Home Rule settlement and the Government's refusal to act against the Curragh 'mutineers', prompted Redmond to act.[77] It is fair to say that the formation of the Ulster and Irish Volunteers as alternatives to politics – or rather political will expressed in another form – and the increasing popularity of the Irish Volunteers throughout early 1914 had weakened Redmond's position at Westminster. Superimposing Party members upon the Volunteer command structure would therefore not merely be an exercise of control, but an act of self-preservation. The instant popularity of the Irish Volunteers threatened to upset the respectability of Irish nationalism that the Irish Party desired since Redmond assumed its leadership in 1900.[78] Having observed the rapid growth of the Irish Volunteers, which by May numbered nearly 75,000, Redmond realised that they were the vehicle with which he could retrieve this position.

Between April and June 1914 MacNeill attempted to negotiate the role that Redmond and the Irish Party would play within the expanding Volunteer movement. He was certain that Redmond would demand that any future governing council of the

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[74] MacNeill to Redmond, 21 Mar. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204); *Irish Independent*, 21 Mar. 1914. O'Neill was organising a mass Home Rule meeting in Derry city, and fears of collision between Unionist and Nationalist elements caught the attention of both Carson and Redmond.

[75] Redmond also foresaw division at an early stage, and communicated to MacNeill that 'it would be a great misfortune if a disagreement should result in the possible establishment of a second body of Irish Volunteers.' Redmond to MacNeill, 16 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204).

[76] The Home Rule Bill received the Royal Assent in September 1914; its implementation was suspended for the duration of the war, providing parliament an opportunity to make provisions for Ulster. Lee, *Ireland*, p. 21.

[77] Notes of interview between Asquith, Birrell and Redmond, 2 Feb. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/4); Redmond to Birrell, 9 Feb. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,169/4).

[78] This hypothesis applies specifically to Redmond. As Irish political society had acknowledged him as their leader, the growth and popularity of the Irish Volunteers as an alternative vehicle with which to secure Home Rule threatened Redmond's hegemony in that particular arena. Peter Salovey and Judith Rodin, 'Envy and jealousy in close relationships' in Clyde Hendrick (ed.), *Close relationships* (California, 1989), p. 228.

Volunteers be sympathetic to Party interests.[79] MacNeill believed that the presence of John Gore, Michael Judge and Tom Kettle – all Party men – on the provisional committee was enough to convince Redmond of the organisation's good intentions toward the interests of the I.P.P. MacNeill's pleas for trust and understanding from the Party became persistent in MacNeill's communication with Redmond and other I.P.P. leaders.

Following a meeting with Joseph Devlin, Irish Party M.P. for Belfast West, on 15 April, in which Tom Kettle and Casement were also in attendance, MacNeill speculated as to how he would address Redmond in London: 'I intend to be very plain, and show Mr Redmond that from every point of view, except the enemy's, the Volunteers should go ahead on the present lines, and that artificial interlocking can only do more harm than good.'[80] But 'interlocking' Party members with the Volunteer leadership was precisely what Redmond desired in order to place the nationalist representatives atop what was being touted as a nationalist movement. MacNeill was 'grilled' in London on 9 May in this regard. He faced Redmond virtually alone after Casement departed following a brief speech and Kettle descended into negative gossip surrounding the movement.[81] The effects of the meeting, and the influence of Redmond, made an immediate impact on MacNeill. In a letter to Devlin dated 13 May, he espoused the necessity of placing a high-ranking Party member within the reconstituted provisional committee:

> We feel that in selecting a prominent recognised supporter of Mr John Redmond, who will be identified by everybody with his policy, the nearer the person selected is to Mr Redmond the better, so that there may be no doubt about the significance of the selection. ... Assure Mr John Redmond from me that we will stand by him to a man and support him, maintain all he has won, and back him to victory.[82]

Redmond's brother William ('Willie') was selected as a member of the new council. His brother's most intimate political ally and confidant, William was M.P. for Clare East.[83] He was appointed in a regretful manner but, fearing a split within the movement to be a greater threat than the infiltration of an Irish Party member, MacNeill believed it favourable. Continuing to Devlin, MacNeill hoped that the appointment of

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[79] MacNeill to Casement, 8 Apr. 1914 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A14).
[80] Ibid., 23 Apr. 1914 (IM.A., George Gavin Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A16).
[81] Tierney, *MacNeill*, pp 130-1.
[82] MacNeill to Devlin, 13 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204). As an extra precaution against suspicion, MacNeill habitually signed his name 'John' when writing to Devlin.
[83] Terence Denman, 'William Hoey Kearney ('Willie') Redmond' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), *Dictionary of Irish biography*, vol. 8 (Cambridge, 2009), pp 422-3.

William Redmond would assure the Party 'that there will be no further ground for absence of complete confidences.'[84]

The Irish Volunteers were not the first popular social movement which threatened to undermine the prominence of the Irish Party, nor where they the first to be challenged in this regard. In February 1900 it was reported to the Irish Government that the United Irish League was 'the one and only political organisation of any importance in the Country', although its vast membership was said to exist mainly on paper. No doubt stemming from the U.I.L.'s popularity, it was widely believed that the Irish Party, recovering from the effects of the Parnell split, would attempt to co-opt the League. The result, it was argued: 'would certainly give the League a better standing amongst a large class who now hold aloof from it.'[85] While the situation only weakly parallels that of the Volunteers in May 1914, mainly due to the overt political purpose of the U.I.L., the precedent is not lost.

The acceptance of William Redmond was therefore more a test of the unity of the Volunteer provisional committee than anything else. Internal dissension was kept at bay through an 'honourable and disinterested' demeanour exercised by those on the provisional committee opposed to the Irish Party, mostly members of the I.R.B. Though unable to fully reveal the circumstances with which he was faced, MacNeill used the I.R.B.'s compliance with the Party as evidence of an overall desire for cooperation. 'I trust their straightforward and unselfish conduct will be generously received', MacNeill disclosed to Devlin on 13 May: 'With the greatest temptation that could have ever come to them to assert themselves, they have on the contrary effaced themselves.'[86] While no doubt attempting to display the concessions granted to the Party, MacNeill inadvertently, yet repeatedly, revealed that dissent existed within the provisional committee. In doing so he also revealed himself to be a weak leader of a somewhat divided movement, dependent on compromise in order to maintain unity.

MacNeill appealed for simplicity in his interviews and correspondence with Redmond and the Irish Party throughout May and June 1914, a desire he revealed to Stephen Gwynn: 'My interview with the Party was like being examined before a Royal

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[84] MacNeill to Devlin, 13 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204).
[85] Inspector General's report, Feb. 1900 (N.A., CO 904/69).
[86] MacNeill to Devlin, 13 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204). MacNeill also felt that the fact that sections of the Volunteers had not broken away following the appointment of William Redmond spoke volumes, and should act as a sign of trust. This point was reiterated by MacNeill several times throughout various correspondences: 'Assure Mr John Redmond from me that we will stand by him to a man and support him, maintain all he has won, and back him to victory, if he only trusts us'. Eoin MacNeill to Joseph Devlin, 13 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204).

Commission. What was really wanted was a free conversation over a pipe of tobacco.'[87] MacNeill's repeated lengthy, illusory notions of national unity and a uniform adherence to the Volunteer ideal amounted to scholarly machinations of the Volunteers of 1782, and made little impact on Redmond and others absorbed in London politics. The trust, confidence and harmony sought by MacNeill could only be achieved, according to Redmond, through Party representation on the Volunteer committee.[88] In private correspondence with Casement, MacNeill confessed his frustrations with 'apprehensions and timidity', which he felt displayed disunity.[89] He tired of 'forcible, feeble diplomacy', and wished instead to employ what he referred to as the Campbell-Bannerman formula – 'No more of this fooling'.[90]

To avoid digression, it may be stated there is ample evidence to the effect that many others, such as M.P. for Mayo East and leading I.P.P. man, John Dillon, found MacNeill 'an exasperating man to deal with'.[91] Frustrations were not solely based on MacNeill's tact but also on his inconsistency. This became particularly apparent in letters between Redmond and MacNeill between May and July 1914.[92] While not intentionally excluding members of the provisional committee from his dealings with Redmond and the Irish Party, MacNeill was not open about them.[93] In fact, only five members of the provisional committee, Seán Fitzgibbon, Roger Casement, The O'Rahilly, Maurice Moore and Bulmer Hobson, even knew of the negotiations which had taken place.[94]

Following the breakdown of negotiations over Irish Party representation on the governing committee of the Irish Volunteers, Redmond published an ultimatum demanding the addition of twenty-five representatives at the instance of the Irish Party. Failure to

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[87] MacNeill to Stephen Gwynn, 20 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS, 15,204).
[88] MacNeill to Redmond, 19 May 1914; MacNeill to Gwynn, 20 May 1914; Redmond to MacNeill 21 May 1914; MacNeill to Redmond 23 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, Ms 15,204).
[89] MacNeill to Casement, 29 May 1914 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy papers, C.D. 45/1/A17).
[90] Ibid.
[91] John Dillon to Redmond, 28 May 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, Ms 15,182/20); Tierney, *MacNeill*, p. 134. Alice Stopford Green remarked that MacNeill was 'meant for a scholar's life, and for that alone.' Alice Stopford Green to Redmond, 28 Oct. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, Ms 15,192/4). Pearse remarked of MacNeill: 'he as the reputation for being "tactful." But his "tact" consists of bowing to the will of the Redmondites every time. He never makes a fight except when they assail his personal honour, when he bridles up at once.' Seán Cronin, *The McGarrity papers: revelations of the Irish revolutionary movement in Ireland and America, 1900-1940* (Kerry, 1972), pp 48-9.
[92] Redmond to MacNeill, 21 May, 3 June 1914; MacNeill to Redmond, 20, 23, 26, 29 May, 2 June, 4, 10 July 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, Ms 15,204). See also Éoin P. Ó Caoimh, 'Redmond's change of policy, August-September, 1914' in Martin, *Irish Volunteers*, pp 149-52.
[93] Hobson (B.M.H., W.S. 50).
[94] Hobson, 'Foundation and growth', p. 46.

comply would result in the creation of a 'rival authority' to the provisional committee,[95] organised along the lines of existing Party structures throughout the country.

The overall message portrayed in Redmond's letter in many ways echoed MacNeill's sentiments as they had been expressed in the original Volunteer manifesto. He sought not to divide, but to promote harmony; he wished the Volunteer governing body to be fully representative of all shades of nationalist opinion. Redmond excused his preliminary absence in the business of the Volunteer movement because, he claimed, he felt it premature: '[B]ut the effect of Sir Edward Carson's threats upon public opinion in England, the House of Commons, and the Government; the occurrences at the Curragh Camp, and the successful gun-running in Ulster virtually altered the position.'[96] The passage of Home Rule also transformed the situation, and gave Redmond further political collateral with which to act. Receiving daily congratulatory notes on his political triumph from Ireland, America and further abroad,[97] Redmond argued that all of Ireland be represented by the addition of his nominees – men nominated by the Irish Party and in sympathy with it.

A second letter from Redmond appeared in the press on 13 June; it was more dictatorial in tone than the first. The majority of the provisional committee were shocked at Redmond's letters in the press; the majority being ignorant of the communication between MacNeill and Redmond that had occurred since May. Even Hobson, who was fully aware of the negotiations, confessed that the ultimatum 'came on us like a bombshell'.[98] The press reported that the provisional committee accepted Redmond's ultimatum, 'under a deep and painful sense of responsibility', and as a 'lesser evil' to division.[99] This lamentation of course neglects the overwhelmingly positive response that came from various county centres and which praised Redmond's control and greater Party influence within the Irish Volunteers.[100]

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[95] Hobson, 'A short history of the Irish Volunteers' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, Ms, 12,177); Martin, *Irish Volunteers*, pp 141-3.
[96] 'Mr Redmond's letter', *Freeman's Journal*, 10 June 1914.
[97] 'Remarkable tributes', *Freeman's Journal*, 11 June 1914.
[98] Hobson, 'Foundation', pp 45-6.
[99] *Freeman's Journal*, 17 June 1914; *Irish Independent*, 17 June 1914; Hobson, 'Short history' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, MS, 12,177); 'The provisional committee submits but protests' in Martin, *Irish Volunteers*, p. 143.
[100] 'Co. Cork speaks', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 June 1914; 'Tributes to Mr Redmond', *Freeman's Journal*, 18 June 1914.

Conceding that an alternative Irish Volunteer organisation would be 'useless to its friends and the laughing stock of its enemies',[101] the provisional committee capitulated to Redmond's demands.[102] Although this provided much public acclamation, in private the approval of Redmond's nominees brought the wrath of the I.R.B. supreme council upon the heads of its members on the provisional committee. Hobson was labelled a traitor; his excuses being unacceptable to Tom Clarke who queried: 'How much did the Castle pay you?'[103] Hobson's stature in the I.R.B. never recovered.[104] Matthew Kelly has placed this acquiescence in perspective. He argues that viewing the addition of Redmond's nominees as a betrayal on the part of Hobson 'would be to take a very narrow view of I.R.B. strategy.'[105] Nevertheless, a minority within the provisional committee that had opposed the integration of Redmond's nominees made their views public on 17 June, appealing to their adherents within the organisation 'to sink their personal feelings' and carry on in an effort to make the Volunteers an efficient force.[106]

Nationalist diversity had been a staple of the Irish Volunteers since its inception, and provided a rallying cry in the interests of cohesion and cooperation. The forced integration of Redmond's nominees, however, changed the dyad of loyalty and participation – initially identified as those in favour of, or against Home Rule – into a triad. Ulster unionists, conservatives and the U.V.F. remained opposed to the implementation of Home Rule, and represented a single component. The Irish Volunteers, however, represented two factions within a single component: those in favour of and those opposed to Irish Party influence and control. Redmond's letters to the press and the drama which ensued therefore exposed much more than the inadequate representation of the Dublin-led provisional committee. As discussed below in greater detail, those in favour of the Party

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[101] Hobson, 'Short history' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, Ms, 12,177); 'The provisional committee submits but protests' in Martin, Irish Volunteers, p. 143.

[102] The 25 men added to the provisional committee were Right Rev. Mgr. A. Ryan, Very Rev. Canon Murphy, Very Rev. J. McCafferty, Rev. F.J. O'Hare, William Redmond, Joseph Devlin, T.J. Condon, Lorcan Sherlock (Lord Mayor of Dublin), Daniel O'Donnell (The Mayor of Sligo), Michael Governey, James Creed Meredith, John Nugent, John Donovan, John Gaynor, P. Murphy, J.P. Cuvley, Joseph Hutchinson, C.J. Kenny, Stephen Hand, J.J. Scarmell, J.F. Dalton, Martin Burke, J.F. Small, George Boyle and Dr. F.J. Madden. Hobson, 'Short history' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, MS 12,177). Although Redmond had pushed very hard for his inclusion throughout May, Michael Davitt was absent from the twenty-five men nominated.

[103] Hobson, 'Foundation', p. 50.

[104] Bulmer Hobson (B.M.H., W.S. 30).

[105] Kelly, 'A Machiavellian moment?', p. 80.

[106] Initially dissenting, on 17 June eight members of the provisional committee, Eamon Ceannt, Michael Judge, Con Colbert, Sean Fitzgibbon, Eamon Martin, Patrick Pearse, Sean MacDermott and Piaras Béaslaí conceded to the addition of Redmond's nominees. Tierney, *MacNeill*, p. 140; Hobson, 'Short history' (N.L.I., MS 12,177); *Irish Independent*, 17 June 1914; Hobson, 'The provisional committee submits but protests', p. 143.

swarmed into the Volunteer ranks, quite often with no conception of the aims and objects of the movement or its ideal. The *Irish Volunteer* commented on this phenomenon: 'The growth of the movement has been so overwhelmingly rapid that some of the corps have not as yet a proper conception of the movement and their duties when they join.'[107] Several weeks later, the newspaper conceded that in all social movements there were bound to be undesirable elements, and declared, 'Let's have the fools':

> When the Volunteers were started they were so all embracing that it was quite natural to expect that as there is still a fairly large percentage of fools in the country that there should also be a percentage in the Volunteers. So the expectation is not disappointed and in one or two places we are informed that there is a split in the ranks. It would be giving malevolence in Ireland too much credit to believe that it is always successful in promoting dissension, so we can safely put down the present instances to sheer stupidity and change it.[108]

The provisional committee was not completely overrun by Party supporters, and still maintained the levers. O'Rahilly remained treasurer with Ceannt as his assistant, making access to funds impossible for those recently appointed.[109] Pearse spun the integration of Redmond's nominees to the advantage of the advanced nationalists. Arming the Volunteers remained his preoccupation:

> I do not regard the cause as lost – far from it. We all remain in the movement, and shall be watching to checkmate any attempt on Redmond's part to prevent us from arming. This is the real danger. The future of the movement depends on our remaining at our posts, to see that the Volunteers are a real army, not a stage army.[110]

Pearse's frustrations were nevertheless evident. Similar to the pre-arranged voting behaviour of Irish Party members at Westminster, Redmond's nominees on the provisional committee acted as a solid block, at times carrying on with unproductive motions and

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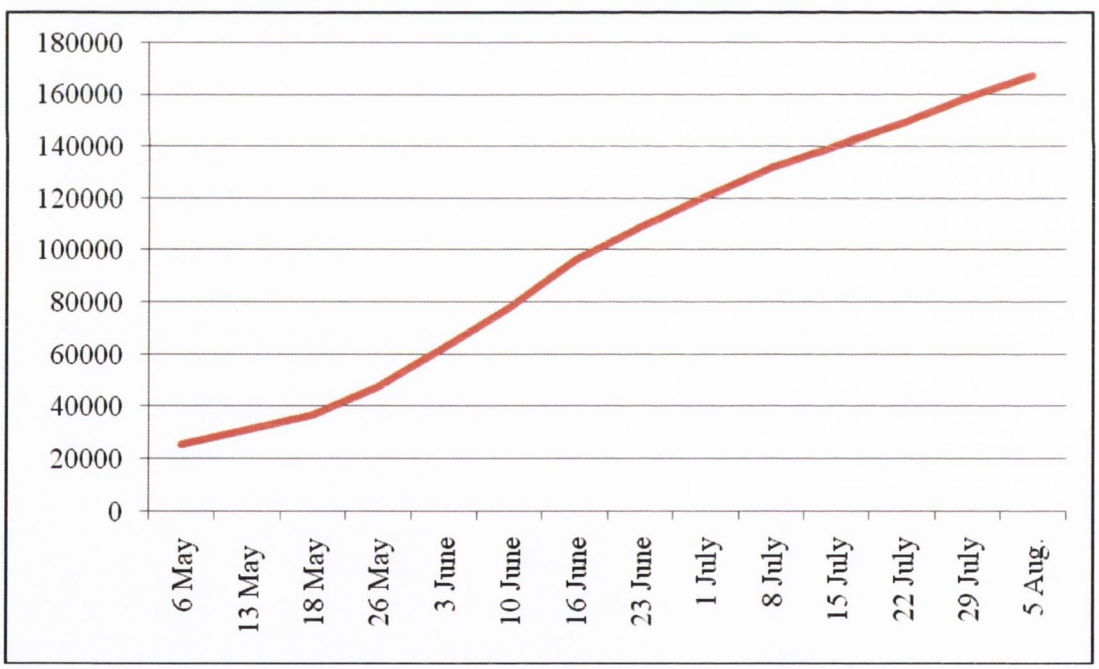
[107] *Irish Volunteer*, 27 June 1914.
[108] Ibid., 18 July 1914.
[109] Tierney, *MacNeill*, p. 141.
[110] Patrick Pearse to Seán McGarrity, 19 June 1914, in Cronin, *McGarrity papers*, pp 42-3.

disjointed business.[111] 'I personally have ceased to be any use on the Committee', remarked Pearse:

> I can never carry a single point. I am now scarcely allowed to speak. The moment I stand up there are cries of "put the question," etc after the last meeting I had half determined to resign, but have decided to stick on a little longer in the hope of being useful in a later stage.[112]

Although the provisional committee was wrought with internal tensions following the addition of Redmond's nominees, the endorsement of the Irish Party greatly boosted rank-and-file membership in the Irish Volunteers.[113] There were an estimated 150,000 Volunteers by mid-July 1914.[114] The chart below reveals the estimated growth of the Irish Volunteers between May and August 1914, returns which were collected by Assistant Under-Secretary Joseph Brennan.

Chart 1.1: Growth of the Irish Volunteers, May-August 1914



[111] Tierney, *MacNeill*, p. 141.
[112] Cronin, *McGarrity papers*, pp 48-9.
[113] The growth of the Volunteers also reflected enthusiasm for the passage of Home Rule and the chairmanship of Redmond, as numbers soared following June 1914. This enthusiasm may be loosely associated with the 'sunshine soldiers' that joined the Irish Republican Army after the Truce of 1921.
[114] Lee, *Ireland*, pp 20-1; *Irish Independent*, 8 July 1914. The *Irish Times* puts the estimate at 153,000, showing an increase of 38,600 men in less than a month. 'Table showing total number of branches and total number of members as set forth in weekly reports, 6 May-16 Dec. 1914' (N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS 15,176).

This impressive growth was naturally reflected in the branch structure of the Volunteers; the number of branches increased over 600 per cent over the same period.[115]

What was the impact of the Irish Party on Volunteer participation in individual counties? While there is no record of Volunteer activity in R.I.C. country reports for the months of May and June 1914, reports from July provide a variety of positive evidence. Leitrim, King's county (Offaly) and Donegal all reported Volunteer activity as spreading rapidly and numbers increasing. King's county in particular boasted exponential growth; its Volunteers had increased from 200 in March, to 1,500 in June to 3,100 in July.[116] The R.I.C. in Cork, West Riding, considered July to be a failure for policing and efforts to curb Volunteer growth. Over 2,000 men had joined the Volunteers in July, an increase of twenty branches. In Galway, East Riding, the Volunteer movement was observed as having 'taken on an entirely new aspect':

> All sections of Nationalists – R.C. Clergymen included – are now enthusiastically supporting the movement, and some of the local gentry in Athenry and Mountbellew district who were formerly looked upon as Unionists are foremost members and leaders in it and have subscribed large [amounts] of money toward the purchase of arms and equipment for the men.[117]

Membership increased in Galway, East Riding, from twenty-eight to forty-nine branches, or from 2,704 to 4,414 members in July.[118] In Ulster, the Belfast Volunteers remained comparatively small, boasting 2,100 members, but were very active. In Tyrone, however, the Irish Volunteers outnumbered their U.V.F. counterparts – over 8,600 Irish Volunteers stood opposite 4,300 Ulster Volunteers. They were simultaneously described as being 'backward in drill', yet 'enthusiastic and more anxious to perfect themselves.'[119]

Activity in counties Dublin, Kerry and Roscommon increased following the landing of arms at Howth in late July, and the subsequent shootings at Bachelor's Walk. Kerry Volunteers were observed as being particularly embittered by the incident, and more

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[115] The number of Irish Volunteer branches recorded on 6 May was 191; this increased to 1,424 by 5 August. This yields a total increase of 645.5 per cent. 'Table showing total number of branches and total number of members as set forth in weekly reports', 6 May-16 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS 15,176). Numerous witness statements also document the increase in Volunteers due to the influence of the Irish Party. See particularly Michael Leahy (B.M.H., W.S. 94) and Denis Lyons (B.M.H., W.S. 73).
[116] County Inspectors' reports, King's county, March, June, July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/92-4).
[117] County Inspector's report, Galway, E.R., July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[118] Ibid.
[119] County Inspector's report, Tyrone, July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).

than ever determined to acquire arms of their own. Roscommon was similarly stimulated. The County Inspector, G.B. Ruttledge, wrote of the effects of the gun-running and shooting in Dublin: 'Nothing I know of has stirred them more for a considerable time and it has supplied any lack of earnestness in the I.N. Volunteers movement that may have existed.'[120]

Redmond's assumption of the Volunteers was not well-received in all cases. In Antrim, for example, a split occurred with Sinn Féin members withdrawing their support for the Volunteers despite the best efforts of the local clergy to promote unity. Captain J.R. White, an influential Volunteer organiser in Derry who had suggested the previous dispute between the Irish Party and provisional committee be resolved by allowing them to massacre one another, resigned his position in July.[121]

At the other end of the country, nationalists in Tipperary, South Riding, were cited as blaming Redmond for not securing Home Rule in its original form, but instead agreeing to its modification and the temporary exclusion of Ulster counties.[122] Despite providing great gains in the ranks, the influence of Redmond and the Irish Party failed to provide a panacea to the numerous local personal and political divisions that existed within the Irish Volunteers. Neither the passage of Home Rule, the amalgamation of the Irish Party into the Irish Volunteers nor the Buckingham Palace Conference, which was held in late July in an effort to compromise on Ulster exclusion from Home Rule, was able to fully unite nationalist Ireland.[123] Although MacNeill and others on the provisional committee had been marginalised, they reserved their dissidence rather than pursue actions that would result in division. Fresh occasion for unity would present itself in the form of national calamity.

III. Division

Irish contribution toward the British war effort would be interpreted by many Volunteers as simply the price of Home Rule – loyalty in exchange for legislation. Roger Casement, expressing the views of the more cynical faction of the Volunteer provisional committee,

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[120] County Inspectors' reports, Dublin, Kerry, Roscommon, July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[121] J.R. White to Berkeley, 16 June 1914 (N.L.I., George Berkeley papers, MS 7,879); *Irish Independent*, 9 July 1914.
[122] County Inspector's report, Tipperary, S.R., July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[123] For interviews and correspondence surrounding the Buckingham Palace Conference see John Redmond's interview with King George V, July 1914; King George to Asquith, 18 July 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,188/14); Redmond to Asquith, 5 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,520); Kieran Rankin, 'Ireland on the dissecting table: the Buckingham Palace Conference of July 1914 and the search for "statutory Ulster"', 28 Feb. 2007 (Centre for contemporary Irish history seminar, Trinity College Dublin).

described Irish enlistment to secure Home Rule as a promissory note 'payable after death'.[124] Redmond perceived the situation differently. Following a brief but monumental speech before the House of Commons on 3 August, in which he announced that Britain could remove its troop reserves from Ireland allowing her defence to be taken up jointly by her Volunteers, Redmond immediately responded to MacNeill, who had requested a meeting to discuss Volunteer policy during the war.[125] 'Anything in the nature of disagreement with this [his/Redmond's] declaration would split the country and be fatal to the Home Rule Cause', he explained. He also considered withholding Irish participation in the war until Home Rule had been given Royal Assent as 'suicidal', and 'ruinous' to the Irish political position: 'As things stand now, our position has been improved by the foreign complications.'[126] Conversely, Maurice Moore, who had been appointed Chief Inspector of the Irish Volunteers, advised that Volunteers who were also army reservists be advised not to report for duty until instructed.[127] Two days later, on 5 August, Redmond communicated his outlook to the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, referring to the war as 'the greatest opportunity that has ever occurred in the history of Ireland to win the Irish people to loyalty to the Empire'.[128] Coincidentally, Edward Carson was at the same time in contact with Major-General Henry Wilson, who had quietly supported the Curragh 'mutiny', about offering the Ulster Volunteers to the War Office for service.[129]

Further explanation of pre-existing conditions for division are provided through contemporary observation. In his history of the Irish Volunteers, Bulmer Hobson stated that the war had presented Redmond with a new situation:

> He had hitherto been an unwelcomed supplement begging for the passage of his bill at the hands of a reluctant Government. The war transformed him in a day into a courted and necessary ally whose support must be won and held by the English politicians let his price be what it may.[130]

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[124] Casement to unknown, 28 September 1914 (N.L.I., Florence O'Donoghue papers, MS 31,131).
[125] *Irish Independent*, 4 Aug. 1914; *The parliamentary debates*, fifth series, *House of Commons*, lxv (20 July-10 Aug. 1914), pp 1828-9; Private, unmarked correspondence, 24 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 22,184).
[126] Redmond to MacNeill, 3 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,204). MacNeill later expressed to the *Leitrim Observer* a 'complete readiness to take joint action with the Ulster Volunteer Force for the defence of Ireland.' *Leitrim Observer*, 8 Aug. 1914.
[127] Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life 1891-1918* (Dublin, 1999), p. 147, quoted from Denis Gwynn, *Life of John Redmond*, (1932), p. 353.
[128] John Redmond to Asquith, 5 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,520).
[129] Edward Carson to Henry Wilson, 4 Aug. 1914 (I.W.M., Henry Wilson papers, HHW 2/73/40).
[130] Hobson, 'Short history', (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, MS 12,177).

As discussed in greater detail in chapter two, in addition to making Home Rule a reality in Ireland, Redmond's price was the Government's recognition and maintenance of the integrity and individuality of the Irish Volunteers as an armed force, whose duties during the war, he argued, should be ostensibly defensive. Redmond believed, as did many, that the war would be brief, and that the Volunteers's expression of solidarity through native defence would form a solid base of trust between the British Government and the Irish nation. He also recognised that Irish enlistment would be required; its form, method and celebration soon became points of contention between Redmond, Asquith and Kitchener.[131] Nevertheless, as J.J. Lee has identified, little sympathy for nationalist Ireland could be expected from the wider British public if it remained silent or neutral on the issue of enlistment – particularly in the face of Ulster's eager participation.[132]

Many Volunteers enthusiastically supported the war while at the same time awaiting Redmond's guidance. Posed with the question 'Are you going to join an Irish division in Lord Kitchener's New Army?', many responded: 'We'll do whatever Mr Redmond says.'[133] This mentality endured. When three brothers, William, Charles and Leopold Maples were asked in April 1915 why they chose to enlist they replied, 'Because Mr Redmond said that this was as much Ireland's fight as England's, and we want to fight for Ireland!'[134]

Maurice Moore also received notices of support influenced by Redmond's speech before the Commons. One such endorsement came from N.J. Museran, a former captain with the London Artillery, on 7 August:

> After reading Mr Redmond's speech I think it right to help the Irish National Volunteers in any way I can ... This terrible war forced on us by a treacherous and overbearing despot may be a blessing in disguise and bind Irishmen in one common brotherhood.[135]

Charles O'Toole also wrote to Moore, articulating his belief in the war as a unifying event in Ireland through poetry:

> So from o'er the world's oceans, come O's and come Mac's,

[131] Redmond to Asquith, 8 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/4).
[132] Lee, *Ireland*, p. 21.
[133] Martin, *Irish Volunteers*, p. 147
[134] *Irish Independent*, 7 Apr. 1915; *Irish Times*, 7 Jan. 1915.
[135] N.J. Museran to Maurice Moore, 7 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6/iii).

> Leave your creeds and your factions upon your way back.
> Remember the people who wish you apart,
> Love only themselves, and not you, in their hearts.
> Come together from North, and from South, East and West,
> Forget all past quarrels and you will be blest.
> Acsuhla, machree, my heart beats for thee;
> Erin, dear Erin, my heart beats for thee.[136]

Individual voices were a microcosm of wider adherence; nearly 8,500 men joined the Irish Volunteers following Redmond's speech.[137]

Signs of agreement and conformity with Redmond's pledge of defence amongst different Volunteer companies were daily published. Many pledges of support came very close to open endorsements for unbridled enlistment. For instance, 300 Rathdowney Volunteers wrote to the *Irish Independent* in response to Redmond's speech before the Commons, claiming their new company motto was: 'Your off and England's flag success.' Similarly, Carrickmacross Volunteers 'unanimously and enthusiastically agreed to take up arms for England, in accordance with your offer to the Government'.[138]

The prospect of coastal defence stirred excitement as well as indignation. Many Volunteer companies maintained that their vigilance in home defence would be undertaken in the defence of Ireland alone. The south Derry Volunteers made such a stand, and stated that they

> would not defend one tyranny against another – that was to say, they would not defend Ireland for Dublin Castle, but of a native Govt. They would ... defend their shores under John Redmond and the Green Flag; but they would not be turned into militiamen to be generalled [sic] by Roberts and Kitchener. ... If they sacrificed their independence, and allowed this movement to be controlled by the Govt. and the War Office, their national usefulness would be ended forever.[139]

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[136] 'Ireland's hope', Charles O'Toole, c.1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,554/4).
[137] 'Table showing the total number of branches and total number of members of the Irish Volunteers set forth in weekly reports', c. 1914 (N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS 26,176).
[138] *Irish Independent*, 7 Aug. 1914. For further professions of admiration for Redmond and his leadership see *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Aug. 1914.
[139] J. Mackey Wilson to Kitchener, enclosing a cutting from the *Irish Independent* of same date, 19 Aug. 1914 (Copy of T.N.A. PRO 30/57/60, Lord Kitchener papers, in N.L.I., MS 21,525); Diarmuid Coffey (B.M.H., W.S. 1,248).

The rapid expansion of the Irish Volunteers throughout July 1914 prevented any feasible system of control or discipline being established within its ranks. This difficulty increased during the early period of the war when, as P.S. Doyle recalled, 'volunteering became suddenly fashionable.'[140] Despite the efforts of Redmond and other Party leaders to withhold the participation of the Volunteers as political capital, enthusiasm for the war prevented the Irish Volunteers acting as a single block. David Fitzpatrick has commented on Irish enlistment in the British Army in similar terms of communal participation:

> What drove most recruits into the war-time forces, apart from a desire for adventure and subsidised international tourism, was loyalty to their friends and families. It is, therefore, not surprising that so many recruits had belonged to paramilitary organisations, fraternities, sporting clubs, schools or universities, where each member felt under strong psychological pressure to conform to group expectations.[141]

Perception of the war varied in Ireland. Michael McKeogh, a P.O.W. who later joined Casement's Irish Brigade, cynically reflected upon the duplicity of the Irish, 'tens of thousands of [which] drank the honeyed cup so readily handed to them by their leaders'.[142] These and many other thousands were observed flocking to recruiting centres 'more enthusiastic for England, singing and playing God Save the King'.[143] Even children were caught up in the general excitement. Thomas King Moylan observed near Westland Row,

> A body of ragged urchins, with paper cocked hats and a few rags on sticks came charging into Henrietta Street at the head of an "army" composed of equally ragged imps, wearing bandoliers composed of corks tied with string. "Soldiers" is the one and only game of all the youth in the City at present.[144]

Perceived and interpreted in various ways, the Great War presented an ideological crisis within the Irish Volunteer movement and eventually split its ranks.[145] In this

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[140] P.S. Doyle (B.M.H., W.S. 155).
[141] David Fitzpatrick, 'Home front and everyday life' in John Horne (ed.), *Our war* (Dublin, 2008), p. 134.
[142] Michael McKeogh, 'Draft memoir, 24 Apr. 1927-9 July 1932 (U.C.D.A., P128/6).
[143] Thomas King Moylan, 'A Dubliner's diary, 5 Aug. 1914-6 Apr. 1918', 6 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., MS 9,620).
[144] Ibid., 5 Aug. 1914.
[145] Sudir Kakar has introduced analysis on the effects of contemporary crisis on the historical development of a group, and the shaping of individual identity it produces. Sudir Kakar, *Identity and adulthood* (India, 1979), pp ix-x.

Redmond played a central role, though one less severe than history has critically judged. It has been shown that the conglomerate membership of the Irish Volunteers provided fertile ground for disagreement and division well before the addition of Irish Party members. The outbreak of the Great War significantly narrowed outlets for Volunteer participation – namely, defensive duty of Ireland or, as will be seen in chapter two, enlistment in the British Army. Real, tangible outlets replaced vague military policies of acquiring arms and forming fours; speeches reiterating the defensive and unifying ideals of the Volunteers were superseded by highly-publicised, celebrated calls by national leaders for Ireland to stand with the great nations of the world against tyranny and barbarism. A stark, physical division within the Volunteers was thus forced, not merely by the suggestions of Redmond, but by the opportunity to fulfil these duties presented by the war.

Redmond made numerous inspections of the Irish Volunteers following the outbreak of the war, beginning with 3,000 Volunteers at Maryborough (Portlaoise), Queen's county (Laois), on 15 August.[146] One month later he released a statement through the Press Association identifying why the war was being fought, why Ireland should participate and how they should do so. In what was contemporarily referred to as his 'manifesto', Redmond argued that the war in Europe was 'a war for high ideals of human government and international relations', and that Ireland would be 'false in her history' if she did not share the burden of sacrifice. Irish participation should be secured, he argued, because the fate of France, 'our kindred country ... and the chief nation of the powerful Celtic race', hung in the balance.[147] He promoted the formation of an Irish brigade to fight in France, simultaneous to the training of Irishmen for home defence. The former necessary in order to maintain the cohesion of the Irish as a fighting unit, and the latter made possible by 'the change brought about in the relations of Ireland to the Empire by the events of the past three years', evident in the 'charter of liberty', Home Rule, that, he stated, 'in a few hours will be law of the land.' 'We have ever', Redmond stressed, 'when no ties of sympathy bound our country to Great Britain[,] always given our quota and more than our quota to the firing line, and we shall do so now.'[148]

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[146] *Irish Independent*, 15, 17 Aug. 1914.

[147] Andrew Oldenquist has termed enlistment undertaken through such moral pressure as evidence of 'impartial patriotism'. As defined by Oldenquist, 'An impartial patriot is someone who maintains that only such consideration [of moral right] count. ... Such patriots believe themselves to be objectionable, like ideal observers, and simply lucky that in their country is right, whereas I think that most of us believe that their underlying motives usually are pure loyalty and their reasons rationalisations.' Andrew Oldenquist, 'Loyalties' in *The Journal of Philosopy* lxxix, no. 4 (Apr. 1982), p. 183.

[148] *Irish Independent*, 17 Sept. 1914.

Although criticised in some circles,[149] Redmond's manifesto highlighted an important point: the passage of Home Rule would necessitate Irish contribution to the war effort. Sir William Hutcheson Poe, who had been involved in talks with Redmond, Kitchener and Asquith regarding both Irish recruiting and a scheme for Irish defence, gently reminded the Irish leader of this reality in an open letter to the *Southern Star* following the initial inspection at Maryborough:

> It must, indeed, be gratifying to Mr Redmond to see the splendid response which his offer has evoked from the National Volunteers, who, from one length of Ireland to the other, have come forward as one man, in this, the hour of our Country's danger, to uphold the honour of the British flag, and to testify, as their fore-fathers have done on many a hard-fought field, the loyalty to the Empire, of which they form a part.[150]

Displays of loyalty through enlistment were considered *fait accompli* by other nations that exercised self-government within the Empire, as well as colonial protectorates. This was most aptly expressed by personal letters and foreign congratulatory notices published after Irish Home Rule had received royal assent. Writing to Redmond on 19 September one commentator, George Michael Brown, conceded that

> Home Rule in my country of Canada brought peace and tranquillity, and out of it has grown an unshakable loyalty to the British Empire. So has it been in Australia, and today we find South Africa fighting shoulder to shoulder with us; so it will be with Ireland.[151]

Irish leaders from Toronto also cabled Redmond, 'warmly endorsing his appeal to the Irish to answer Lord Kitchener's call for recruits.'[152] Other 'meetings of rejoicing' were held throughout the United States, mainly in cities which contained a high concentration of

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[149] John Sweetman to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 19 Sept. 1914.
[150] *Southern Star*, 22 Aug. 1914.
[151] George Michael Brown to Redmond, 19 Sept. 1914, in *Southern Star*, 26 Sept. 1914. Canadian home rule was established in 1867 through the British North America Act, which consolidated the colonies of Canada into a single political entity. Canada remained part of the British Empire, and acted alongside Britain in foreign affairs, but retained control of its domestic business. A liaison in the form of a governor-general was also established to maintain ties.
[152] *Irish Independent*, 21 Sept. 1914. Although this notice appears the day after Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge, it is highly doubtful that its message was influenced by Redmond. Its sentiments, therefore, are independent of the events at Woodenbridge.

Irish, such as New York, Chicago, Boston and San Francisco. Following the news of the enactment of Home Rule they encouraged the Irish back home 'to join the colours and do their fully duty by England' in the war.[153]

Despite Redmond's speech before the Commons on 3 August and his published manifesto on Ireland's duty in the war on 17 September, his brief, impromptu speech delivered at Woodenbridge, County Wicklow, on 20 September, was interpreted as a spontaneous and illicit call to arms and has since been identified throughout Irish historiography as *the* catalyst to the formal division of the Irish Volunteers. How did this speech – delivered to 500 men of the East Wicklow Volunteers, and observed by approximately 2,000 others – differ from others?

First, Redmond was not alone at Woodenbridge. He was accompanied by other Volunteer personalities, notably Maurice Moore, Captain Fitzroy Hemphill, Captain Donelan, J.T. Donovan and Dr Ryan. Although not having prepared a speech, Redmond congratulated the Volunteers on their hard work toward becoming efficient soldiers. 'But efficient for what?', he asked:

> The interests of Ireland as a whole are at stake in this war. This war is undertaken in defence of the highest principles of religion, morality and right, and it would be a disgrace for ever to our country, a reproach to her manhood, and a denial of the lessons of her history, if young Irishmen confined their efforts to remaining at home to defend the shores of Ireland form an unlikely invasion and shrinking from the duty of proving upon the field of battle that gallantry and courage which have distinguished your race all through its history. ... Go on drilling and make yourselves efficient for the work, and then account yourselves as men, not only in Ireland itself, but wherever the firing line extends in defence of right, of freedom and religion in this war.[154]

The speech was met with resounding cheers.

Although both the original manifesto of the Irish Volunteers and Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge exalted sacrifice, recalled historic precedents and appealed to Irish manliness, the circumstances under which they were delivered vary too greatly to permit direct comparison. Much had changed in Ireland since November 1913; Irish

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[153] *Irish Independent*, 22 Sept. 1914.
[154] *Irish Independent*, 21 Sept. 1914.

freedom, and the means required to maintain it, had been popularly altered by the perceived reality of Home Rule and participation in the war that would guarantee and secure it.[155] The almost immediately published response of the provisional committee following the Woodenbridge speech, entitled 'Manifesto to the Irish Volunteers', therefore suggests opportunism rather than genuine reaction.[156] Their grievances were nevertheless levelled directly at Redmond and the Irish Party. The addition of Redmond's twenty-five nominees to the provisional committee, the Irish Party's consent that Ulster would be appeased through exclusion from Home Rule, and the off-the-cuff enlistment policy outlined at Woodenbridge formed the basis of why, according to the signatories of the manifesto, 'Mr Redmond is no longer entitled, through his nominees, to any place in the administration and guidance of the Irish Volunteer organisation.'[157]

The Volunteer split that followed was welcomed by many – including those in the Irish Party – as an opportunity to clear the air, and to define the movement and its objectives along clearer, more definite grounds.[158] Redmond and what were termed the Irish National Volunteers retained the vast majority of men and equipment; MacNeill and the Irish Volunteers could claim only a fraction of support, roughly 10,000 men.

Early indications revealed that Redmond had saved face following the split, and that by equating the peace, stability and freedom of Ireland with an allied victory he had drawn tighter the various strings of popular opinion. Although falling very close to Redmond's own constituency, and thus hardly representative of nationalist Ireland as a whole, the professions of Wicklow Volunteers at Aughrim following the split were no doubt shared by many throughout Ireland:

> We are ready to forfeit our lives in our country's cause. But owing to the gravity of the issues involved we can undertake to give implicit obedience to only a Chief

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[155] Although Redmond had returned from Holyhead on the morning of 20 September, his last available correspondence with both Birrell and Asquith gives evidence of his stubborn refusal to commit the Volunteers to the war effort. Redmond to Birrell, 9 Sept. 1914, (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,169/4).

[156] The twenty signatories to the 'Manifesto to the Irish Volunteers' dated 24 Sept. 1914 were Eoin MacNeill, The O'Rahilly, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Piaras Béaslaí, Michael Judge, Peter Paul Macken, Sean Mac Giobuin, Patrick Pearse, Padraic O'Riain, Bulmer Hobson, Eamonn Martin, Conchubhair O'Colbaird, Eamon Ceannt, Sean MacDiarmada, Seamus O'Conchubhair, Liam Mellows, L. Colm O'Lochlainn, Liam Ua Gogan and Peter White. Casement was in America at the time. 'Manifesto to the Irish Volunteers' in *The Irish Review*, iv, no. 41 (Sept. – Nov. 1914), pp 281-6.

[157] Ibid., p. 282.

[158] *National Volunteer*, 17 Oct. 1914.

> duly authorised to speak and act for Ireland. At present there is but one such[:] John Redmond.[159]

Conversely, Redmond suffered perhaps the harshest personal attacks since the fall of Parnell. Separatists and advanced nationalists rejected Redmond's formula of Irish loyalty – that which equated enlistment and the success of the Allies with Irish freedom. Even before the split, the *Irish Volunteer* spoke plainly against such precepts:

> Our flag is green, and any man who cheers for another flag before he has done his utmost to have his own float over a free nation is a traitor. Any man who cheers the flag of our oppressor before they have made restitution to the nation is doubly a traitor.[160]

The representation of the Volunteer split in such stark, black and white terms is also apparent in many witness statements left to the Bureau of Military History. Although hindsight and popular perceptions no doubt helped to shape a uniform narrative of this period, it is still important to note witness' insistence on loyalty when describing the Volunteer split. Thomas Furlong (Kilkenny), Joseph Kenny (south Dublin), Frank Hardiman (Galway) and Patrick Garvey (Tralee) all commented on those who 'remained loyal' to the Volunteers.[161] Furlong stated that men remained loyal to the executive; Kenny that they remained loyal 'to the original Volunteer pledge.'[162] In the same vein, Seamus Doyle (Dublin) identified the small fraction of men who 'remained true to the Irish Volunteers',[163] while P.S. Doyle (Dublin) said of the aftermath of the split: 'It was now that the *real* Volunteer movement' again emerged.[164] [Emphasis added] Such evidence not only highlights underlying ideological division within the Volunteer movement, it emphasises the importance of allegiance in the Irish mind during the period. This was not reserved for advanced nationalists alone, as the numerous professions of personal allegiance to Redmond following the split attest. In some Volunteer companies those who spoke against Redmond were harassed. Michael Leahy was struck by a projectile during a

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[159] *Irish Independent*, 1 Oct. 1914.
[160] *Irish Volunteer*, 22 Aug. 1914.
[161] Thomas Furlong (B.M.H., W.S. 513); Joseph Kenny (B.M.H., W.S. 332); Frank Hardiman (B.M.H., W.S. 406); Patrick Garvey (B.M.H., W.S. 1011).
[162] Joseph Kenny (B.M.H., W.S. 332).
[163] Seamus Doyle (B.M.H., W.S. 166).
[164] P.S. Doyle (B.M.H., W.S. 155).

meeting in Cork when he attempted to speak against the Volunteers joining the British Army. 'We were jeered and hissed,' he recalled, 'and barely escaped being beaten up.'[165]

Following the split, Redmond was identified and unapologetically branded a traitor by the Irish Volunteers and their supporters.[166] A 'ballad of European history' sang out: 'J is for John Redmond and Judas as well, Betraying the Irish to Empire and Hell.'[167] The propaganda of advanced nationalists held tight to the notion that Redmond had betrayed Ireland. A satirical poem published in *The Cork Celt* was typical:

> Oh! Paddy dear, and did you hear, the news that's going round,
> The Green Flag's a back number, everywhere on Irish ground,
> Our trusty Irish leader flies the English Union Jack,
> But God help our wives and mothers, they are mostly wearin' black.
> The Irish race gets pride and place on French and Belgian plains,
> Although the English Parliament has hanged Home Rule in chains,
> For Johnny Red has plainly said, the Irish Volunteers,
> Should go to France and fight beside the British Grenadiers.[168]

The division of the Irish Volunteers in autumn of 1914 released pressure which had been building since the movement's inception the previous year. While the addition of Redmond's nominees may have diluted the 'purity' of the movement as idealised by a minority of physical force separatists, the outbreak of the Great War forced a parting of ways along more distinguishable paths. Rhetoric which had once described the Irish Volunteer movement as all-inclusive, and representative of the various shades of nationalist opinion, gave way to divisive jabs delivered from two distinct nationalist camps. Irish Volunteers were dubbed 'cranks' and extremists; Redmond's National Volunteers had 'taken the shilling' and were called Imperialists. Each faction would subsequently construct its own narrative of events which led to division; that of the Irish Volunteers dominates Irish historiography of the twentieth century. The total eclipse of the Irish Party by Sinn Féin following the general election of 1918 subsequently marginalised the influence of constitutional nationalists and their positive contribution to the formation and growth of the early Irish Volunteers.

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[165] Michael Leahy (B.M.H., W.S. 94).
[166] *Fianna Fail*, 26 Sept., 10 Oct. 1914.
[167] 'A ballad of European history', n.d. (N.L.I., Barton scrapbook, MS 5,637).
[168] *Cork Celt*, 17 Oct. 1914.

Conclusion

Disagreement, dissent and division within the Irish Volunteer movement should not been seen an anomaly, but as part of the maturation of Irish political and revolutionary identity. An analysis of the origins of the Irish Volunteers has provided a unique perspective of this phenomenon. Its very existence was owed to political division over the Home Rule Bill, and the reactions of Ulster unionists. Its 'richness' or 'amorphousness' in terms of members' outlooks contributed greatly to the organisation's vague definitions of freedom.[169] While it took several crisis points within the movement to fully expose fundamental differences, and thus allow a purge of the perceived 'disloyal' members, internal polarisation remained constant, due mainly to the various social, political and military elements that made up its membership.

The parting of Volunteers in late September 1914 can therefore be seen as a long-delayed division within the movement; one that, as Bulmer Hobson described, 'terminated the cause of the Irish Volunteers on the lines on which the movement had been originally planned.'[170] The division cleared the air of what were perceived by many within the movement as ideological fallacies, and ultimately allowed individual Volunteer companies to align themselves with Redmond and his ideals for participation, or with MacNeill. In either case, the vague definitions of patriotism, duty and loyalty to Ireland, though polarised between two camps, were eventually made clear following the split of the Irish Volunteers.

While a vast majority of Volunteers followed Redmond, support for his interpretation of Irish loyalty – that is, home defence and eventually enlistment – was not as uniform as contemporary observers have recorded. As alluded to above, Irish home defence was limited by the prerequisites of the War Office. Similarly, the initial surge of recruits from the Irish National Volunteers can be deconstructed and explained both by the number who were also reservists, general enthusiasm for the war and the passage of Home Rule. 'The mobilisation has however left us in a pinch', wrote Maurice Moore to Redmond in early August: 'it takes away in one swoop some 25,000 of our soldiers and most our instructors just when they are most wanted.'[171] George Berkeley wrote in a similar tone from Belfast:

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[169] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 85-6.
[170] Hobson, 'Short history' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, MS 12,177).
[171] Moore to Redmond, 4 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,207/7).

> I soon realised, however, that the war had practically crippled our Volunteers. As far as I can recollect we lost at least 700 men, between Reservists and enlistment, within the first ten days or so; there may have been many more. But what crippled our movement was the fact that many of the best men were called away from every part of the force.[172]

Historiography that has identified the erosion of the Irish National Volunteers as due to mass enlistment therefore provides only passing analysis.[173] Thousands enlisted, and thousands left the movement, but a vast majority remained Irish National Volunteers throughout the Great War. Their experiences, and the extent to which they adhered to Redmond's definition of loyalty, are the subjects of the next chapter.

[172] George Berkeley, 'Experiences in Belfast1914', ch. ix, 'War and peace', (N.L.I., George Berkeley papers, MS 7,880). For further insight on the Volunteers in Belfast, see John McCarthy (B.M.H., W.S. 883).
[173] Hobson, 'Short history' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, MS 12,177); James Kenny (B.M.H., W.S. 141).

CHAPTER TWO

CONDITIONAL LOYALTY: THE IRISH NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS

As introduced in the previous chapter, cultural and political organisations in Ireland at the turn of the twentieth century provided outlets for a variety of both unionist and nationalist sentiments. The Ulster and Irish Volunteer movements were perhaps most important; both provided an outlet for individuals to demonstrate on behalf of their perceived rights and political freedoms. For the Irish Volunteers, overlapping interests with other nationalist organisations, such as the Gaelic League or Irish Parliamentary Party, provided a ready-made base of support. Furthermore, the membership of the early Irish Volunteers was boosted by ideologically vague, overarching nationalist concepts, such as 'the defence of Irish freedoms'. In this sense loyalty to Ireland, and the means through which it could be exercised, were widely interpreted; the same factors which made this loyalty so identifiable also made it obscure.

It was not until the I.P.P. and its leader, John Redmond, took control of the Irish Volunteers that specific routes toward Irish freedom were defined and clearer concepts of Irish loyalty, and ways it could be exercised, were established. Redmond's influence and long-standing position as party leader and chief parliamentary agitator for Irish interests brought forth an enormous wave of previously withheld Volunteer support. Those who joined the movement following the intervention of the Irish Party did so with the reassurance that the Irish Volunteers had received the blessing of established national leaders. After June 1914 the Irish Volunteers ostensibly became a tool of the Irish Party. Their purpose, direction and duty were defined by their leaders, and invested in the single character of Redmond.

The outbreak of the Great War significantly narrowed definitions of Irish loyalty as articulated by the Irish Party, and afforded the Volunteers very little latitude through which this loyalty could be exercised. Redmond's role was central in this regard. The objects outlined in the Irish Volunteer manifesto in 1913, although vaguely defined, came into sharp contrast with Redmond's offer of home defence and suggestion of Irish enlistment for the British war effort. A disproportionate split in Volunteer ranks occurred shortly after the war began based on these directives.

This chapter will examine the Irish National Volunteers – the majority group that sided with Redmond – and the events that forced a reassessment of their loyalty to him and the constitutional movement during the Great War. It will do so by analysing the I.N.V. as

the vehicle for Redmond's definitions of loyalty, that is, home defence of Ireland during the war or enlistment in the British Army. Also, the policies of both the Irish Party and the War Office will be considered as factors which alienated the I.N.V. and its efforts during the war.

Historians have dutifully documented the brief history of the Irish National Volunteers. For many, however, the I.N.V. remain a mere sideshow to more dynamic events of the period. This is evident in the way narratives dealing with the I.N.V. often end following the outbreak of the Great War. There are others, however, who have highlighted some of the thematic arguments explored in this chapter. For instance, D. George Boyce and David Fitzpatrick have examined the decline in I.N.V. membership pre- and post-Rising.[1] Timothy Bowman has explored the relationship between Redmond, the I.N.V., home defence and enlistment in the British Army, noting the popular understanding that the National Volunteers would eventually form the basis of an Irish national army following the implementation of Home Rule.[2] In a political context, Michael Laffan and Michael Wheatley have identified the decline in support of the Irish Party to the passing of Home Rule, and how the war caused its machinery to become dormant.[3] In a similar context, Paul Bew and Diarmaid Ferriter have noted the political fallout that resulted from Redmond's failure to establish distinct I.N.V. divisions in the British Army, and his inability to negotiate a scheme for Irish home defence.[4] Finally, Kevin Kenny has reiterated the popular view that enlistment by the I.N.V. and Ulster Volunteers was seen as a declaration of loyalty to the empire in its time of need.[5] Though not unfamiliar to historians, the I.N.V. endured several crises that continually challenged their cohesion and their function as a public nationalist paramilitary organisation. The Volunteer split, Easter Rising and efforts at reorganisation throughout 1917 will all be examined in this regard.

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[1] D. George Boyce, 'A First World War transition: state and citizen in Ireland 1914-19' in D. George Boyce and Alan O'Day (eds), *Ireland in transition, 1867-1921* (London, 2004), pp 100-101; Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 98-9.

[2] Timothy Bowman, *Irish regiments in the Great War: discipline and morale* (Manchester, 2003), pp 62; 67-8.

[3] Michael Laffan, *The partition of Ireland 1911-1925* (Dundalk, 1983), p. 49; Michael Wheatley, '"These quiet days of peace": nationalist opinion before the home rule crisis, 1909-13' in Boyce and O'Day (eds), *Ireland in transition*, pp 57-75.

[4] Paul Bew, *The politics of enmity, 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 371; Ferriter, *Transition*, p. 129.

[5] Kevin Kenny, 'The Irish in the empire' in Kevin Kenny (ed), *Ireland and the British empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 109.

I. Redmond's definitions of loyalty

Redmond, though initially suspicious of the Irish Volunteer movement, by August 1914 possessed one of the greatest political bargaining chips in Irish history – a nationalist army of over 180,000 members. Like many, he was convinced that Ireland's interests, even as a self-governing nation, depended on the stability and survival of Britain.[6] The outbreak of war, therefore, proved fortuitous for Redmond and the Irish Party. 'Out of this situation', he explained, 'there may spring a result which will be good, not merely for the Empire, but for the future welfare and integrity of the Irish Nation'[7]

The extent to which Ireland would contribute to the war effort remained uncertain in August 1914. In order to maintain his national prominence and authority, Redmond had to satisfy three sectors of potential opposition: the Government which had passed Home Rule though had yet to implement it, unionists who opposed Home Rule and physically threatened its implementation, and the Irish Volunteers whose massive support had pressed the issue of Home Rule. Redmond would utilise the Volunteers as a tool to oblige all three. Rising before the House of Commons on 3 August, he defined the role of the Volunteers under his leadership, as well as the capacity in which they would act during the war. Highlighting the tradition of the Irish Volunteers, which stretched back to the late eighteenth century, Redmond suggested that the Government could withdraw their troop reserves from Ireland, and allow her shores to be defended from invasion by 'her armed sons' as she had done during the American Revolution. '[F]or this purpose', he announced, 'armed Nationalist Catholics in the South will be only too glad to join arms with the armed Protestant Ulstermen in the North.'[8]

The most immediate result of Redmond's speech was that it instituted a political truce, a *pax sacra*, between Irish and Ulster Volunteers. 'Mr Redmond's five minutes' speech and the immediate rally of all the representative, responsible, influential elements of Irish Nationalism to his declaration and his policy, removed the patriotic apprehension that was the mainstream of the Southern Unionist hesitation', wrote the *Athlone Weekly*.

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[6] Éoin P. Ó Caoimh, 'Redmond's change of policy, August-September, 1914', in F.X. Martin (ed.), *The Irish Volunteers 1913-1915, recollections and documents* (Dublin, 1963), pp 149-52. For additional evidence of moral pressure to enlist in the contemporary press, see *Daily Mail*, 7 Sept. 1915; *Irish Independent*, 4 Aug. 1914, 10 June, 7 Sept. 1915; *Irish Times*, 5 Jan. 1915.

[7] Private, unmarked correspondence, 24 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 22,184). Maurice Moore later weighed in on Redmond's gamble: 'The greatest political crisis of the world was in course of evolution, and might decide the fate of Ireland; no one would be sure if England would survive it; Mr Redmond thought she would, and that a victorious England would gratefully grant the freedom she had promised to Ireland.' Maurice Moore, 'A history of the Irish Volunteers, 1913-1917', unpublished manuscript, c. 1918 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/9).

[8] *The parliamentary debates*, fifth series, *House of Commons*, lxv (20th July-10th August, 1914), pp 1828-9.

'[I]t is plain now that we are in presence of one of the few golden opportunities presented in Irish history for the effective consolidation of the patriotic national feeling of Ireland with the larger Imperial patriotism.'[9] Addressing Volunteers in Queen's county, Sir Hutcheson Pöe declared: 'That speech has done more to compose our internal differences, to unite all Irishmen in a bond of friendship and goodwill, than could have been accomplished by years of agitation, or by a conference, however well intentioned.'[10] Neville Robinson, a professed unionist who had avoided the Volunteer movement completely, quite agreed. He believed Redmond's speech to have 'caused a great change in the view of the National Crisis to the Empire and Unionists ought to do what they can to train the volunteers to defend these shores.'[11] Maurice Moore, Inspector General of the Irish National Volunteers, described how men 'who had been lifelong Unionists ... came to my office, and begged to be enrolled among the Irish Volunteers.'[12] Needless to say, an Irishman's wartime duty, as loosely outlined by Redmond, was enthusiastically approved during the early weeks of the war by factions previously hostile to one another.

Not all parties saw the proposal of joint coastal defence in such a positive light. Following an interview on 5 August with the Prime Minister, Herbert Asquith, Redmond observed Edward Carson as being 'in an absolutely irreconcilable mood about everything.'[13] Despite Carson's threats to reignite controversy surrounding Home Rule, the Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell, and Asquith assured Redmond that a solution would be forthcoming.[14] It was apparent that outright unity would also be resisted from nationalist corners. Horace Plunkett warned Redmond of the irrelevance of a world war to certain sections of nationalist Ireland:

> There are, of course, men into whose souls the iron of past oppression has entered so deeply that even a European war must be thrown into the *moratorium* of things which cannot be considered until the Ireland to which they belong reaps the fruit of the long struggle they have endured. There are also men to whom any change in the constitutional arrangement of today is sacrilege.[15]

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[9] *Athlone Weekly*, n.d. (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,215/2/A).
[10] Ibid.
[11] Neville Robinson to Maurice Moore, 5 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/3).
[12] Moore, 'Account of the Irish Volunteers', ch. 14 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 8489/5).
[13] Redmond to Asquith, 5 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,520).
[14] Birrell to Redmond, 12, 19 Aug. 1914; 8, 15 Sept. 1914; Asquith to Redmond, Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,520).
[15] Horace Plunkett to Redmond, 12 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,221).

Plunkett advised Redmond to be particularly wary of offering political concessions to unionists, and to secure a decisive conclusion to the Home Rule question as soon as possible. It was the latter, he emphasised, 'which is your supreme duty to get settled in one way and in one way only.'[16]

Home Rule became law on 18 September, but was initially suspended for the duration of the war or for twelve months, whichever was less, and subject to further possible deferral.[17] Despite provisions, this provided further evidence to the Irish public that freedom had been won, and that Redmond had delivered it. This, in addition to the growth of the Volunteer movement, provided Redmond with a powerful mandate. He utilised this influence in the early months of the war to secure a tangible outlet for the loyalty of Irish nationalists – home defence by the Volunteers.

From the onset of the war Redmond faced the reality that nationalists would enlist regardless of his consent. This severely weakened his position when negotiating a scheme of home defence with Asquith, Lord Kitchener and the War Office. As D. George Boyce has observed: 'Redmondism and recruitment would stand and fall together.'[18] Asquith recognised 'with deep gratitude the loyal help which Ireland offered in this grave hour', and genuinely sought ways in which the Volunteers might be applied.[19] Redmond insisted, however, that the Volunteers were to be utilised for domestic defence, and not to be drafted overseas.[20] He baited the Government with recruits in exchange for their trust: 'If this were done there would be such a wave of enthusiasm as would lead to a very large body of recruits joining the new force which is being raised.' If this were not done, Redmond warned, the new-found loyalty of the Irish nationalists toward Britain would be lost and, he claimed, 'the people generally will be disheartened and hurt.'[21]

Sir Arthur Paget, Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, along with Colonel Williams and Captain Webb of the War Office, met with Moore and Captain Fitzroy Hemphill in early August at the Royal Hospital to discuss proposals for utilising the Volunteers in Ireland. According to Moore,

> The Volunteers [were] to be formed into two divisions, one north and one south of a line from Dublin to Galway, both cities to belong to the southern half.

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[16] Ibid.
[17] Suspensory Act, 1914, 4 & 5 George V, ch. 88 (18 Sept. 1914).
[18] Boyce, 'A First World War transition', p. 95.
[19] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 16 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/6).
[20] Lewis Comyn, 'Redmond's double-refusal to Lord Kitchener, August, 1914' in Martin, *Irish Volunteers*, p. 147; *Irish Times*, 16 May 1956.
[21] John Redmond to Asquith, 8 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/4).

> Volunteers from battalions by counties and to be called up and drilled first in barracks, then in camp, and lastly to do duty on coast defence. It was suggested the period in the barracks should be three or four weeks, a total of about twelve weeks after which each batch would return home. ... It was calculated that accommodation for twenty thousand men enlisted in Irish barracks; for twenty thousand in camps; and twenty thousand on coast defence. Sixty thousand men in all. ... The C-in-Chief in Ireland will be Chief in Command, but the Volunteer committees will act as a medium of communication in touch with the Volunteers; and the Inspector General of the Irish Volunteers will retain duty of inspection.[22]

The organisation of an army on paper nevertheless required the approval of Kitchener and Harold Tennant, the Under-Secretary of State for War. The War Office, in turn, expected Irish recruits to fill vacancies within the British Army – particularly the three distinctly Irish divisions that had been created. Redmond's fear of the Volunteers being used solely as cannon-fodder in France was relayed to Birrell in early September – nearly two weeks prior to his speech at Woodenbridge. He argued that 'If the existing Volunteer organisation is ignored and sneered at and made little of recruiting in the country will not go ahead. On the other hand, if the Volunteers are properly treated [i.e. granted home defence duty], I believe that recruiting will go ahead.' 'If this is done', Redmond concluded, 'intense satisfaction will be given all through the country, and the pride and sentiment of the Volunteers will be touched, and the appeal for recruits generally through the country, and even in the ranks of the Volunteers themselves, will, I am confident, be responded to.'[23]

Redmond's scheme had one rather serious variable: it depended on uniform adherence of over 180,000 Irish Volunteers and their officers to his instructions.[24] Division had been apparent in the Volunteer provisional committee since the co-option of Redmond's nominees, and many felt that military authority over the Volunteers must

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[22] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 17 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/6).

[23] Redmond to Birrell, 9 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS. 15,169/4). Kitchener's assessment of the utility and loyalty of the Irish Volunteers can be gauged from various reports and communiqué of the period. See for example Percy Illingworth to Kitchener, 8 Aug. 1914; memo on Irish Volunteers, n.d.; Lord Meath to Kitchener, 14 Aug. 1914; J. Mackey Wilson to Kitchener, 19 Aug. 1914; Lord Meath to Kitchener, 20 Aug. 1914; LB Friend to Kitchener, 16 Nov. 1914; (Copy of T.N.A., PRO 30/57/60, Lord Kitchener papers, in N.L.I., MS 21,525).

[24] On the power of an individual to instil duty on mass groups see Gustave Lebon, *The crowd: a study of the popular mind*, (New York, 2002 edn), p. 9, 44. Redmond's efforts to join the Volunteers to the war effort defied what Lebon referred to as the 'law of the mental unity of crowds' due mainly to the various degrees of loyalties possessed by Irish Volunteers, but also by the numerous interpretations of duty they maintained.

ultimately be vested in their own leadership.[25] Assessing the stipulations put in place by the War Office, and the reluctant attitude of Kitchener, and noting the fragility of the Volunteer provisional committee and the movement's decentralised command structure, Redmond revised and redirected the duties of the Irish Volunteers and Irishmen in light of the war. Moore, sharing a private moment with Redmond and his brother Willie at Westminster, recalled the nationalist leader's attitude:

> About 16th September I was in London and had a conversation with Mr Redmond in his room in the House of Commons; his brother was present when he told me he had made up his mind to advise Irishmen to join the Army in France; he repeated that it was no use discussing the matter, his mind had settled. ... Soon after he [John Redmond] left the room ... I said his brother would be wise not to speak to men on parade about enlisting; they are on duty and cannot express their opinions ... I think he [Willie] felt at the bottom of his heart that the whole thing was wrong, but loyalty to his brother prevented his saying a word ... [26].

Redmond's speech at Woodenbridge four days later, in which he sanctioned Irish enlistment in the British army as further service to Ireland, extended the duty of Irishmen to 'wherever the firing line extends'.

Despite expressed faithfulness to Redmond and the Irish Party, many Volunteer companies acted independently following the outbreak of war. Reservists who had acted as drill sergeants were called to the colours, and many Volunteers followed them. Initial Irish enlistments, which by December had exceeded 40,000, threatened to halt Redmond's political momentum and weaken his position with Kitchener. Though Redmond had acted as a medium through which additional recruits could be got, it quickly became apparent to Kitchener that no special concessions were required to entice the Irish to enlist. As George Berkeley observed of the Volunteers from Belfast, 'These men went to serve relying on the word of England pledged to Home Rule by the signature of her King and by the Great Seal

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[25] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 16 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/6). Ben Novick has commented on the congeniality of the British Government toward Redmond and the I.N.V. – particularly in regards to arming – as the Liberals continued to rely upon the cooperation of the Irish Party. Ben Novick, 'The arming of Ireland: gun-running and the Great War, 1914-16' in Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (eds), *Ireland and the Great War: 'a war to unite us all?'* (Manchester, 2002), p. 102.

[26] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 17 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/6).

of England. They have observed the terms of their bond. Thousands of them from every part of Ireland have cemented the pledge with their blood.'[27]

In associating loyalty and duty to Ireland with home defence and service in the British Army, Redmond was unable to curb the enthusiasm of the Volunteers toward his own ends, and use it for political leverage to pressure the War Office. The Irish leader subsequently took a backseat to the cause of the Empire. The best Redmond could do was to lure the War Office with further recruits in exchange for the mounting of home defence.[28]

Following the exit of many instructors and reservists to war service,[29] and the subsequent split in Volunteer ranks in late September 1914, the Irish National Volunteers began immediate reorganisation to consolidate their support behind Redmond and the Irish Party. The retention of over 160,000 members following the Volunteer split reveals a strong correlation between constitutional nationalism and the Volunteer psyche, and lends credence to Redmond's gamble of uniting the Volunteer cause with that of the Allies. Furthermore, adopting the title 'National Volunteers' brought needed clarity to the movement. As Diarmuid Coffey, a leading National Volunteer organiser and administrator, stated, the title 'was much beloved by the Parliamentarians. It had a sort of echo of the Nationalist Party.'[30] Offices were moved from Frederick Street to a house on Parnell Square.[31] A separate Volunteer newspaper, *The National Volunteer*, was begun, and subscriptions for arms and equipment were donated through a personal appeal by Redmond. By the end of October over £5,000 had been collected.[32]

Throughout the late autumn and winter of 1914 the I.N.V., though ostensibly a political body, strove to place itself on a sound military base in order to exhibit its

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[27] George Berkeley, 'Experiences in Belfast 1914', n.d. (N.L.I., MS. 7,880).

[28] For additional correspondence on home defence see L.B. Friend to Redmond, 3 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,188/10); Redmond to Birrell,19 Apr., 15 June 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,169/4).

[29] Bulmer Hobson estimated that by July 1914 the Irish Volunteers contained 28,000 'ex-army men or men belonging to the reserve of the English army.' Given the number of reservists who were members of the I.N.V. who returned to the colours following the outbreak of war – approximately 10,341 – this figure seems very high, and suggests a much smaller active reservist faction within the Volunteers. Bulmer Hobson, 'A short history of the Irish Volunteers' (N.L.I., Bulmer Hobson papers, MS 12,177); 'Table II: estimate of the number of reservists and recruits who have rejoined or joined from Ireland since the outbreak of War (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259); George Berkeley, 'Experiences in Belfast 1914', n.d. (N.L.I., MS 7,880).

[30] Diarmuid Coffey (B.M.H., W.S. 1,248).

[31] The house was purchased for £700 but required a further £300 in repairs. This put a significant strain on the already small capital of the I.N.V. Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 18 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/7).

[32] Hemphill to Moore, 30 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/2); national committee weekly diary, 27 Oct. 1914 (Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239); *The National Volunteer*, 31 Oct. 1914.

credibility and capability to the War Office. This reorganisation continued into 1915, the dawning of which was heralded by the *Freeman's Journal* as 'the second great Home Rule year.'[33] A new National Volunteer Constitution was adopted in March, which compartmentalised the organisation in order to place it on a more 'business-like' basis. A finance committee was established to collect subscriptions and vote funds towards supplies and equipment, and the national committee worked to centralise the organisation. As a result, the number of affiliated companies – those which paid dues and sent representatives to the general purposes committee in Dublin – had by March 1915 risen from 668 to over 900.[34] The I.N.V. constitution also took steps to remove confusion regarding organisational procedure and the direction of the movement. Matters of policy were placed before a supreme council – a directory of seven members headed by Redmond. By enacting this constitution any sentiments of apolitical nationalism were swept aside. As the I.N.V. secretaries recorded, 'the Government of the Volunteers in its policy and main lines ... [rests] with the Leaders of the Irish Party and with them alone.'[35] The crutch of leadership that the Irish Party had provided during the summer and autumn months of 1914 had become a permanent appendage. Although it had existed all along to some degree or another, the loyalty of the rank and file had become constituted Redmond and the Irish Party.

Was the passionate response to Redmond's leadership of the Irish National Volunteers experienced uniformly throughout Ireland? Did Redmond's influence spread outward from Waterford City, or did the movement grow sporadically throughout the country? Did strictly politically Nationalist counties harbour proportionately greater numbers of Irish National Volunteers than those with mixed Nationalist representation, or mixed political representation in the form of Liberal and Unionist M.P.s? These questions must be addressed when attempting to assess the weight of authority vested in the Irish Party by rank-and-file Irish National Volunteers, or to determine the link between Nationalist politics and the I.N.V. The tables below help illustrate the influence of politics on Volunteer membership throughout Ireland.

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[33] *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jan. 1915. A tradition reminiscent of the French Revolution, the Irish Republic would also be celebrated in this way. The year 1921 was heralded as the fifth year of the republic.

[34] List of registered companies of the Irish National Volunteers, (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/8); honorary secretaries draft report, 31 March 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/7).

[35] Honorary secretaries draft report, 31 March 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/7).

Table 2.1: Relationship between political influence and I.N.V. membership

Predominant political representation in county following Dec. 1910 election	Average number of I.N.V. between Jan. 1915 and Dec. 1917	Number of single men aged 15-44 in 1911	I.N.V. as percentage of single men in county aged 15-44	Average percentage of I.N.V. for each political grouping
NATIONALIST (11)				
Carlow (N:1)	1,628	6,526	24.9%	
Cavan (N:2)	3,255	16,599	19.6%	
Clare (N:2)	2,502	19,117	13.1%	
Donegal (N:4)	7,310	27,167	26.9%	
Kildare (N:2)	2,432	16,624	14.6%	
Leitrim (N:2)	1,464	10,630	13.7%	
Longford (N:2)	1,669	7,657	21.8%	23.4%
Meath (N:2)	4,275	12,078	35.4%	
Queen's (N:2)	3,065	10,484	29.2%	
Roscommon (N:2)	4,022	16,982	29.9%	
Sligo (N:2)	3,822	13,435	28.4%	
TOTAL	35,444	157,299		

Predominant political representation in county following Dec. 1910 election	Average number of I.N.V. between Jan. 1915 and Dec. 1917	Number of single men aged 15-44 in 1911	I.N.V. as percentage of single men in county aged 15-44	Average percentage of I.N.V. for each political grouping
MIXED NATIONALIST (11)				
Cork (N:7, Ind. N. (O'B):10	1,901	70,718	2.6%	
Kerry (N:4, Ind. N. (O'B): 2	2,466	26,739	9.2%	
Kilkenny (N:3, Ind. N: 1)	2,055	13,436	15.3%	
King's (N:2, Ind. N:1)	1,044	11,059	9.4%	
Limerick (N:3, Ind. N. (O'B):3)	4,316	25,371	17%	13.25%
Louth (N:2, Ind. N. (O'B):1)	2,643	11,388	23.2%	
Mayo (N:4, Ind. N. (O'B):1)	4,391	30,446	14.4%	
Tipperary (N:4, Ind. N. (O'B):1)	2,240	29,012	7.7%	
Waterford (N:3, Ind. N. (O'B):1)	2,745	14,934	18.4%	
Westmeath (N:1, Ind. N:1)	2,009	12,314	16.3%	
Wexford (N:2, Ind. N. (O'B):1)	2,140	17,391	12.3%	
TOTAL	27,950	262,808		

Predominant political representation in county following Dec. 1910 election	Average number of I.N.V. between Jan. 1915 and Dec. 1917	Number of single men aged 15-44 in 1911	I.N.V. as percentage of single men in county aged 15-44	Average percentage of I.N.V. for each political grouping
MIXED POLITICAL REPRESENTATION (11)				
Antrim (U:4, L:1)	2,228	27,140	8.2%	14.8%
Armagh (U:2, N:1, Ind. N. (O'B):1	3,972	17,458	22.7%	
Belfast (U:4, Ind. U:1, N:1)	1,329	50,657	2.6%	
Down (U:4, L:1, N:1)	6,022	28,815	20.8%	
Dublin (N:6, Ind. N. (O'B): 1, U: 4)	1,974	75,517	2.6%	
Fermanagh (L:1, U:1, N:1)	2,592	10,402	24.9%	
Galway (N:5, Ind. U:1)	2,548	32,500	7.8%	
Londonderry (N:1, L:3, U:3)	4,706	20,630	22.8%	
Monaghan (N:2, U:1, Ind. N:1)	1,041	11,866	8.8%	
Tyrone (U:4, N:2, L:2)	6,365	23,076	27.6%	
Wicklow (N:2, U:1)	1,471	10,637	13.8%	
TOTAL	34,248	308,698		

[36]

By dividing Irish counties, and the borough of Belfast, based on dominant political representation from the most recent general election before the war, that of December 1910, three distinct and equally divided categories emerge: straight Nationalist (Irish Party), mixed Nationalist (Irish Party, Independent Nationalist and O'Brienite) and mixed political representation (Irish Party, Independent Nationalist, Unionist, Independent Unionist and Liberal). By averaging monthly I.N.V. membership returns for each county from the period 1 January 1915 through December 1917, distribution of National Volunteer membership through political association is more clearly demonstrated. While it may be expected that counties which harboured straight Nationalist representation would also boast the highest average I.N.V. numbers, those counties with mixed Nationalist representation returned much fewer National Volunteers than counties with Unionist and Liberal M.P.s. This certainly highlights the difficulties in aligning various nationalist sentiments toward a single outlet, as argued in chapter one.

[36] Key: U=Unionist, L=Liberal, N=Nationalist, Ind. U=Independent Unionist, Ind. N=Independent Nationalist, Ind. N. (O'B)=Independent Nationalist (O'Brienite). Pat Hudson, *History by numbers: an introduction to quantitative approaches* (London, 2000), pp 53-85, 137-67; Brian M. Walker (ed.), *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp 177-85; 325-82; W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick (eds), *Irish historical statistics: population, 1921-1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp 5-16; 148-60. I.N.V. county membership was averaged from monthly returns supplied by the R.I.C., Jan. 1915-Dec. 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904/96-104).

How successful were the National Volunteers in attracting potential members? If the average number of National Volunteers per county between 1915-17 is measured against the number of single men in each county aged 15-44 – the age demographic most likely to be involved in mass movements – a stronger relationship is again observed in strictly Nationalist counties. Some of the more shocking returns in National Volunteer membership occurred in Ulster counties. Tyrone, Derry, Fermanagh and Armagh all register average I.N.V. memberships over 20 per cent of available single men in their respective counties. All four counties also boasted mixed political representation and strong Unionist bases. This perhaps highlights, at worst, fear of political and religious domination within one's native county as motivation for joining a paramilitary group. At best, it displays the aspirations voiced by Roger Casement: that Volunteering would produce a healthy rivalry in the North.[37]

These statistics must be observed while acknowledging the following stipulations: although they measure average I.N.V. membership over a broad period, it is difficult to provide accurate estimates of potential membership as the Great War also competed for the services of single men between 1914 and 1918. As county population figures were taken from the 1911 census, percentages of I.N.V. as a proportion of available men will ultimately fail to reflect the depletion of men in Ireland due to enlistment for the war or pre-war emigration. Government crackdown on volunteering following the Easter Rising and, perhaps, general indifference to politics and the Volunteer movement, also skew results. Nevertheless, as participation was interpreted as an expression of loyalty, these figures do provide reliable indication of Ireland's receptiveness to Redmond and the Irish Party regarding the Irish National Volunteers.

To sustain this support, the I.N.V. maintained that public spectacle and demonstrable utility were paramount to success. In a more practical sense, weapons, uniforms and training would display legitimacy. This responsibility fell to Maurice Moore, whose family had a long military history. Moore served with the Connaught Rangers in the Kaffir, Zulu and South African wars before retiring in 1906. He was an Irish language enthusiast, and established night schools near his residence in Moore Hall, county Mayo.[38] With the aid of Colonel Edmond Cotter and Captain Fitzroy Hemphill, Moore hoped to

[37] Casement to Berkeley, 24 June 1914 (N.L.I., George Berkeley papers, MS 7,879).
[38] Leon Ó Broin, 'Maurice Moore and the National Volunteers' in *Irish Sword*, xii, no. 53 (winter 1979), pp 317-8.

transform home defence from scheme to reality.[39] He made numerous inspection tours throughout the country; with the help of captains Diarmuid Coffey and J.S. Eckersley, a card and index system of companies referenced main centres of Volunteer concentration.[40]

Moore envisioned an educated corps of soldiers trained to navigate the landscape, erect field fortifications, perform military operations, and bond personally through military retreats to the country. He was in tune with the lives of his men, and made efforts to organise training sessions to accommodate Volunteers' daily lives. Men could train at their leisure, building their camaraderie as well as their skills. Classes for both officers and men were to be established in the capital town of each county as a way to bring county volunteers together. Lecture topics included armaments, construction of fortifications, and musketry.[41] Exams in infantry training and theory, as well as musketry, were held. Candidates could also be examined for the rank of officer.[42] Summer training camps were proposed to coincide with men's holidays, while smaller corps of volunteers would be held in reserve for home defence to relieve their comrades in rotation so as not to disrupt their employment.[43] Although few of these plans were ever realised, Moore's reputation and efforts were so revered that he was celebrated in song:

> Then on! As myriad hosts acclaim.
> Go, proudly lift they honoured name
> A niche in Ireland's Hall of Fame
> They guerdon yet must be,
> While here old Mayo's reverent poor
> Who bitter wrongs did long endure
> Shout out "Hats off to Colonel Moore"
> Chief of the I.N.V.[44]

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[39] Throughout early 1914 Moore's concept of Irish Volunteer organisation and function was based on the British Territorial system. Moore to Casement, 26 Mar. 1914 (I.M.A., George Gavin Duffy, C.D. 45/1/B2).
[40] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 18 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/7).
[41] 'Lecture topics and the nights on which they were delivered', n.d. (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,705).
[42] 'Examination in infantry training and musketry', 5 Apr. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10544/10)
[43] 'Proposals for summer camp', 4 May 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/1); 'winter training of Irish Volunteers', 7 Oct. 1914 (Ibid.). Almost all of these schemes were pipe dreams which never materialised. Despite his military history, Moore was not alone in his outlook. MacNeill's Irish Volunteers underwent similar transformations and undertook efforts to professionalise their organisation. For training specifics see Peadar Bracken (B.M.H., W.S. 361) and G. Byrne (B.M.H., W.S. 143).
[44] 'Chief of the Volunteers: a paean to Colonel Moore', Michel O'Grady, n.d. (N.L.I., MS 8,489/2).

Despite managerial reorganisation, the I.N.V. lacked sufficient money, arms, and training, and had yet to show themselves to Government authorities as a necessity to Irish national defence. The Volunteer split had dried up several lucrative sources of funding, notably from Clan-na-Gael in the United States, which diverted its support toward MacNeill's Irish Volunteers. Vacant armouries and plain clothes Volunteers made for poor publicity. An estimated £20,000 was required for equipment and officers' salaries.

Pomp and pageantry were important aspects of Volunteering, and should not be overlooked. Mathew Kelly has suggested that there was in fact a link between arms and masculinity in the Volunteer mindset.[45] Rifles, uniforms and other material trappings that portrayed involvement must therefore be acknowledged as components of group adhesion. To display arms, clothes and insignia of the movement was to exhibit belonging.[46] Drilling, marching and field manoeuvres were simply not enough to retain men or sustain excitement. David Fitzpatrick has noted that by October 1914 lack of weapons and, as a Clare company instructor confessed, 'the monotony of drill', resulted in a drop in attendance at Volunteer gatherings.[47] Edmond Frewen had warned Redmond in late 1914 that without personal discipline and tangible results, the I.N.V. 'may well get out of hand, or may otherwise become futile and absurd'.[48] Although the National Volunteers had escaped the split with the majority of rifles, the majority were of an old, Italian pattern and had virtually no ammunition. This meant that, theoretically, proportionate to the number of members (163,292 as of 2 Dec. 1914), one rifle had to be shared between eighteen Volunteers. Of course distribution of arms was not proportionate; the majority were concentrated in Ulster, with small pockets of arms in Dublin, Wicklow, Cork and Tipperary.[49]

In some cases the possession of arms was in itself a reason to carry on with the National Volunteers. For instance, National Volunteer enlistment in the British Army from

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[45] Kelly, 'A Machiavellian moment?', pp 74-5.

[46] John Horgan helps to illustrate this point. He commented of a Belfast contingent marching in the 1915 Easter review, 'I think we [Cork] were as well-drilled as any there, but the Belfast uniforms gave them a real advantage'. Horgan to Moore, 6 Apr. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,561/18). Anthony Hepburn also notes this event: A.C. Hepburn, *Catholic Belfast and nationalist Ireland in the era of Joe Devlin, 1871-1934* (Oxford, 2008), p. 169. The *Midland Reporter* observed as early as November 1913 that 'A man with a rifle always commands respect from the rules of a country.' *Midland Reporter*, 20 Nov. 1913 quoted in Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party: provincial Ireland 1910-1916* (Oxford, 2005), p. 181. Finally, Ben Novick has provided an in-depth analysis of gun-running prior to the Easter Rising. Ben Novick, 'The arming of Ireland: gun-running and the Great War, 1914-16' in Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (eds), *Ireland and the Great War: 'a war to unite us all'?* (Manchester, 2002), pp 94-111.

[47] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, p. 91.

[48] Edmond J. Frewen to Redmond, 28 December 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,188/8).

[49] Summary of arms in possession of Volunteer forces in Ireland, c. 1914-1916 (N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS 26,154).

Dublin declined steadily throughout 1915 as county representatives reported an addition of over 800 rifles for the same period.[50] However, to attribute this decline solely to the slightly greater availability of rifles would be to ignore waning Irish interest in the war, the fact that Home Rule had been secured, and that wider enlistment patterns – particularly in Dublin – were also declining during this period.

The respective followers of Redmond, MacNeill, and Carson nevertheless agreed: the possession of a rifle was equated with respect. Detailed Government records of Volunteer growth juxtaposed with rifle possession solidify this concept.[51] It was in this sense that obtaining arms had been the yardstick by which Volunteers measured success, claimed legitimacy and exhibited strength. For the National Volunteers it meant vindication in the face of 'MacNeillite' dissenters. Furthermore, it justified their existence and displayed their determination to their northern peers and the War Office.[52]

Throughout 1914 and 1915 arms were obtained in small consignments through Redmond via his various government contacts. They came to the I.N.V. usually fifty at a time with anywhere from 100 to 10,000 rounds.[53] The Government were more than happy to allow Redmond to distribute rifles, shotguns, and pistols for training purposes so long as they weren't of any worth to the military, had limited ammunition, were properly locked away and their locations known to the police.[54]

Negotiations for arms were at times complicated. The gift of some 3,000 rifles – 'the majority of an antiqued pattern' – to the National Volunteers from the Belgian Government in spring of 1915 frustrated Kitchener, who retained them for training the 16th Division.[55] In fact, Redmond's familiarity with government personalities more often hindered his securing of arms for the National Volunteers. A letter from General Friend illustrates this point:

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[50] Ibid; Table III(A): Recruiting statistics month-by-month, Aug. 1914-Jan. 1918 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS. 15,259). The obvious exception of enlistment periods coincided with the anniversary of the war's commencement in August, and the implementation of the Wimbourne recruiting scheme in November 1915.

[51] See N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS 26,154; John Redmond papers, MS 15,259; Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/7; N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 21680; précis of Lord Midleton's evidence, Dec. 1914-Apr. 1916 (T.N.A., PRO 30/67/31).

[52] Novick, 'The arming of Ireland', *passim.*

[53] Importation of arms and ammunition for the National Volunteers, c. 1914-1917 (T.N.A., CO 904/29).

[54] L.B. Friend to Matthew Nathan, 18 March, 1915; Nathan to G.S. Barnes, Board of Trade, 22 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,209/3).

[55] Kitchener had opposed the Volunteers from the start, and believed arming them for home defence duty dangerous. He refused to see John L. Connor, who had called in regarding the Belgian rifles, thus driving further the wedge between the War Office and the National Volunteer organisation. Memorandum, 27 Mar. 1915, (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/2); Connor to Crean, 9 Apr. 1915 (Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/2); T.P. O'Connor to Redmond, 19 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I. John Redmond papers, MS 15,215/2).

> If Mr Redmond would only follow the recognised procedure there would be little trouble or difficulty. All he has to do is to apply to this office for the permit to import into Ireland, giving all proper detailed information concerning the arms, and then go armed with this permit to the military authority within whose district the arms are being purchased and obtain a licence for the sale. ... Mr Redmond doubtless thinks he can short circuit the system by going straight to Mr Asquith, but, as you describe, his short circuit is a complicated one.[56]

The Under -Secretary for Ireland, Sir Mathew Nathan, concurred, and criticised National Volunteer authorities as showing 'very little administrative capacity in the matter of importing rifles for their use.' The problem, according to Nathan, was a lack of coordination between Redmond and his officers in obtaining arms; each applying to their own go-between to secure permits. Intermediaries such as Asquith, Tennant, Birrell and Mahon became aggravated as they had more important matters to attend to in the spring of 1915.[57]

Although the Volunteer split had 'cleared the air', and placed 'a straight issue' before the Volunteer movement – 'For Ireland or the British Empire?'[58] – the Government remained unconvinced of the sincerity of the National Volunteers towards home defence, their genuine loyalty towards the Empire,[59] or Redmond's concept of vicarious duty to the Empire through the coastal defence of Ireland. If the National Volunteers were to survive, Redmond would have to fulfil his promise of employing the Volunteers for home defence. Nationalists were anxious to see the I.N.V. bear arms, don a distinct Irish uniform, and guard the shores – duties exhibiting individuality and demanding respect, as articulated by Redmond upon the outbreak of war. This conditional loyalty meant the National Volunteers would adhere to Redmond's demand for recruits so long as the counterpart of home defence was realised.[60]

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[56] L.B. Friend to Nathan, 13 May 1915; Nathan to Redmond, 14 May 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/29).
[57] Novick, 'The arming of Ireland', pp 100-103.
[58] *Irish Volunteer*, 3 Oct. 1914. Similar to the outlook MacNeill faction of Volunteers, Joseph Brennan, Assistant Under-Secretary, saw the Volunteer split as 'a straight issue' (N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS. 26,176).
[59] Lord Meath to Kitchener, 14, 19, 20 Aug. 1914; Lord Meath to Redmond, 15 Aug. 1914 (Copy of T.N.A., PRO 30/57/60, Lord Kitchener papers, in N.L.I., MS 21,525); Earl of Midleton, *Ireland-dupe or heroine* (London, 1932), pp 98-99.
[60] Robert Paul Wolff, *The poverty of liberalism* (Boston, 1969 paperback ed.), pp 60-1. As Josiah Royce outlined, reverence for individuals is dependent on a 'tie that binds'. That is, veneration of an individual exists only as that person is able to provide an outlet for individual or group's identified loyalty. Josiah Royce, *The philosophy of loyalty*, (New York, 1916 edn), pp 20-1.

II. Cork guard duty

Cork had played a leading role in the Volunteer movement from its inception; the growth and enthusiasm of its Volunteers was rivalled only in Dublin.[61] The Volunteer split had not affected the I.N.V. in Cork to a great degree; they remained well trained, well organised, enthusiastic, and in great numbers. By January 1915 the Cork I.N.V. could boast over 6,000 members county-wide.

Cork citizens, as well as Volunteers, were not only supporters of constitutional nationalism, but fiercely independent. This is best illustrated by an unauthorised and unconditional offer of the Cork City National Volunteers to the War Office by Captain Talbot-Crosbie in early August 1914 – an offer which received harsh backlash from Volunteer leaders in Dublin.[62] They were also intensely anti-German, with sentiment being aroused by Cardinal Mercier's pastoral, and certain xenophobic elements of the Defence of the Realm Act. For example, on 8 January Dr Kuno Meyer was deprived of the honour of the Freedom of the City of Cork, despite his years of service to the Gaelic League.[63]

Having established themselves independently, the Cork Volunteers also took the initiative to fulfil Redmond's promise to defend Ireland from home. In mid-December 1914 John Horgan and E. Gayer of the Cork City I.N.V. wrote not to Redmond or Moore, but to R.I.C. County Inspector, Thomas Howe, outlining their anxiety to do all they could to assist the Government in the defence of Ireland. They concluded:

> [T]hat our Committee are strongly of opinion that whatever may be the immediate value of the services we can so render, that every action of this kind which identifies the great majority of the people with the support of the Irish executive and of the forces of the Crown, will be of value to the County at large both now and in the future.[64]

They specifically identified two rail bridges, which connected the city to the rest of the country, as vital gateways for munitions delivery. District Inspector for Cork City, South District, Charles Walsh, acknowledged and accepted the offer the following week. Cork's

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[61] Gerry White and Brendan O'Shea, *'Baptised in blood': the formation of the Cork brigade of Irish Volunteers, 1913-1916* (Cork, 2005).
[62] Walsh to Moore, 22 Aug. 1914; Liam de Róiste to Moore, 2 Sept. 1914; Lane, O'Riordan, Osbourne, Cotter and Fitzgibbon to Moore, 3 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6); White and O'Shea, *'Baptised in blood'*, pp 44-61.
[63] R.I.C. Inspector General's monthly report, Jan. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/96).
[64] Horgan and Gayer to Howe, 12 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).

self-sufficiency, coupled with the anxiety surrounding a German invasion, may have been factors which led Walsh to endorse the assignment. [65] As a result, Cork National Volunteers were permitted to undertake guard duty for home defence in early January 1915 – the first company of National Volunteers to do so.

Moore described the assignment of the Cork Volunteers as being 'not a matter of mere local interest but of National importance.' 'I am quite sure', he wrote,

> [T]hat in taking over the defence of bridges and other posts in the City by the Cork City Regiment of the Irish National Volunteers a service of the very greatest importance has been performed. ... I have anxiously looked forward to the time when the Irish National Volunteers would take over the defence of the country, and I see in what the Cork City Regiment has done the first step towards this great accomplishment. [66]

Redmond gave his congratulations in a personal, though intentionally publicised, note to Captain Donegan: 'Hearty congratulations to Cork Volunteers on mounting guard. Trust War Office will now utilise force generally for defence purposes everywhere.' [67]

Moore and Redmond had reason to be excited. Mounting guard duty was a manifestation of Redmond's pledge of home defence. It was the required physical outlet which allowed the I.N.V. to express their loyalty. Armed with shotguns, twenty rounds of ammunition, and great coats adorned with Volunteer insignia, the Cork City Volunteers provided optimism to National Volunteer companies throughout Ireland. The application of the Cork City National Volunteers also gave an enormous boost in the morale to the I.N.V. Sixty Volunteers returned to the Cork ranks having previously been absent from drill. [68]

The initiative of Cork won mixed praise from national committee members. Moore initially hoped that 'the example of Cork [would] be followed in Limerick, Dublin, Belfast, Derry and other places', [69] possibly creating a healthy rivalry between counties and

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[65] Walsh to unknown [presumably Horgan and Gayer as subject references their letter], 23 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).
[66] Moore to Donegan, 2 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).
[67] *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Jan. 1915. Cork definitely spurred public excitement. However, the nature of their work revealed the actual necessity of their duty to be minute. The Cork Volunteers reported for duty at 10 p.m. on 1 January 1915. The twelve men were applauded by a crowd of hundreds that escorted them to the bridges to relieve Royal Irish Constabulary men until 6 a.m. the following day. *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jan. 1915.
[68] Donegan to Moore, 31 Dec. 1914 (Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6); *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jan. 1915.
[69] Moore to Donegan, 2 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).

companies.[70] When J. McDonnell wrote to Moore inquiring about undertaking guard duty in Galway, he was re-directed to Major-General L.B. Friend, General Officer Commanding Troops in Ireland.[71] Major Crean of Dublin made his enquiry publicly, writing to Moore via the *Freeman's Journal*:

> There is not the least reason why such duties should not be undertaken by the Volunteers of the City and County of Dublin if the military authorities can see their way to invite their assistance. My services are at their disposal ... I am confident that if those services are requested and suitable arrangements are made for equipment, the authorities will obtain a ready response.[72]

Though personal efforts had secured Cork's home defence assignment, bureaucracy and politics would stifle similar efforts. The national committee was anxious that arrangements agreed upon between the Government and local companies would erode their central authority. In addition, it was feared that Volunteers would be sworn in under the 'Special Constables Act, 1832', thus jeopardising their civilian status and individuality as Volunteers. A standing order intended to remedy these irregularities was unanimously passed by the national committee in early January 1915. It stated: 'That no arrangement be come to between any Company or Battalion; Board or Committee, of the Irish National Volunteers and any outside body without first communicating with the national committee and getting their sanction.'[73]

The national committee recognised the importance of the Cork guard in helping to boost the morale of the Volunteers. Redmond, however, knew the extent to which the War Office would bend; Moore maintained that, in the absence of officers, home defence would never materialise. 'However attractive this scheme might appear', he wrote, 'I knew the Volunteers were not then in a position to undertake the defence of anything ... no government in its senses would permit mere assemblies of undisciplined men to take up garrison duty.'[74] Furthermore, overall Irish enlistment had slowed; Kitchener and the Government called for additional recruits, and Redmond was continuously reminded of the

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[70] *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Jan. 1915; *Irish Times*, 11 Jan. 1915. Curiously, the entire Cork episode is absent from Moore's history of the Volunteers.
[71] McDonnell to Moore, 7 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,548/5).
[72] Letter dated 8 Jan. 1915, *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Jan. 1915.
[73] Irish National Volunteers national committee minutes, 5, 12, 26 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239).
[74] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 16 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/6).

stores of fit Irishmen which could be raised.[75] He subsequently deflected blamed toward pre-war emigration, wartime agricultural responsibilities, and characteristics of troublesome social classes for poor enlistment figures. The latter would also be used to excuse the Royal Irish Constabulary from enlistment. Government interpretations of Irish loyalty were based on enlistment. In this regard, the Ulster Volunteers had a clear lead over their nationalist countrymen. Although overall contributions would mirror each other throughout the duration of the war, initial U.V.F. enlistments exceeded 16,000 while those of the I.N.V. stood at just over 10,000.[76]

In early 1915, the utility of the Irish National Volunteers was therefore modified. Blame for the stagnation of the movement was shifted away from Ireland and its leaders, and towards Britain and the War Office. Major Crean defended his previous actions in using the national press as a medium:

> It is not likely that any offer made by the Volunteers, will be immediately accepted by the Military authorities; all the same the offer should be made by individual Corps, in as many parts of the country as possible and should be made public. The responsibility for refusing their assistance will then rest with the Military authorities and the Volunteers will have the credit of having done what they could and nobody will be able to say they shirked work and are mere toy soldiers.'[77]

Unable to persuade the War Office of its competency or utility, no further home defence assignments were issued to the Irish National Volunteers.

The service of the Cork National Volunteers lasted only a few weeks. In early February Cork Garrison Commander, General Hill, informed the Cork City Volunteers that, while 'fully acknowledging the patriot spirit which has led them to offer their services and thanking them for services already rendered', he found it 'impossible to continue their employment as an armed guard.'[78] Hill was willing to employ the Cork Volunteers as

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[75] Recruiting in Ireland, c. 1915; Memorandum by C.H. Vedham, 30 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259).
[76] By 15 December 1914 the U.V.F. had contributed 16,435 men, the I.N.V. 10,341; 13,663 men not affiliated with either group also enlisted (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259).
[77] Hemphill to Moore to honorary secretaries, national committee National Volunteers, 5 Feb. 1915 (Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/7).
[78] Irish National Volunteers national committee minutes, 9 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239); *Daily Independent*, 8 Feb. 1915.

*un*armed guards, but he would not allow citizens who did not belong 'to the armed forces of the Crown to bear arms in defence of the Realm.'[79]

Reasons for their dismissal vary and none can be pinpointed as directly responsible. Various bits of evidence suggest that the informal permission granted by the County Inspector Howe had alarmed the War Office. In addition, National Volunteers allotted toward home defence meant fewer potential recruits for the army. Others speculated that MacNeill's Irish Volunteers would infiltrate the National Volunteers in an effort to obtain arms on loan from the military. Theft of I.N.V. rifle and ammunition stores had already caused alarm.[80] The Irish Volunteers numbered 250 in Cork's East Riding by January 1915, and were active only in the city. In Cork's West Riding, however, local police reports confirm that of 2,874 National Volunteers, nearly 500 were known Sinn Féiners.[81] As in other locations, the presence of 'Sinn Féin' Volunteers in I.N.V. ranks was due mainly to the scarcity of Irish Volunteer companies with which to train. Finally, the War Office called into question the character of Moore. Several of his proposals regarding the future of the Volunteers caused alarm within Government as well as nationalist circles – particularly proposals to reunite the Irish and Irish National Volunteers.[82] In addition, although he was publicly silent on the matter, Moore despised the dominance of the Irish Party deputies in the national committee.[83] As early as February 1915 Joseph Devlin doubted whether Moore was a whole-hearted supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party.[84]

In an effort to save face and maintain whatever support had been gained through the Cork episode, Redmond immediately set to work building a case on which the National Volunteers might once again take up armed guard duty. He reiterated the position of the National Volunteers to the Government – their contribution to the war effort, their inability to take up further service abroad, and their general desire to undertake home defence work.[85] Redmond again baited the Government with his only lure:

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[79] Ibid.
[80] Novick, 'The arming of Ireland', pp 103-4.
[81] County Inspectors' monthly reports, Cork East and West Riding, Jan. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/96).
[82] In February Moore had proposed the expansion of the British Territorial system into Ireland, promoting recruits from the Irish, Irish National, and Ulster Volunteers to join in combination. Moore to Redmond, 15 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,206/7). It was also suggested that Volunteers given duty take the oath of allegiance, or some modified form as a matter of tact to ensure the confidence of the War Office. Redmond to John Gulland, 14 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,192/7).
[83] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', chs 17, 18, 25 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/6,7,9).
[84] Brennan interview with Joseph Devlin, Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,156).
[85] 'Irish National Volunteers and enlistment for home defence', John Redmond, Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,258).

> I understand that the necessity of furnishing garrisons and guards for coast defence is a serious embarrassment to the military authorities in Ireland. ... This work must interfere to a very serious extent with the preparation of these battalions, and it seems to me that these battalions could be relieved of this work if an arrangement were made whereby the Volunteers could enlist for home service only for the period of the war and could be trained for purely home defence, ... They could be enrolled in local battalions bearing the name of their locality and engaged in the work of defending places in their own districts. ... I believe that, if the Volunteers were engaged in regular military work of this kind, living together under military discipline and enrolled for home defence, the military spirit would rapidly develop among them, and volunteers for foreign service would speedily become numerous from their ranks.[86]

Unbeknownst to Redmond, General Friend had changed his views on Irish home defence.[87] Though previously supportive of a scheme to utilise the Volunteers, in March Friend reported to the Under-Secretary that it had become 'inadvisable to allow armed Volunteers to perform duties in aid of the Defence of the Realm.' Though at odds with Government opinion, Friend also advised against any further importation of arms or ammunition into Ireland: these were better utilised on the battlefields in France.[88]

Despite repeated appeals by Redmond throughout 1915 – particularly to the Chief Secretary to use his influence on Kitchener – the War Office did not budge. The military's reply was consistent; its explanation, such as the following from Lieutenant-General Henry Sclater, typical: 'our efforts have been concentrated on obtaining men to serve wherever they may be required without conditions of any sort ... By urging men to join on a special enlistment for home service only we should naturally reduce the numbers of the above'.[89] Redmond's protests that foreign service was not the purpose for which they were initially enrolled, and that it would sacrifice their 'individuality as a volunteer force,' and degrade 'the principle for which they were organised, namely, the defence of Ireland', made no impact.[90]

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[86] Ibid.
[87] Redmond to Birrell, 19 Apr. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,169/4). For evidence of L.B. Friend's collusion see 'Irish National Volunteers and enlistment for home defence', John Redmond, Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,258).
[88] L.B. Friend to Nathan, 12, 18 March 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/29).
[89] Henry Sclater, 5 Aug. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,225).
[90] *Sunday Chronicle*, 21 Mar. 1915; N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,169/4.

Continued enlistment from the National Volunteers and the Irish population at large, and the refusal of a place in the coalition cabinet, weakened Redmond's clout, and exposed him as a false prophet of Irish freedom, unable to effectively consolidate and lead his flock or provide an approved outlet for their excitement and loyalty.[91] The dismissal of the Cork Volunteers deflated the hopes of similar Volunteer corps throughout the country, and reaffirmed the Government's position that Ireland's part in the war was to be fulfilled on the battlefield, not on empty bridges throughout the country in preparation for an unlikely German invasion. Although Irish enlistment had slowed, Government quotas were being met. This was achieved without having to offer arms, uniforms, or guard appointments to the I.N.V. in an attempt to flatter native interpretations of patriotism and loyalty.

The dismissal of the Cork guard denied Volunteers the opportunity to express their loyalty to Ireland through service at home.[92] Despite an impressive review on St Patrick's Day and display of national solidarity during the funeral of O'Donovan Rossa, the dismissal of the Cork guard left but one identified outlet for Volunteers to fulfil their duty to Ireland: enlistment.[93] Military authorities in Cork suggested to Horgan and Donegan that they put aside aspirations for home defence and act as recruiters for an Irish Brigade.[94] Constitutional nationalists, such as Tom Kettle and Stephen Gwynn, also preached Volunteer loyalty in the form of army enlistment.[95] Kettle, a war correspondent for the *Daily News and Leader*, was said to have abandoned the pen for the sword.[96] Echoing Redmond's sentiments at Woodenbridge, Kettle believed that 'If the Volunteers were either to learn their trade as soldiers or to fulfil their functions as defenders of the liberties of Ireland, they could not stop in Ireland.' He further reminded them that, 'in considering

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[91] Brade to Redmond, 21 Feb. 1915; Redmond to Brade, 24 Feb. 1915; Redmond to Sclater, 8 July, 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,225); *Sunday Chronicle*, 21 Mar. 1915.

[92] Royce, *Loyalty*, pp 218-19. Royce highlights the opportunities for loyalty as being vital. Without objects toward which one can direct their loyalty, one begins to lose enthusiasm.

[93] For evidence that enlistment was an outlet for loyalty as outlined by Redmond, see T. Nugent to Moore, 25 Nov. 1914 (N.L.I. Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,554/5).

[94] Donegan to Moore, 25 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6); T.P. Killeen to Moore, 14 July 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,548/7); Quigley to Moore, 27 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,548/5).

[95] Kettle was quoted as stating, 'If the Volunteers were either to learn their trade as soldiers or to fulfil their functions as defenders of the liberties of Ireland, they could not stop in Ireland. A great many of them had come, but he deliberately asked more of them to come, not in separate units, but in organised bodies. He felt convinced that unless some such positive programme be adopted, the Volunteer movement – although it might survive the sneers of noble lords and ignoble clowns – would gradually find that it had lost the core of reality that had kept it alive, and that it would disintegrate and disappear. He asked them, in considering the whole question of the war, to remember that, although they were paying the price, they might, perhaps, be getting a large reward.' *Irish Times*, 18 Jan. 1915.

[96] Kettle's death was met with 'profound regret' by the I.N.V., 17 Nov. 1914, (N.L.I., Sheehy Skeffington papers, MS 22,275).

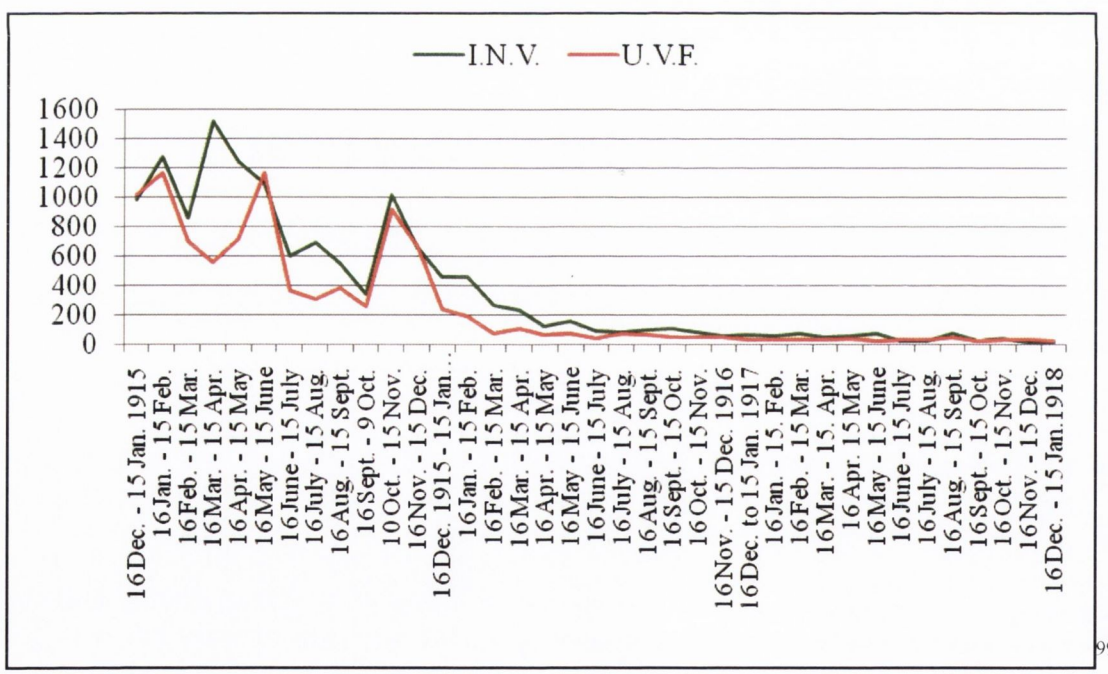
the whole question of the war, to remember that, although they were paying the price, they might, perhaps, be getting a large reward'.[97]

Individual National Volunteers saw enlistment as the only remaining form of service to the national cause. Harvey Mumteney identified the failure of the Government to utilise the I.N.V. for home defence as his reason for enlisting:

> [W]hen it became obvious that the government could not and would not arm and train the Irish Volunteers, I thought the best thing to do for Ireland was to offer ... [my] services to the War Office, I , accordingly, did so and was appointed a Captain in the 7th Dublin Fusiliers.'[98]

A survey of National Volunteer demonstrates the extent to which individuals answered the call of Redmond, Kettle and others. The chart below compares approximate I.N.V. enlistment with that of the U.V.F. through January 1918, when such records were no longer recorded.

Chart 2.1: Irish National and Ulster Volunteer enlistment, December 1914-January 1918



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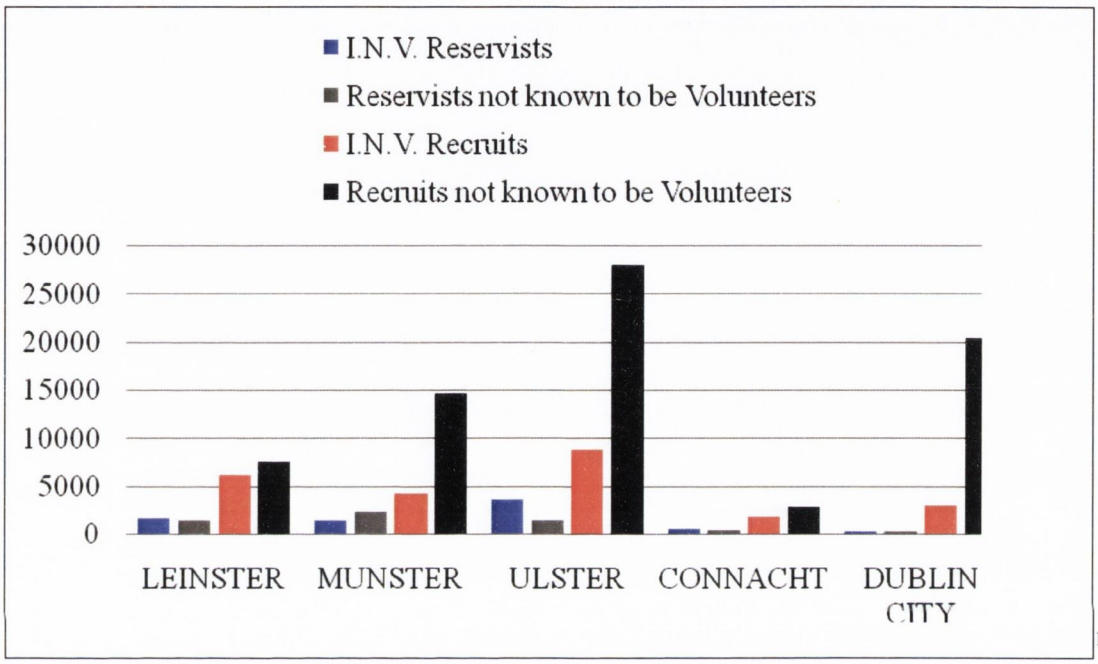
[97] *Irish Times*, 18 Jan. 1915.
[98] Harvey Mumteney to Redmond, 24 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,261/2). The surname of the signature on this letter is wholly illegible.
[99] Table III A, recruiting statistics (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259).

Similar to questions posed above regarding I.N.V. membership as a representation of a county's political make-up, consideration must again be given to a county's political majority in determining the level of enlistments for the British Army. To what extent can enlistment from the I.N.V. be attributed to geopolitical influence? The chart below attempts to answer that question.

Chart 2.2: Total enlistments of I.N.V. and non-Volunteer reservists and recruits



[100]

Measuring contributions to the war effort by province, it is again evident that National Volunteers in Ulster were more forthcoming than those in other provinces or Dublin city. This again illustrates that block Nationalist representation did not necessarily produce the greatest enlistment figures.

The enthusiasm which had accompanied the war up to the New Year had faded by mid-1915. Over-dependency on leaders such as Redmond and Moore to define Volunteer objectives and, most importantly, provide outlets for Volunteer loyalty had resulted in a frustrated and idle movement. Alternatively, the *raison d'etre* of 'defending Irish freedoms' had been seized upon by propagandists who encouraged enlistment as a show of Irish loyalty. Redmond had painted himself into a corner in this regard. The passage of Home Rule proved to many that legislative freedom had been secured but, threatened by war, was yet to be implemented and must be paid for. According to Kitchener and the War

[100] 'Total enlistments of I.N.V. and non-Volunteer reservists and recruits', Table IV-B enlistment estimates by province, no dates but it can be assumed that data entry follows the formula of dates set forth in the previous data set on reservists and recruits who enlisted for the Royal Navy (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259).

Office, the queue to the till began at the recruiting station. Though Volunteer enlistment slowed throughout the war, it was enough to ensure that no special concessions were needed to coax the Irish into the ranks.

Despite enlistments from the National Volunteers, critics lambasted them as shirkers. As illustrated above in chart 2.1, a continuous decrease in recruits followed the initial surge upon the outbreak of war. Enlistment as evidence of loyalty had been a key motivating factor between the Ulster and National Volunteers upon the outbreak of war; each strove to outdo the other, armed and protected by their respective agents in the press. The *Weekly Northern Whig* spent 1914 dissecting the falsehood of Irish nationalist loyalty to the Crown and the war effort. The paper interpreted Redmond's speech in the House of Commons on 3 August as a 'tongue in ... cheek ... profession of loyalty in England to delude British Radicals'.[101] Conversely, Ulster's loyalty was 'not a sham, their help for the Empire has not to be purchased by bribery.' This mentality united the Ulster Volunteer Force throughout the war, although this was not expressed through consistent enlistment returns. Similar to Redmond's rationale, the defence of Ulster had been fused with defence of the Empire; it was prerequisite to a favourable settling of the Home Rule question. 'They will do their duty now to the Empire, and afterwards they will do it towards Ulster' was the rallying cry.[102] It must be stated however, as Timothy Bowman has argued, that the decision to enlist was by no means an easy one for members of the U.V.F., and that being an Ulster Volunteer 'had a fairly minimal impact on a man's decision to enlist'.[103] This helps to explain why, despite an equally great membership, U.V.F. enlistment followed a similar pattern to that of the I.N.V., and decreased following the initial exodus of officers and reservists in 1914. Similar to Redmond, Carson was aware of the political capital afforded by the Ulster Volunteers;[104] like his nationalist counterpart, he was ultimately unable to control the actions of such a large body of men.

Nevertheless, Unionist enlistment was substantial. The creation of the 36th (Ulster) Division certainly helped this, as did preferential treatment afforded to the Ulster Volunteers in forming companies replicated from U.V.F. ranks.[105] Some of the more

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[101] *Weekly Northern Whig*, 19 Sept. 1914.
[102] Ibid.
[103] Timothy Bowman, *Carson's army: the Ulster Volunteer Force, 1910-22* (Manchester, 2007), p. 172.
[104] Ibid., p. 166.
[105] *Belfast News-Letter*, 4 Sept. 1914. For evidence of frustrations experienced by of those seeking to join an Irish Brigade, of abuse of Irishmen in non-Irish brigades, or transfer requests of Irishmen to Irish Brigades, see J.P. Wray to Moore, 13 Oct. 1914; Fitzroy Hemphill to unknown, 14 Oct. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,554/2); James Grove White to Moore, 15 Aug. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS. 10,547/6); Moore to unknown, 12 Nov. 1914, Moore to J.P. Leigh, 16 Nov. 1914, Nugent to Moore, 25 Nov. 1914 and Crilly to Moore, 26 Nov. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,554/4).

extreme elements of 'Carsonism' felt hurt and somewhat betrayed by the passing of the Home Rule Bill. Others hissed the King's picture and walked out of their congregations when the National Anthem began playing.[106] Nevertheless, they enlisted, it was observed: 'in spite of a betrayal and the prospect of ultimate ruin at the hands of their enemies'.[107]

Nationalists never denied that Ulster and its Volunteers had done their duty; it was the accusations that 'the Nationalists have shirked the call' which frustrated Redmond.[108] Still, abuse poured forth.[109] By allowing the definition of duty to Ireland such latitude, nationalist leaders initially inhibited the unity of the National Volunteer movement. By narrowing the focus of Volunteer loyalty to enlistment, Redmond presented critics with a clearer target. Opponents thus equated patriotism with participation. Consequently, commentators such as 'Outis', an anonymous contributor to *United Service Magazine* who spent the war degrading the Irish contribution in all of its forms, poured on scorn at will:

> Long live the National Volunteers,
> May none their reputation mar;
> Invincible in times of peace,
> Invisible in times of war.[110]

By September 1915 Redmond and Moore sought distance from the National Volunteers. Their frustrations were apparent:

> In my opinion nothing can be done with the Volunteers or anything like them; they cannot be trained, disciplined or armed; moreover the enthusiasm has gone and they cannot be kept going. Even if we do keep some sort of organisation alive it will be no use for practical purposes against any army Orange or German.[111]

What made the failure of the I.N.V. unique was that they were denied the very outlet for service which they sought and which they were assured would be provided. The inability

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[106] *The Ulster Guardian*, October 3, 1914.
[107] *Weekly Northern Whig*, 26 Sept. 1914.
[108] Clipping of Redmond's speech at Tuam, 7 Dec. 1914, *Freeman's Journal*, n.d. (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,521).
[109] See various editorials inside the Sheehy Skeffington papers following the outbreak of the war, including 'Mr Redmond's failure', 3 Nov. 1914 (N.L.I., Sheehy Skeffington papers, MS. 22,275).
[110] 'Has recruiting in Ireland been satisfactory?', *United Service Magazine*, c. 1915 (N.L.I., PER 35 u, 1915 N.S. 51).
[111] Moore to Redmond, 24 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,206/7).

to express this loyalty through home defence, and the unwillingness to enlist en masse, resulted in an irreversible trend of declining participation. Other factors, however, also aided in its collapse.

III. Disintegration

Redmond's intervention was a major factor, though not the sole factor, in the disintegration of the Irish National Volunteers. Heralded in 1914 as a necessary step to unite nationalists under a single banner, the Irish Party had further diluted what had already been a cloudy pool of nationalist ideals. The selection of officers from men of popular social standing, and an administrating body which had become 'purely a party machine', irritated many who supported the movement. 'You have a leaderless force', R.E. Fitzgerald told Moore as early as July 1914, 'a large ship without a rudder, and therefore a menace to the British Nation'.[112] Instruction and training by reservists resulted in skeleton companies after the initial call to the colours had been answered. Despite these physical and ideological setbacks, many National Volunteers went to great lengths to serve their country and protect Home Rule, fulfilling duties which had been defined by their leaders.

The primary disintegration of the Irish National Volunteers therefore occurred by way of enlistment in the British Army. I.N.V. enlistment was initially substantial, and reflected national trends throughout the war. Overall, the inability of National Volunteers to enlist as units resulted in falling away of members as the war progressed. This decline in men and interest can be observed most poignantly throughout the initial months of the war. It can be found within both qualitative and quantitative evidence, namely, statistical returns reflecting I.N.V. enlistment, membership returns of I.N.V. companies, and the observations and records of the Royal Irish Constabulary that detail the National Volunteer movements and attitudes of the period.[113]

Numerous reports from I.N.V. organisers throughout Ireland detail the dual difficulty which the war presented. Companies became depleted as a result of both the anxious patriotism of National Volunteers, represented in enlistment, and the lethargy of those who dropped out of the movement. Patrick M. O'Sullivan reported of the condition of the Kilfinane corps in 1915:

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[112] R.E. Fitzgerald to Moore, 2 July 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers MS 10,548/5).
[113] Tables I-IV, c. 1914-17 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259); Inspector General's monthly reports, July 1914-Mar. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/94-7).

> At the outbreak of the war our company was strong. Then our instructors and reserve men were called to the colours and gradually our men volunteered – some are presently in France, in Gallipoli, and a number are in training. Even a part of our Committee volunteered. Those who remain are engaged in laborious work and have not the time nor the energy for drill. And to be candid there is but little hope for reorganisation in Kilfinane at present.[114]

Similar reports reached Moore and the national committee; all provide evidence to the fact that ranks had been depleted due to mass enlistment in the army.[115]

In which areas and to what extent had damage been done? Over 10,000 National Volunteers enlisted by the second week of December 1914. Of these, 7,615 were reservists – over 3,200 more reservists belonged to the National Volunteers than their Ulster counterparts during this period, further illustrating the loss of experienced instructors.[116] Discounting reservists, National Volunteer enlistment in the concluding months of 1914 was rather weak, averaging just under 700 recruits prior to the official weekly tabulation that began on 14 December. Taken together, the absence of these men wrought havoc on National Volunteer companies. An average of 1,729 National Volunteers enlisted per month from the outbreak of war through mid-June 1915.[117]

The R.I.C. Inspector General's monthly reports to the Chief Secretary provide qualitative evidence of the effects of Volunteer enlistment on a national level. They describe that the Volunteer movement, having spread 'over the whole country from North to South', made no progress following the outbreak of war, and was in fact in steady decline.[118] Local county reports provide greater detail to explain why this was. In addition to retiring into 'Winter Quarters',[119] various R.I.C. county reports explain that while the majority of Volunteer companies agreed with Redmond's war policy, many wished to avoid service. In September 1914, the County Inspector for Kerry reported that although the Volunteer movement in his county boasted forty-eight branches with 4,437 members, it was 'dwindling in enthusiasm I believe from fear on the part of many members that if they

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[114] Patrick M. O'Sullivan to Eckersley, c. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/7).
[115] J.M. McGinniss to Eckersley, 25 May 1915, John Lennon to unknown, 12 Aug. 1915 and Gerald Moloney to Moore, 14 Aug. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6); Diarmuid Coffey to Moore, 23 Aug. 1915 and Frank OCurran to Moore, 10 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,548/4).
[116] Approximately 10,341 I.N.V. enlisted by 14 Dec. 1914, 7615 of whom were reservists. The U.V.F. contributed 4,352 reservists to total 16,435 U.V.F. enlisted by 14 Dec. 1914. Table IV-B, enlistment estimates by province (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, 15,259).
[117] Ibid.
[118] Inspector General's monthly report, July 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[119] County Inspectors' monthly reports, Kildare Nov. 1914 and Meath Jan. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/95-6).

become efficient they would render themselves liable to military service. ... Very few recruits in this county have joined the army lately, and practically no Irish National Volunteers.'[120] Similar sentiments were echoed in Leitrim and Queen's county, which boasted Volunteer memberships of 4,216 and 3,998 respectively. The next month, the County Inspector for Armagh reported that 'there is very little drilling ... The majority of the members do not like the idea of fighting and getting killed; and seem to be afraid of being thought too efficient in the way of drill.'[121] Whispers of conscription also hindered open drill. Kilkenny, Louth and Roscommon reported rapid loss in Volunteer enthusiasm, with drilling having practically ceased. 'I have reason to know', reported Pierce Charles Power, the County Inspector for Kilkenny, 'that the fear of compulsory service has culled the ardour of many of the Volunteers.'[122]

In addition to answering the call of duty, as articulated by Redmond and the Government, many enlisted in an effort to vindicate themselves. Inspecting the Midleton National Volunteers of Cork in late August, Diarmuid Coffey reported that many men had enlisted because they had been sneered at as National Volunteers, accused of 'playing at soldiers' and told 'that if they really followed Mr Redmond's lead they ought to enlist.'[123] Pressure to enlist had become recognised by many as a political tactic of the Irish Party to bolster support for the Empire and thus gain the trust of the Government. This tactic, however, disgusted many additional National Volunteers who dropped out of the movement due to an overtly political agenda, an over-reliance on Redmond and the Irish Party, and the loss of focus which they believed the Volunteers had once possessed. It was in this way that the war had sabotaged Volunteer unity. Indolence and anxiety thus characterised the remaining National Volunteers prior to 1916.[124]

Enlistment and the absence of officers cannot alone bear the blame for the decline of the National Volunteers. Propagated fumbling continued into 1916 in the form of *The National Volunteer* – the organ of the Irish National Volunteers and the voice of the movement. Participation had been a cornerstone of Volunteering. It comes as a shock

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[120] County Inspector's report, Kerry, Sept. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[121] County Inspector's report, Armagh, Nov. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94). Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party*, p. 214.
[122] County Inspector's report, Kilkenny, Nov. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[123] Coffey to Moore, 23 Aug. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,548/4).
[124] Regarding reports of general boredom and apathy in the Irish National Volunteers, see Sandymount I.N.V. record book, c. 1915 (N.L.I., MS 12,162); Moore to national committee, 5 June 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10547/4); Frank O'Connor to Moore, 10 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10548/4).

then that the *National Volunteer*, with a potential subscription base of 100,000 had a readership of fewer than 12,000 and by the end of 1915 faced bankruptcy.

The paper had been published with the intent of rallying Volunteers to the Irish Party, as detailed by James Creed Meredith in late 1914:

> So long as the paper makes the unquestioning allegiance of the Volunteer to the Irish Party, as de jure if not de facto the Government of Ireland, perfectly clear, it discharges its whole duty, and all else is work of subrogation; by trying to do too much in the propagandist line it succeeds in doing nothing really helpful. If the paper had a large circulation among volunteers and their sympathisers then really valuable work in aid of the political side could best be done on a single page by short pointed effect.[125]

But over-reliance upon political propaganda was found to be a major contributing factor in the paper's failure. Those within the I.N.V. did not like to see their former comrades demonised and belittled within its pages. Coffey reflected on the paper's damaging effects:

> This paper was run nominally as a Volunteer paper but Gaynor was really only a party hack and the whole effort of those running the paper was to abuse the Sinn Féiners and boost the Parliamentary Party. Those of us who had, though Redmonite in politics, gone into the Volunteers because it seemed to be a fine national movement, were disgusted with 'The National Volunteer'. [126]

Moore shared Coffey's view, and confronted Gaynor about the content of the paper, accusing him of not understanding the ideals of the Volunteers. Moore warned that continued partisan harping and party politics would only further alienate the Irish Volunteers:

> I pointed out that the first article alone contained the following phrases: 'mischief makers', 'dastardly plot', 'treachery of a distinguished faction hissing their spiteful malignity', 'baffled spite of the factionists turned to rage', 'Irish

[125] Report of sub-committee regarding *The National Volunteer*, James Creed Meredith, 28 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10545/3).
[126] Diarmuid Coffey (B.M.H., W.S. 1,248).

> Nationalists once again at each other's throats', 'gorge and malignant hate', 'falsified their odious prophecies' ... and that the whole outlook of the paper was most repulsive to every independent Nationalist. We argued for a time and then he said he would take no instructions from me or from the National Committee; he would obey no one but Mr Redmond.[127]

On an inspection visit to Tyrone in late June 1915, an I.N.V. organiser reported to Moore that upon touring the county he found 'almost every corps that does or did exist' to have 'without exception a great distaste for the "National Volunteer" newspaper.' He continued:

> It is said that the National Volunteers do not wish to be continually in opposition to the Irish Volunteers. ... That the National Volunteer is continually abusing and bickering the Irish Volunteers. That the political part of the National Volunteer could be dispensed with and that military matters should be the main topic of the pages. [128]

As a result, the paper became unprofitable, and copies of the *National Volunteer* went unsold. Vendors requested their supplies be reduced or discontinued altogether. 'One copy will do in future as it is impossible to get them sold now' complained one newsagent from Toome.[129] Advertisers allowed their contracts to expire.[130] By the end of 1914 the paper was haemorrhaging £30 per week. It did so poorly that by December 1915 it had become a major liability to the National Volunteers, who struggled to finance the employment of staff in other departments. The unreliability of *The National Volunteer* as a financial asset to the movement is illustrated below.

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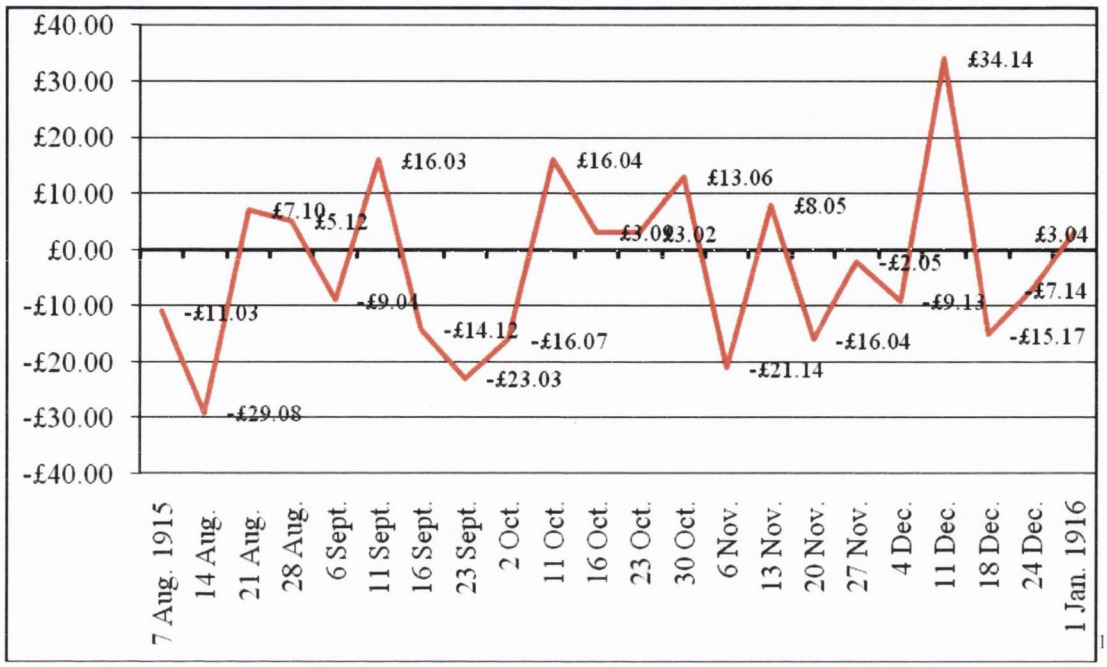
[127] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch.18 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/7). Early contributions on musketry, such as those provided by Tom Kettle, were bumped in favour of articles abusing the rival Irish Volunteers, columns lacking any useful military information, and overtly biased editorials.

[128] Unknown to Moore, 30 June 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/7).

[129] Several vendors sent requests to reduce supplies of *The National Volunteer*: 'Please discontinue our parcel of National Volunteer, what copies we require we can get from our London agent.' Conlon & Co, Liverpool, 30 Aug. 1915; Croker, Waterford, 7 Sept. 1915; 'Stop sending me any in future from this date.' McLoughlin, Carndonagh, 7 Sept. 1915; 'Reduce weekly supply of papers by 2 dozen.' Barrett, Cork 13 Sept. 1915; 'Discontinue *National Volunteer* until further notice.' Doren, Lurgan, 15 Sept. 1915; 'Stop supply of National Volunteer papers coming to me weekly as I am unable to sell one, since first you sent them.' Mellottee, Mayo, 15 Sept. 1915; 'Stop from order 1 doz. National Volunteer.' Menzie, Glasgow, 16 Sept. 1915; 'Please reduce our supply of Volunteer by 50 copies weekly.' Eason, Belfast, 15 Sept. 1915; 'One copy will do in future as it is impossible to get them sold now.' Begley, Toome, 11 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/3).

[130] Kevin Kenny [advertising] manager to unknown, 25 Aug. 1915; Michael McGoverney to unknown, 12 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/3).

Chart 2.3: *The National Volunteer* income/expense difference, August 1915-January 1916



[131]

Although unexplained in the paper's financial records, an influx of funds in December 1915 might be explained by a shift in funds from the national committee or from the *Freeman's Journal*, upon whose presses the paper ran.

The failure of *The National Volunteer* cost the I.N.V. more than readers – it jeopardised the integrity of the movement. Coffey levelled accusations of incompetency and negligence toward its executives. In his statement to the Bureau of Military History in 1955 he stated that, 'It was strongly suspected by some of us that a subsidiary object in running the paper on the part of Nugent' – whom he considered the epitome 'of a political boss of great ability, pretty unscrupulous, bluff and pleasant to his friends, a bitter and vindictive enemy' – and 'the A.O.H. members of the new committee was to get rid of Volunteer funds which they wished to divert from equipping and organising Volunteers to jobs for their back writers.'[132] Attending meetings of the general purpose committee in Dublin, Coffey was aghast at proposals to allow Volunteer funds to fade along with members. Though never utilised exclusively as a means of communication between the

[131] National Volunteer newspaper, Wood Printing Works contract, 7 Aug. 1915-1 Jan. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/3); national committee weekly diary minutes, 21 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239).

[132] Diarmuid Coffey (B.M.H., W.S. 1,248).

national committee and Volunteer companies, the folding of *The National Volunteer* weakened what had already become a poor system of communication within the movement and drained funds needed for equipment.[133]

While the disintegration of the National Volunteers may have been gradual, its death need not be viewed as definite. The exploitation of Volunteer enthusiasm, the over-politicisation of the Volunteer cause, and the failure to arm a substantial portion of its members caused many Volunteers to re-examine themselves and their position within the stagnant movement. Furthermore, Redmond's failure to materialise Home Rule or arm his Volunteers, British recruiting mismanagement, and an ever increasing list of Irish war casualties weakened Volunteer fidelity to him, though their desire to serve Ireland remained.[134] In attaching themselves to Redmond and his interpretation of loyalty to Ireland, many National Volunteers allowed their fidelity to be transformed into idolatry.[135] This need not be viewed as an anomaly in Irish history of the revolutionary period. Prior to the Great War, Redmond was hailed as *the* entity of Irish nationalism. By limiting the definition of loyalty to Ireland within his own terms, Redmond narrowed Volunteers' opportunity to serve the nation. It may of course be observed that many actively sought Redmond's leadership and the simplicity he brought to the Home Rule question, in order to clarify and justify their own positions. Nevertheless, in demonising the Irish or 'Sinn Féin' Volunteers, traditional nationalists further isolated many within the National Volunteer movement who, though at variance with their more extreme Volunteer counterparts, nevertheless admired their devotion.

Falling away individually or, as was typical, following the lead of their comrades – particularly at the local level – many National Volunteers chose either to defect to the more radical Irish Volunteers, or to desert the movement altogether. Boyce has identified retreat from the Government's recruiting campaign and Redmond's failure to provide strong political leadership during this period as factors contributing to defection. General malaise within the ranks of the I.N.V. may also be added to these grievances.[136] The Inchany branch of National Volunteers in Strabane, County Tyrone, numbering approximately 120 men collapsed in 1915 – fifty of its members defecting to the Rabstown Irish Volunteers and taking with them the company's thirty-one rifles and 200 rounds of ammunition. The

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[133] Regarding poor communication between I.N.V. companies, see J. Crean to Moore, 15 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I. Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/1); Donegan to Moore, 2 Mar. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).
[134] National committee weekly diary minutes, 20 July 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239).
[135] George Fletcher, *Loyalty: an essay on the morality of relationships* (New York, 1993), p. 6.
[136] Boyce, 'First World War transition', p. 100.

Ematris National Volunteers of Monaghan lost thirty-five of its members and twenty-four of its rifles to the Irish Volunteers at Coravaccan in January of 1915. And in May the National Volunteers of Mallow dissolved allowing thirty-five members to assimilate into the Irish Volunteers, taking along the two rifles and £21.13.0 which had been in the hands of the company's treasurer.[137] Charlie Brown, who had trained with the National Volunteers following the split in Cork, returned to the Irish Volunteers.[138]

As men, arms, and money found their way from the National to the Irish Volunteers, the former faced a crisis within its leadership. Moore, mysteriously distanced himself from the National Volunteers in early March 1916, he explained, 'in order to carry out duties which seem to be, at the moment, more urgent than those I am obliged to relinquish.'[139] Moore's history and pseudo-memoir of the National Volunteers neglects to explain this absence. The Chief of Staff, Edmond Cotter retired due to frustrations with Moore, and the Chief Assistant to Moore, Fitzroy Hemphill, followed suit shortly thereafter, citing his inability to continue to sacrifice his personal interests for the interests of the movement.[140] Before departing Hemphill lamented the state of the National Volunteers, and the ineffective body they had become:

> At the commencement of the war there was a large force of Volunteers in existence, and had it not been for a variety of circumstances, there would now be in Ireland, a large well armed, and highly trained body of Volunteers. ... I am convinced that there is a great future for a Volunteer force in Ireland. It is a movement which is an excellent physical and mental training for young Irishmen – Every able-bodied Irishman owes a duty to his country, that he may be able to defend his rights, his property, his women and children should occasion arise.'[141]

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[137] 'Transfer of rifles from the National to the Irish Volunteers', various dates c. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/29).
[138] Dan Corkery (B.M.H., W.S. 93). The Under-Secretary's reports of Volunteer activity throughout Ireland help to explain these transfers in greater detail. The minute changes in Volunteer arms and their distribution reveal just how difficult it was to import weapons; the losses and gains of each sector of Volunteers reveal where and when arms changed hands. Though a series of thefts had occurred following the Volunteer split, the climax of arms theft occurred between autumn 1915 through the spring of 1916. Arms raid by Irish Volunteers, statement of D. O'Sullivan, 6 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,548/5); *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Aug. 1915; *Irish Times*, 16 Aug. 1915; *Irish Daily Independent*, 17 Aug. 1917; N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,544/2). See also Novick, 'The arming of Ireland', pp 103-4.
[139] Moore to unknown, 1 Mar. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/1).
[140] Moore claimed that Cotter returned to England for financial reasons (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/7).
[141] Hemphill to Moore, Mar. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/1).

The Irish National Volunteers experienced a slow death prior to the Easter Rising. Companies had faded due to military enlistments, rifles sat rusting under lock and key, and their leaders became indifferent or distracted. As it did with many strands of Irish society, the Easter Rising prompted a re-examination of patriotism and sacrifice, in many cases giving direction and purpose to those who had simply wished to become part of a national movement. The national resurrection which followed the Easter Rising also revived the Irish National Volunteers. The mystique which grew from that week created a panacea which helped to cure the atrophy it had experienced since the outbreak of the Great War. What followed was an evaluation of interpersonal, national, and patriotic loyalties to Ireland and between Irishmen.

IV. The I.N.V. and the Easter Rising

Troops disembarking at Kingstown on 25 April 1916 were given specific instructions regarding the different men they would encounter in Dublin. Advancing on the Stillorgan, Donnybrook and Dublin roads, soldiers were to remember: 'that the householders and inhabitants of this country are with very few exceptions loyal to their support of the Empire, and that a large majority of them now have relations and friends serving in the Army, the rebels forming a very small proportion of the population.'[142] Rebels were simply 'misguided persons' and it was impressed upon military personnel that:

> Great care should be taken that men who are merely strong Nationalists should not be confused with Sinn Féiners and the dividing line between the two should be generously on the side of the Nationalists in cases where doubt exists.[143]

Similarly, John Regan noted in his memoirs that troops arriving from England 'had a gruelling time coming into Dublin and did not know friend from foe.'[144]

Upon receiving word of the outbreak in Dublin, Redmond instructed all National Volunteers to hold themselves at the disposal of the military and their soldiers. Many National Volunteers outside Dublin had done so without instruction.[145] In Wexford, National Volunteers under Jameson Davis were sworn in as special constables and put to

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[142] Orders for O.C. Troops disembarking from England at Kingstown, 25 Apr. 1916 (Copy of T.N.A., PRO 30/57/60, Lord Kitchener papers, in N.L.I., MS. 21,525; T.N.A., WO 25/69/1).
[143] Ibid.
[144] Joost Augusteijn (ed), *The memoirs of John M. Regan: a Catholic officer in the R.I.C. and R.U.C., 1909-1948* (Dublin, 2007), pp 94-5.
[145] *Freeman's Journal*, April 26,27,28,29, May 1, 2,3,4,5 – 1916. Redmond would later deny this when the rebellion gained public sympathy.

work policing the town, 'a move which arrested the spread of the insurrection in that historically rebel county.'[146] Other National Volunteer companies, such as those in Limerick, Cork, Drogheda, and Newry took turns guarding important public buildings – actions Major Crean was later anxious to exploit to critics in Ireland and Britain.[147] In most cases, however, particularly in Dublin, the National Volunteers handed over their rifles to soldiers or police, or disclosed of their whereabouts to the authorities, 'as a guarantee of good faith' and to display their cooperation.[148]

The chaos of the week, however, left most soldiers with little patience or inclination toward the finer points that distinguished constitutional nationalism from militant separatism. Mistakes were naturally made. A number of National Volunteers had accidentally been shot dead, including John Herbert Armstrong, 'a bitter opponent of the Sinn Féin policy.'[149] On Wednesday, 3 May, it was reported to Major Crean, acting Inspector General in Moore's absence, that a number of the National Volunteers had been arrested, their arms and uniforms seized by military authorities under the impression that 'National Volunteers and Irish Volunteers were merely branches of the same organisation.'[150]

Most all of the National Volunteers arrested complained of mistreatment and degradation at the hands of their captors. They were denied food or drink until well after their arrest, and only then supplied 'some hard biscuits and cocoa'. Several separate accounts describe the cocoa as containing 'a lot of black grit.' They were denied exercise, reading, or smoking privileges and days passed before they were permitted to wash. There were no blankets supplied and the accused had to sleep on cell floors; any additional rations distributed were, as Ben Pluck described, 'not of a class to improve your health. I have not recovered from the effects of treatment yet.'[151] Prisoners' effects were collected and not returned. For instance, R. Hammond's change purse had contained three shillings upon his arrest; he later described what was returned to him:

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[146] Gill to Asquith, 20 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,190/3).
[147] In a letter to an unknown recipient, Crean stated: 'Newspaper reports that the National Volunteers in various districts acted in aid of the authorities on the occasion of the recent deplorable disturbances in the country and I have to request that you will be so good as to furnish at your earliest convenience as full a report as possible of the nature of the duty (if any) performed in your district by the National Volunteers and the circumstances in which it was undertaken.' Crean to unknown, 11 May 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/3).
[148] Parliamentary question for 18 Oct. 1916, Under-Secretary submitted 17 Oct. 1916; 31 Oct. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, nos. 7,472 and 19,679).
[149] Report of S. Fagan, 7 Nov. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 20,431).
[150] Crean report to national committee, c. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/1).
[151] Statement of Ben Pluck, n.d. (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/3).

When being released I was asked to check the items and see if they were correct. I pointed out to the officer that there was no money in the purse, he produced the book and let me see that there was no entry in it for any property taken off my person on my arrival at Arbour Hill.[152]

Concerned mothers and wives wrote to Redmond and Crean to intervene on behalf of their sons and husbands who had been mistakenly arrested.[153] There was little that either could do but contact military authorities and vouch for the character of the interned. In some cases this worked, such as in the case of James Halpin who was released from Wakefield prison in late May.[154] Crean went a step further and offered himself to the military in order to identify National Volunteers who may have been picked up. But the most he could do was make reports of the mistreatment which, according to B.J. Phillips, – 'could not be explained badly enough.'[155] In some instances knowing someone was not enough. Lieutenant McMahon, a former National Volunteer who had enlisted in the army, patrolled Arbour Hill but refused to recognise several Volunteers who called to their former comrade for help.[156]

Perhaps worst from an organisational point of view, many of the arms and ammunition which had not been voluntarily surrendered by the National Volunteers were seized from their homes. Of the 3,780 arms confiscated by the military during the Rising (1,654 from Dublin alone), the Under-Secretary assured the Prime Minster that none were 'other than Sinn Féin arms', and that nearly 200 rifles accidentally taken from the National Volunteers were being held in safe custody in the Victoria Barracks.[157] Debate continued throughout the year regarding the accuracy of these claims.[158]

Though he stood aloof from the Volunteer movement over the past year – preoccupied with the war and recruiting – Redmond's actions in the wake of the Rising enforced his genuine belief that the 'Sinn Féin Volunteers' did not, on a large scale, deserve punishment. They were, as he and others believed, simply misled idealists, syndicalists and feminists. Their following, journalist T.P. Gill described, had 'no natural

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[152] Statement of R. Hammond, arrested 26 Apr., released 4 May (Ibid.). See also 'a rebellion victim', c. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS. 10,571/3).
[153] Kathleen Hawkins to Redmond, 9 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,262/5).
[154] Unknown to Redmond, 25 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,262/5).
[155] Statement of B.J. Phillips, arrested 30 April and released 19 May (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/3).
[156] Statements of Ben Pluck and R. Hammond (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,546/3).
[157] Return of arms seize and captured during rebellion, n.d. (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,185).
[158] Parliamentary question for 18 Oct. 1916, Under-Secretary submitted 17 Oct. 1916; 31 Oct. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, nos. 7,472 and 19,679).

seed-bed in Nationalist Ireland outside a few very restricted spots such as the Dublin slums'.[159] Particularly compassionate, considering their complicated history and the division which had originated from their difficult relationship, was Redmond's insistence on the sparing of Eoin MacNeill.[160] Though later evidence would absolve MacNeill from any direct responsibility for the Rising, as de jure head of the organisation it was believed that he would take the brunt of any punishment.

Redmond wished for a stay on executions not only to spare life, but to prevent the loyalty of constitutional nationalists towards the Empire from faltering. He admitted to fellow I.P.P. man, John Dillon, that the situation was 'extremely complicated'. Additional executions would rile the Irish people against the Government, support from which was essential in securing the interests of the Irish Party. In addition, Redmond foresaw his American support shifting in the wake of executions, further eroding sources of funding and international sympathy with the constitutionalist position. 'It is a very serious sign, and I am convinced,' Redmond relayed to Asquith, that 'if more executions take place in Ireland, the position [in America] will become impossible for any constitutional Party or Leader.'[161] Redmond's position was extremely tricky. He condemned the Rising but approved of exemplary executions so long as they were few, of a military nature, and carried out slowly. He judged the insurrection as 'wicked, reckless and without justification', but maintained that the majority of Ireland has been, and remained, loyal.[162]

Redmond reported to the Chief Secretary in early May that public feeling in Ireland was 'already becoming very bitter.'[163] It soon became apparent in government circles that the Irish must be appeased in order to retain their loyalty. Immediate solutions to 'healthily divert people's minds in this country from the aftermath of the rebellion' included the appointing of a statutory commission to implement the Home Rule Act, and the admission that Ulster, 'with the appeal to physical force which it was led', was partly responsible for the Rising.[164] Birrell was sacked and consequently, though not deservedly, Nathan. The 'wait and see' attitude of the former during the previous years was criticised

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[159] Unknown to Asquith, 17 May 1916; Gill to Asquith, 20 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/6; 15,190/3).
[160] Redmond note, 4 May 1916, (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/6).
[161] Redmond to Asquith, 3 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/6).
[162] Redmond memorandum, 6 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,182/22). Moore's condemnation of the executions was equally strong; his appeal to spare Casement came with a warning: 'Be wise; stop this execution; if not take a terrible responsibility on yourself. At all events we have warned you.' Moore to Asquith, 29 July 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,561/1).
[163] Telegram to Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle; read in Irish Office 4.30 pm, 7 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,262/5).
[164] Unknown to Asquith, 17 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,165/6).

in a letter from Lord Midleton, a southern Unionist and staunch opponent of advanced nationalism:

> I assure you I should greatly dislike to attribute to you, especially at the present time, any words of which I was not certain; but I do assure you, though they may have escaped your memory, that you used the particular expressions I attributed to you more than once. You were sitting back in your armchair in your room in the House of Commons, and I remember as if it were yesterday your saying, "I don't take these people seriously; I laugh at the whole thing." That particular expression struck me very much, because it was used in November, and you said something almost identical to me when we met on the Metropolitan Railway some little time later. I specially remember them, because I was so grateful for the change of tone in your letter of February 27th, which you permitted me to read. Please forgive my saying that I have seen, though I am not permitted to use it, what purports to be documentary evidence of your having held the view that the fears of any very serious action by the Sinn Féiners were laughable.[165]

Though assigning blame for the Rising was an objective of the Government, apparent in its subsequent committee of inquiry hearings, fear that the loyalty of constitutional nationalists would wane in the aftermath of reprisals was paramount. T.P. Gill complained that enough was not being made of the loyalty of Nationalist Ireland throughout the years – particularly during the war.[166] Gill peddled Redmond as a man who had remained consistent and obedient to the wishes of the Government and the War Office throughout the war, and had given up a position in the Coalition Government so as to preserve the political peace. That the great majority of National Volunteers identified with Redmond and the constitutional movement was not lost on Gill, who concluded that this connection prevented what could have been a very serious revolution in Ireland:

> The mass of Irish Nationalists in Ireland and beyond the seas remained detached and loyal in this rebellion, following Redmond's lead – a great outstanding historical fact. ... Enough is not being made of the loyalty of Nationalist Ireland. It

[165] Midleton to Birrell, 23 May 1916 (T.N.A., Midleton papers, PRO 30/67/31). Gill would also identify neglect, such as failing to post guards outside the post office, Gill to Asquith 20 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,190/3).
[166] Gill to Asquith, 20 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,190/3).

> is not being appreciated as it ought. The accidental and stupid magnifying of the outbreak which is going on tend to obscure this great factor and even to prevent an appreciation of the imminent danger of losing it. ... Add to the estimate of how loyally Ireland has followed Redmond since the war and far more remarkable fact of the support of the immense proportion of the Irish and their kinsmen and sympathisers in America.[167]

Continental allies were quick to announce that the rebellion was not, on the whole, an act of treason. The French newspaper *Le Temps* declared of Ireland: 'Son loyalisme ne peut pas etre suspecté, malgré la deplorable affaire de Dublin.'[168] Nevertheless, opinion varied. Philip Gibb, a war correspondent in France, later recalled the feelings of 'the average Englishman', of which he was admittedly one:

> I shall never forget when that dreadful news came to us on the western front. ... At that very time the Irish tried to stab us in the back – did stab us in the back. ... When the news came to us it seemed at first incredible, and then unforgivable. It is still hard to forget or forgive by any Englishman, and by some Irishmen. An Irish general said to me: "I can never go back to Ireland, never! I can never take off my hat to an Irishman again." There were tears in his eyes as he spoke.[169]

A less emotional, but nonetheless poignant observation was supplied by Cecil Geoffrey Hodges of the Gordon Highlanders in a letter to his father in May 1916. Hodges condemned what he saw as the incongruous ineptitude of the British Government: 'I do not for a moment believe that with a firm and determined Government, resolved to stick at nothing in order to win this war, we should have been treated to this humiliating affair in Ireland.'[170]

Declarations and examples of Irish loyalty, particularly those embodied by the National Volunteers and a population who had sent its sons to war, could no longer be entertained by the Government in light of the events of Easter Week. Enlistment had declined following Lord Wimbourne's recruiting scheme the previous autumn, and

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[167] Gill to Asquith, 17, 20 May 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,190/3).
[168] *Le Temps*, 20 Oct. 1916; Bertie of Thame (Ambassador at Paris) to Lord Lieutenant and Chief Secretary, 19 Oct. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 19,178). For additional French commentary on the course of Ireland throughout the Great War, see R.C. Escouflaire, *L'Irlande ennemie...?* (Paris, 1918).
[169] Philip Gibb, 'The Anarchy in Ireland from the view of the average Englishman', *Harper's magazine*, cxlii (March, 1921), pp 409-18.
[170] 'Westrope' to his father, 1 May 1916 (I.W.M., H.L. Franklin paper, 93/25/1).

monthly returns were shadowed by earlier contributions. Home defence had been a failure. Simply put, the I.N.V. had outlived its use. Military crackdowns following the Rising included the suspension of drill, marches, the wearing of uniform in public, and the prohibition of volunteering in Ireland in any form which claimed ulterior motives to sustaining and supplementing the British Army.

Though some companies clung to life and the national committee continued to meet, many Irish nationalists became convinced that the struggle for legislative freedom and national autonomy was futile by constitutional means; support, money, votes, and adherence to a policy of parliamentary cooperation with the Liberals had produced nothing tangible. Support for the war and the hardships they incurred had secured nothing. The tide of public opinion began to turn, and losses in France and Gallipoli became symbolically insignificant to the wider nationalist population compared to sacrifices in the streets of Dublin or the executions in Kilmainham jail.

The I.N.V. attempted to regroup the following September 'in an effort', Moore described, 'to get in touch with various corps who are at present unaffiliated'.[171] Their efforts were overshadowed by the release of 'Sinn Féin Volunteers' from prisons, the flying of the tri-colour, and the pessimism expressed by Redmond who, in the wake of the Rising, saw the base of his support eroded – 'the ruin of all his plans and diplomacies.'[172] In a letter to the national committee in November 1916, Redmond stated that reorganising the movement at that time 'would in the existing circumstances of Ireland, be fraught with grave mischief, not only to the cause of the Volunteers but to many other causes of national importance.' Disheartened by the events of Easter, Redmond felt the resurrection of the National Volunteers to be inopportune and distanced himself from the organisation.[173]

The Rising and its aftermath was the latest and perhaps most significant event which directly contributed to the downfall of the Irish National Volunteers. Lingering in small pockets throughout the country with strictly nominal membership, the further decline of the I.N.V. was due more to the alternative provided by Sinn Féin than the mismanagement of the Irish Party and National Volunteer executive. Moore detailed how the I.N.V., as they had existed prior to 1916, were simply incapable of towing this new line toward Irish freedom:

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[171] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', chs 28, 29 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/10).
[172] Ibid.
[173] National committee weekly diary minutes, 14 Nov. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239).

> Not only was the old organisation inefficient for the new work, but the leaders were not, either in character or position, any way suitable. Lawyers, commercial men, government employees, middle-aged married men, might give an air of respectability to a recognised body, but they were not the class or education fitted for conspiracy, secret plotting, attacks on prisons and the raiding of barracks for arms. This sort of work was for the young and wreckless; men without wives and children depending on them; men who could and would face the prison or the firing party without flinching.[174]

As a result, efforts to revitalise the Irish National Volunteers throughout 1917 failed in the wake nationalist Ireland's conversion to republicanism and subsequent re-invention of the criteria of nationalist loyalty.

V. Aftermath

Following the Easter Rising, British authority in Ireland no longer entertained the idea of Volunteering – regardless of Irish contributions to the British Army or desire to defend the shores of Ireland. Further restrictions governing Volunteer drill, the wearing of a Volunteer uniform in public, and the carrying of arms crippled the public presence of the National Volunteers. Even the proposition of performing Swedish drill, which in reality amounted to glorified gymnastics, was frowned upon by Redmond and forbidden by General Sir Bryan Mahon.[175] Having experienced great apathy prior to the Rising, these restrictions brought the necessity of reorganising the I.N.V. to the fore. A circular issued to company centres in September 1916 emphasised this point:

> We are confident no words of ours are needed to impress upon you the absolute necessity of placing the Volunteers on a sound and permanent fighting footing. The times are threatening, and vast national issues of the first importance loom up in the immediate future. We must organise, strengthen, and consolidate our forces. In too many cases officers and men seem to have lost heart and interest. This lethargy is unworthy of us; no man is entitled to hang back and criticise where he

[174] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 29 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/10).
[175] National committee weekly diary minutes 19 Dec. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,239); Moore to Redmond (two different letters of same date), 6 Dec. 1916; Donovan and Kettle to Kelly, 17 Oct. 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,207/7).

> should be helping to construct; no one is entitled to hamper where he should help. In the interests of the nation every man must stand to arms.[176]

The encouragement of the secretaries fell on deaf ears. While thousands still considered themselves National Volunteers, and nominal enrolment figures appeared on monthly police reports, only thirty companies had paid their affiliation dues and remained in contact with headquarters in Dublin. This was a far cry from the 900 companies which remained current and active one year previously.

Moore, having surfaced from his unexplained absence, proposed a national convention to assess the state of the movement.[177] Redmond, still acting president of the I.N.V., was alarmed at the prospect in the aftermath of an attempted revolution and advised against it.[178] Moore feared that continued stagnation of the National Volunteers would allow the 'Sinn Féin rebels' to capitalise on the sympathy they had received from nationalist Ireland, and draw additional National Volunteers into their ranks. John Donovan concurred, and reported to Redmond that while men of the national committee and other governing bodies were supporters of the Irish Party,

> if something practical were not done in the way of re-organising the Volunteers and holding a Convention at a date in the near future the result would be that thousands of young men all over the country would drift into secret societies. They declared that these secret societies were spread all over the country and the one avenue of safety was the National Volunteers and making them attractive to the youth of Ireland who were not Sinn Féiners and who were anxious to support the Constitutional Movement.[179]

The I.N.V. redirected its efforts toward other national causes in order to curb its decline and re-appear as a broad nationalist movement. Once again crisis bred clarity. Opposition to the proposed partition of Ireland, the immediate enactment of Home Rule (at least in the twenty-six counties), a refusal to act against any Unionist county which resisted Home Rule (and protest against any efforts of the British army to act against them), an

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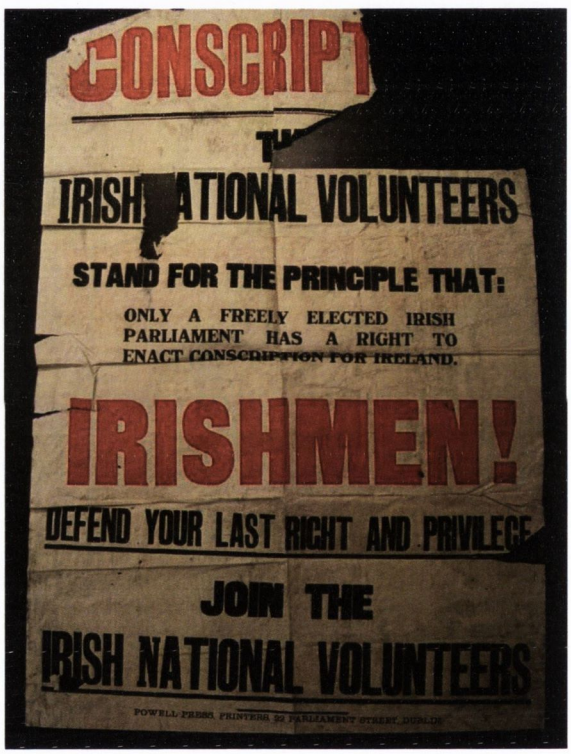
[176] J.T. Donovan and L.J. Kettle to various companies, 27 Sept.1916 (T.N.A., CO 904/23).
[177] National committee weekly diary minutes, 12 Sept.; 14 Nov. 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS. 9,239).
[178] Redmond to honorary secretaries, 31 Oct., 15 Dec. 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,185).
[179] Donovan to Redmond, 15 Nov. 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,185). Moore was supported at this time by Crean, Meredith, Nugent, and Coffey.

appeal to Ulster nationalists to stand with nationalists of the south of Ireland for a united island, and amnesty for Irishmen imprisoned in connection with the Rising were all motions passed with confidence by the national committee in June 1916.[180]

The perceived threat of conscription, however, was the most identifiable rallying cry for Irish nationalists. Redmond had of course stood against Irish conscription since 1915,[181] but bringing the issue out of the Commons and coordinating it with the efforts of the National Volunteers gave the movement renewed purpose. Donovan and Kettle saw the conscription crisis as a way to recruit for the National Volunteers.

Photo 2.1



They issued posters to be hung throughout the country, and canvassed for the I.N.V. to stand firm in the event of conscription.[182] '[T]his Conscription talk is no political dodge,' they ensured. 'It will have to be decided one way or the other, and that very soon.'[183]

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[180] I.N.V. general purpose committee minutes, motions of Moore and Meredith, 17 June 1916 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 9,240).

[181] Redmond to Asquith, 15 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, 15,165/5).

[182] Regarding conscription, Donovan informed Redmond that 'only free men were enabled to decide this question'. Posters such as the one pictured above were torn down by the police and 'all civil servants under pain of dismissal' were warned against joining the National Volunteers. Donovan to Redmond, 15 Nov. 1916 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,185); anti-conscription poster, c. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 20,989).

The buzz of conscription reached every corner of Ireland. Some I.N.V. companies did not hesitate to champion the cause, and used language more commonly associated with separatists to express their opposition. A man named Kelly declared at a meeting of the Meath county board of the National Volunteers that it would be 'Better [to] die on the hill-sides of Ireland than be conscripted'.[184] J.J. McCarthy, president of the Meath board, used a more reserved tone, and proposed the resolution: 'we won't have conscription at any price'. McCarthy concluded with a statement of clarification, that although the I.N.V. was pledged to resist conscription 'there was no man attending the Volunteer meetings there who was in favour of the principles of the Sinn Féin Rebellion. Two wrongs did not make a right.'[185]

Though certainly achieving a consensus amongst nationalists, the conscription crisis failed to halt the decline of the I.N.V. The transformation of Irish nationalist sentiment following Easter 1916 further necessitated the need for a national convention to re-evaluate the position of the I.N.V. in post-Rising Ireland. Incessant badgering on the issue sent Redmond over the edge:

> [I]n spite of my expressed disapproval of the calling of a National Convention of the Volunteers at present, such a Convention has been summoned for next Easter Monday in Dublin. I wish to say that, under the circumstances, I can take no responsibility whatever in connection with this convention, and must ask the Committee to select someone else to take my place as President.[186]

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[183] Donovan and Kettle to Mr Kelly, 17 Oct. 1916 (T.N.A., CO 904 series via N.A.I., M.F.A. 54/10). The urgency of the issue was press upon an aloof Redmond: 'As long as there is an organised force in Ireland, pledged to resist Conscription, there is little fear that it will be attempted. But, it is certain that the Government will make an attempt to enforce it if they believe the country is in a disorganised condition. The National Volunteers are pledged to resist Conscription. It is absolutely essential that this force should be reorganised at once and put on an efficient footing. At present public drilling and training is not permitted, but the more important work or enrolling new members and pledging them to resist conscription can be vigorously pushed ahead.' Donovan and Kettle to Redmond, 16 Oct. 1916 (T.N.A., CO 904 series via N.A.I., M.F.A. 54/10).

[184] 'Volunteers and conscription', R.I.C. special crime branch report on National Volunteer reorganisation, c. Oct. 1916 (T.N.A., CO 904/23).

[185] Ibid.

[186] Redmond's resignation was not taken seriously and the national committee went to great lengths to appease his wishes, including the alteration of the I.N.V. constitution in order to postpone a convention and the courting of other Irish Party members to help strengthen resistance to Moore. Donovan to Redmond, 12 Feb. 1917; Redmond to honorary secretaries, 13 Feb. 1917; Donovan to T.J. Hanna, 9 Mar. 1917 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,185).

Redmond's resignation as president of the movement dissolved the bond between the National Volunteers and the Irish Party as it had been established in 1914 and strengthened throughout 1915. Moore emerged as leader of the National Volunteers, airing his frustrations with the Irish Party publicly as a way of excusing the National Volunteers from any mismanagement or misdirection.[187] However, Donovan and other members of the national committee associated Moore with the crowd that had guided the I.N.V. toward decline. Having disrupted a meeting of the national committee in November 1916, Moore threatened to sever his connection with it permanently should a convention be denied within the stated period outlined by the I.N.V. constitution, that is, by Easter 1917. Postponing a vote on a convention date bought the committee time, but essentially drove a wedge further into the National Volunteer leadership. Moore's actions only exacerbated the situation. By December 1916 it was evident that his views had changed. Moore estranged himself from the traditional Redmondite outlook of the I.N.V. He was seen liaising with Austin Stack and other known 'extremists', and advocated reunion between both Volunteer factions.[188]

As Moore seized upon Redmond's abdication, Donovan, Lawrence Kettle, and a minority within the national committee were unable to oppose him. Moore's overt disgust at the direction of the movement and criticism of the Irish Party throughout 1917 attracted many followers and reflected the greater trend in nationalist opinion. His push toward a national convention prompted further division within the national committee, however, and resulted in the resignation of several of its members.[189] Finally, his proposal for a reunited Irish Volunteer movement was met with mixed reaction. This, along with open sympathy for the rebels, immediately caught the attention of the Government.

Moore arranged for a meeting of Volunteer officers to discuss the feeling of the movement at the moment; orders of business reflected the reverence felt for the Easter martyrs and the shift in nationalist loyalties present in many National Volunteers. He opened the meeting by asking those present 'to pay a mark of respect to the men who had given their lives for their country in Easter 1916'.[190] Attended by fifty-four officers, Moore explained that, as an alternative to the traditional structure of the Volunteers being run from the top by the likes of Redmond, the officers meeting was a way to help

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[187] *Irish Independent*, 2 Apr. 1917; T.N.A., CO 904/23; Moore to Donegan, 30 May 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).
[188] Moore to Austin Stack, 9 Dec. 1916 (N.L.I., MS 17,095).
[189] Donovan to T.J. Hanna, 9 Mar. 1917; Madden to Donovan, 15 Mar. 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/10).
[190] Officer's meeting, 22 Apr. 1917 (N.L.I. Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/10).

decentralise the movement, and to 'understand the wants and wishes of the Volunteers, and it was in order to take counsel with them and their opinions'. Moore also revealed to the *Freeman's Journal* that he was 'not altogether without hope that we may find some way of reconciling old differences of opinion which have done so much harm in the past.'[191]

Addressed as President of the Irish National Volunteers, Moore ascended the chair and once again called for an expression of 'sympathy with our fellow countrymen and ancient comrades in arms, who lost their lives in the cause of freedom, a cause which many nations, including England herself, declare they are fighting for.' The motion was passed unanimously by the 160 men in attendance, four of whom wore Sinn Féin badges.[192] The meeting once again called for an immediate convention and reorganisation of the movement. Moore, however, took the issue further. 'We regret the split,' he stated, 'which was the origin of most of the troubles which have since occurred; we think the time opportune for a re-union; we invite all to join in friendliness and forgetfulness of the past'.[193] Though his vision for reunion with the Irish Volunteers caused great alarm within Government and military circles, it was a complicated sentiment Moore had harboured for some time.[194] Moore did not condone the actions of the Easter rebels, nor did he wish to see the Irish Party suffer at the hands of Sinn Féin. Moore had supported Redmond as the leader of the Irish Party – as the representative of Ireland. He opposed, however, the actions of the Party and of Redmond himself for purporting to criticise the seceding Volunteers and further divide Ireland by politicising the Volunteers. Though demonised as hasty and irrational by dissenters within the national committee, Moore's impromptu meeting of officers in late May aired the frustrations of Volunteers throughout the country in a general forum. Moore stressed 'an independent attitude, neither Party nor Sinn Féin, but Volunteer, so that the movement may be saved from extremes.'[195] Moore's sentiments harkened back to the Volunteers of 1913 and echoed the contemporary speeches of Eoin MacNeill and Roger Casement. Though met with praise by his followers, reorganisation on such a platform was impossible within the realities of 1917.

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[191] *Freeman's Journal*, 1 May 1917. A second meeting of officers was held a week later at the Mansion House.

[192] The political situation would become even more difficult for Redmond and the Irish Party as Sinn Féin won its first by-election in January 1917 – several members of the national committee were seen wearing Sinn Féin badges and had canvassed for Plunkett in North Roscommon. Donovan to Redmond, 7 Feb. 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904/23).

[193] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 May 1917.

[194] Mahon to Duke, 17 May 1917, (T.N.A., CO 904/23/5); secret dossier, memo of George Love, 28 May 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904/23).

[195] Moore to Donegan, 30 May 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,547/6).

Provincial Volunteer companies praised Moore and his leadership – a type which, even during his career in the British Army, had evoked both 'the despair and admiration of his fellow-officers.'[196] A Belfast convention of officers pledged their loyal support to Moore 'in whatever steps he may consider necessary to take to make the movement efficient and National.'[197] He capitalised on this momentum and announced an all-Ireland National Volunteer convention for 5 August and requisitioned the National Volunteer offices at 44 Parnell Square to serve as his headquarters.[198] Using the daily papers as vehicles for advertisement, he effectively threw down the gauntlet to the Government, explaining that the Volunteer convention would be used as a forum to heal 'the differences which arose in September, 1914, amongst the Volunteers of Ireland, and to a general re-organisation.'[199] The previous meetings with I.N.V. officers no doubt strengthened Moore's confidence in his proposals.[200]

Two distinct reactions emerged following Moore's announcement. The first was from the minority within the national committee who resolved, in Moore's absence, to hold a national convention of their own on 4 September – thus effectively splitting the movement. The second was from the military, which had become greatly concerned regarding the explicit appeal to reunite the Volunteers of Ireland within a single body, effectively boosting the number of men open to Sinn Féin influence by tens of thousands. General Mahon warned Moore that any reunion or reorganisation would be deemed illegal if it proposed drilling or arming of any sort.[201] The transfer of arms from the National Volunteers to the Sinn Féin element was once again feared. New R.I.C. Inspector General Joseph Byrne informed the new Chief Secretary, H.E. Duke, of increased security to prevent such transfers.[202] Neither Moore nor Donovan (spokesman of the remaining National Volunteers and caller of the 4 September convention) could vouch for the security of their rifles due to their scattered distribution.[203] Dissatisfied, General Fry informed

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[196] Diarmuid Coffey (B.M.H., W.S. 1,248).
[197] (Belfast) A.E. McDonnell to Moore, 19 June 1917; (Derry) correspondence from officers meeting 31 July 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/9).
[198] *Freeman's Journal*, 19 July 1917; 'Intent to hold a convention', (Ibid.) 20 July 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/10).
[199] *Freeman's Journal*, 21 July 1917.
[200] Moore to honorary secretaries, 30 July 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/9).
[201] Major-General W. Fry to Moore 3 Aug. 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904 series via N.A.I., M.F.A. 54/10).
[202] Byrne to Duke, 3 Aug. 1917. For an assessment of Duke as Chief Secretary see Eunan O'Halpin, 'Historical revision XX: H.E. Duke and the Irish administration, 1916-18' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxii, no. 88 (Sept. 1981), pp 362-376.
[203] Col. F.H.G. Seanton to Under-Secretary, secret file A.2/1657/1, 4 Aug. 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904 series via N.A.I., M.F.A. 54/10).

Moore that he would not hesitate to execute his duty and that responsibility for the rifles remained squarely on the Colonel's shoulders.[204]

Moore's sabre-rattling throughout 1917 proved more attractive than had Redmond's policy of recruiting and cooperation with the Government. Affiliated companies rose from thirty in late November 1916 to forty-eight by August 1917 – a small increase but an increase nonetheless. Although committee minutes and contemporary accounts paint Moore as a renegade bent on upsetting the alliance of the Irish Party and the Volunteers, he defended himself as being a man of the times, aware of the potential of a cohesive nationalist movement. In an open letter to Donovan and Kettle in the *Irish Independent* he commented on the shifting position of Irish nationalist sentiment, and criticised moderates who struggled to comprehend it:

> Too late my friend! The Volunteers, like the electors, have left you stranded on a shifting sandbank. The tide has turned, and is rising rapidly. ... Instead of leading, you are being dragged, reluctant and struggling, along the national road that every Irishman should have been treading long ago ... .[205]

On 5 August Moore's convention was held despite Government warnings. Speaking with regret on the state of the Volunteer movement in Ireland, Moore voiced his frustration at what had effectively become a shattered movement to the fifty men who represented 176 Volunteer companies (this time twenty of whom wore Sinn Féin colours):

> During the last two or three years many things have happened that I did not approve of and which I attempted to prevent. ... I think it will be found that if I had had my way matters would have turned out very different; there would have been no split and no Wooden Bridge speech and no urging of the Volunteers to enlist. ... Is there any Irishman I wonder who joined the Volunteers in the early days of splendid enthusiasm; when they knew nothing of quarrels and bickerings; when every Volunteer was taught that it was his duty to take his place in his Company, regardless of the political opinions of his right or left hand man; when rich and poor stood together in the ranks, and submitted to the discipline that would make them

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[204] Ibid.
[205] *Irish Independent*, 10 Aug. 1917.

soldiers of Ireland; is there anyone of those men who does not bitterly regret the divisions which drove us asunder and ruined the movement.[206]

Moore's reflections represented a very brief period for the Irish Volunteers: one bursting with equal portions of enthusiasm and ignorance. While the introduction of political figures and associations had indeed become a cancer which had eaten away at the Volunteers and had, at times, required excision, it had also become a cornerstone of the Irish National Volunteers. The Irish Volunteers who came to support Sinn Féin can be assessed no differently; their political hijacking simply occurred later in their existence. Moore suggested reunification with those Irish Volunteers to whom, he argued, Ireland owed a huge debt of gratitude: 'their self sacrifice has done much to advance our position' he explained.[207] Moore's vision was not limited to the MacNeill/Redmond divide which had forced a wedge between the Volunteers in the early days – his vision was Casement-like, wholly inclusive of all Volunteers: 'Not only do I wish to have some peace among Nationalists, but I wish to hold out the hand of friendship to Orangemen and Unionists when we come together to decide on the future of Ireland.'[208]

Reports of Moore's convention sent shock waves through military and government circles.[209] In view of the proposed amalgamation of volunteers bodies, immediate action against the I.N.V. was deemed justified.[210] R.I.C. Inspector General, Joseph Byrne, even questioned Mahon as to the legality of having Moore deported.[211] Though not acting to that extreme, Mahon conceded that 'the Conference of the Irish National Volunteers called by Colonel Moore on Sunday last has materially altered the situation.'[212] Byrne estimated that anywhere from 4,000-6,000 rifles could be seized if the military acted swiftly, thus preventing them reaching undesirables. Seizure of the Ulster rifles was discussed but, due to their number, had to be postponed.[213] The rifles belonging to the National Volunteers, the majority of which were stored in armoires and known to the police, made easier

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[206] Draft speech prepared for the Volunteer convention, c. Aug. 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/9).
[207] Ibid.
[208] 'I.N.V. convention 1917', c. Aug. 1917 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,545/9).
[209] Owen Brien (D.M.P. superintendent) to unknown 7 Aug. 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904/29)
[210] Wl. Wh[erton] footnote in Owen Brien memo of 7 Aug. 1917 (Ibid.).
[211] 'The conduct of Colonel Moore raises a serious question whether the powers of the D of R Regulations should not be invoked to prohibit him from residing in Ireland.' Byrne to Mahon, n.d. (Ibid.).
[212] Mahon to Duke, 8 Aug. 1917; minute to R.I.C. Inspector General and D.M.P. Commissioner, 9 Aug. 1917; note to press censor's office, Dublin 15 Aug. 1917; war office memorandum, 16 Aug. 1917 (T.N.A., WO 32/9514).
[213] Byrne to Duke, 7 Aug. 1917 (T.N.A., WO 32/9514).

targets.[214] In the early hours of 14 August the military, in coordination with the Royal Irish Constabulary and Dublin Metropolitan police, seized rifles held in various depots, armouries and homes throughout Ireland. Moore, possibly still fuming from the fact that the fine mahogany doors at 44 Parnell Square, I.N.V. headquarters, had been smashed in with a sledge hammer to gain entry, questioned Mahon as to why the raid had happened at night in the cover of darkness:

> If you thought it improper that arms should remain in our care, though we held them by your authority, it was open to you to ask for their delivery, in an open lawful manner, during the day, instead of by an armed raid in the dead of the night. … As you are aware I have tried in many ways to keep order; the organisation of the Irish National Volunteers has been open and above board.[215]

It was suppressive moves such as this, Moore exclaimed, which drove National Volunteers into 'secret channels'.

One month after the raid, Mahon reported to Duke that drilling had 'virtually ceased in all counties except Clare'. Ten days later, the long-awaited convention of Redmond-supporting National Volunteers took place. Major Crean had taken Moore's place as Inspector General; hardly anyone in the movement noticed. A joint statement by the honorary secretaries Donovan and Kettle summed up what had once been an influential movement:

> Many material changes have taken place in the world, and in the Irish National Volunteers, since our last Convention was held at Easter, 1915. The National Volunteers have passed through many vicissitudes since the day when 25,000 men, the great proportion of them well drilled and equipped, marched through the streets of Dublin from the great Review in the Phoenix Park. The two main factors in these changes have been the terrible world war and the Rising in Dublin last year. The effect of both those happenings on the Volunteers has been, needless to say, an adverse one. The war depleted our ranks, and the military restrictions which followed on the Rising compelled us to suspend drilling and training. …

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[214] Mahon to Duke, 8 Aug. 1917 (Ibid.).

[215] Moore criticised the move as biased towards the National Volunteers, upset 'that the same procedure was not adopted towards those large depots or arms, which you are well aware remain in the hands of the Orangemen.' Moore to Mahon, 16 Aug. 1917 (T.N.A., CO 904/29).

> Unfortunately the Inspector General, Colonel Maurice Moore, and other members of the National Volunteers broke this rule, and indulged in misstatements regarding Volunteer matters.[216]

The convention drew little attention. Redmond, Carson, and other representatives were drawn to the Irish Convention which had been sitting since July; its proceedings pledged to implement a swift and tangible solution to the Irish problem.[217] Furthermore, the death of Thomas Ashe, following a botched forced feeding at Mountjoy, monopolised the attention and sympathy of nationalist Ireland.

The autumn of 1917 brought new challenges to the Government. Mahon reported to the Prime Minister: 'the "Sinn Féin" movement is increasing daily and they are commencing to defy the law openly by drilling and wearing uniform, also the speeches of the leaders are very bad.' The Irish Volunteers too were on the rise. Nationalist sentiment following the Rising, the threat of conscription, and government suppression of Moore's National Volunteers had driven many in to Sinn Féin ranks, and prompted National Volunteers to join the ranks of the Irish Volunteers. A county-by-county examination of monthly I.N.V. membership returns between 1914 and 1918 provides evidence of a fluctuation in the ranks, though it was at times only partially recorded; in many instances I.N.V. membership was purely nominal. County strength as it had existed prior to the Easter Rising was often given in place of a fresh survey by County Inspectors. This data must therefore be interpreted as an approximate tally and, at best, serves as an illustration of the overall trend of decline and stagnation of the Irish National Volunteers. The impracticality of affixing individual county labels prevents the construction of a more accessible set of data. It is interesting to note, however, the superior number of Volunteers in Ulster and north Connacht counties.

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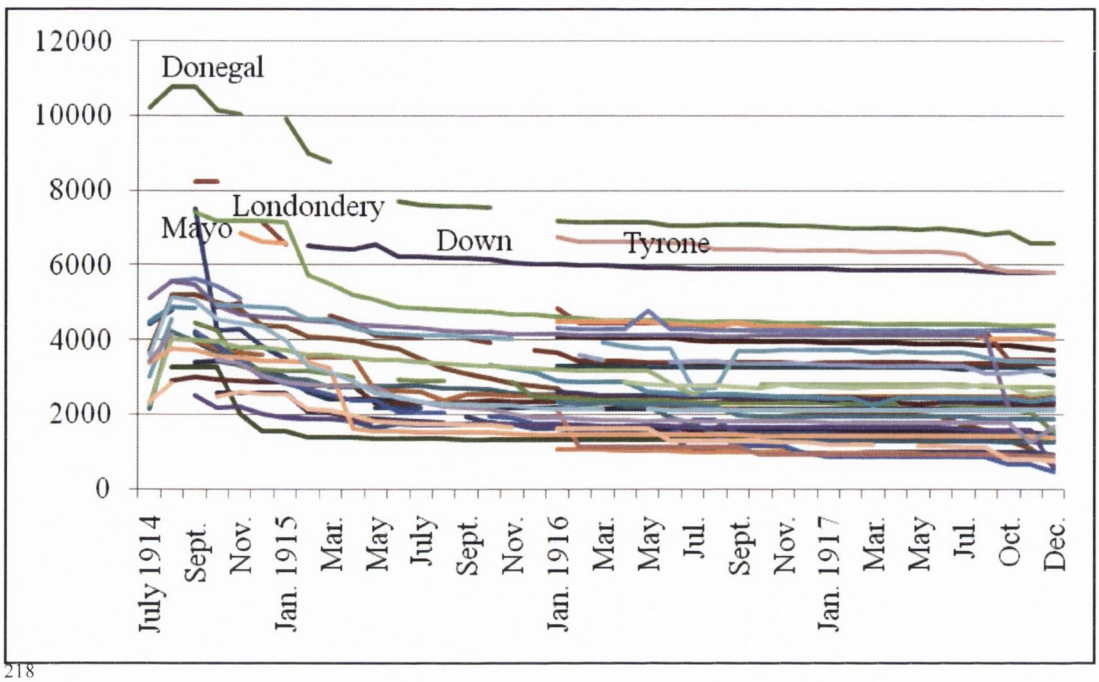
[216] *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Sept. 1917.
[217] Duke memorandum, 19 Sept. 1917 (T.N.A., PREM 1/232).

Chart 2.4: I.N.V. county membership, July 1914-December 1917



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Without Redmond's leadership and the respectability of the Irish Party the Irish National Volunteers ceased to exist. Though membership returns following the Great War suggest activity throughout the country, police conjecture reveals that these numbers were purely nominal. Reflecting on this period, Moore concluded that: 'the sooner that the organisation was wound up the better, so that those who continued keen for real work might honourably transfer to a body organised in a manner more suitable to the exigencies of the situation.'[219]

The reinvention of Irish patriotism following the Easter Rising welcomed support, but reunification between those who had sided with Redmond and the War Office following the outbreak of the Great War, and those who followed MacNeill, proved itself to be wholly ceremonial. The exit of Redmond and the suppression of membership and arms following the Easter Rising loosened any cohesion that had existed within the I.N.V. Its leadership throughout 1916-7, itself divided, was ultimately unable to direct the movement or control its members. A small committee convened in order to oversee an 'official' fusing of the two Volunteer bodies, though to what degree it was able to speak for the rank-and-file of the remaining I.N.V. is uncertain. Following this, the Irish National Volunteers ceased to exist.[220]

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[218] County Inspectors monthly reports, July 1914-December 1917 (TNA, CO 904/94-104).
[219] Moore, 'Irish Volunteers', ch. 29 (N.L.I., Maurice Moore papers, MS 10,555/10).
[220] Ibid.

Conclusion

Though born of the excitement surrounding the Home Rule settlement, and assembled from the various literary, nationalist and sporting components of the Gaelic Revival, the Irish National Volunteers became the political army of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party. Though it never officially took the field in Ireland, the I.N.V. raise several important questions regarding the dynamics of loyalty in Ireland prior to and during the Great War.

The first involves the use of broad and ill-defined criteria to attract members to a cause. Vague and flexible definitions of an organisation's objectives allow for minimal resistance and maximum appeal. This, coupled with a large body of support, permits dissidents to simply defect rather than attempt to alter the organisation's aims or structure. Additionally, by identifying a base love or fear, movements manipulate the lowest common appeal to attract further adherents. The Irish Volunteers were no exception. They entertained various opinions and definitions of Irish 'freedom' so as to maintain cohesion and attract further support prior to the Great War. They identified the aggression of the Ulster Volunteers as a reason to arm and defend political concessions, and they utilised the notion of an 'Irish' Ireland toward their own ends.

Secondly, the establishment of a spokesman or figurehead can produce both positive and negative effects. An individual leader narrows the focus of support, and more clearly defines the direction of a movement based on his history, rhetoric and aspirations. Uniting the Volunteers in the person of Redmond paid initial dividends; contemporary sources reveal a great deal of fidelity to both the institutions of the British Government and to the Irish Party prior to 1916. In this regard, the Irish population's aspirations for political autonomy were pinned to the Party and Redmond as its leader. Following the Party's plantation of representatives into the ranks of the Irish Volunteers, Redmond became the figurehead of the movement, and his outlook shaped that of the Volunteers.

However, while forfeiting control of the Irish Volunteers to an established national figure may have attracted thousands of additional adherents, it significantly narrowed outlets for Volunteer loyalty. These outlets were articulated by Redmond: home defence, as outlined in the House of Commons, and foreign military service, as stated at Woodenbridge.

This reveals the third and possibly most important aspect of the study of loyalty and the Irish Volunteers – competing interests or conflicting loyalties. Any definition of

loyalty which fails to acknowledge competition for that loyalty is inadequate. In order to claim loyalty to a person or object, there must be an object which is rejected. It is perhaps in this third sense that the I.N.V. exemplify a study of conditional loyalty in both an individual and collective sense. Multiple failures throughout their existence drove individual National Volunteers into the competing camp of advanced nationalism, or out of the movement altogether. The inability to materialise home defence, and the over-politicisation of the National Volunteers, are only two examples which have been examined in this chapter.

However, it is not solely the failure of the I.N.V. which weakened the loyalty of its members. The Irish Volunteers provided an alternative that appealed to many on various military, political and nationalist levels. Coupled with the evolving nationalist concepts of loyalty following Easter 1916, the repression of Volunteering in public, and the declining popularity of constitutional methods towards freedom, the appeal of the more radical Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin grew considerably as they provided more immediate tangible outlets for Irish sentiment.

CHAPTER THREE
THE ROYAL IRISH CONSTABULARY AT WAR?
DUTY, LOYALTY AND ISOLATION, 1914-18

The Great War erupted during a time of relative peace and prosperity in Ireland. Agrarian agitation, an issue which had dominated Irish politics during the late nineteenth century, had significantly subsided. Overall crime was down: convictable offences had decreased by over 1,300 cases between 1911 and 1914, while misdemeanours fell by over 32,000 cases in the same period. Persons tried for drunkenness had decreased by 16,201 cases during the ten years prior to the war, and non-violent offences against property were the lowest they had been since 1904. Most importantly, perhaps, new crime was down – 80 per cent of the 19,353 convicted prisoners in 1914 were repeat offenders.[1] By and large, the majority of constables who left records of their service in Ireland regarded the years prior to the Great War as peaceful, with life in the country as a whole being very pleasant.[2] Their chief duties involved regular police work and the occasional suppression of poitín distilling.[3]

The restoration of peace in Ireland had transformed Irish constables in the eyes of Irish society.[4] This had been achieved to an unprecedented degree by the early twentieth century, and further aided the process of detecting and suppressing crime. W.J. Lowe and Elizabeth Malcolm have described this assimilation as 'domestication', arguing that the R.I.C.'s 'peaceful civil duties and acceptance in rural Ireland', the exclusion of the carbine and sabre from the policeman's beat, and an increasing proportion of Catholics in the force, helped to remove the authoritarian and repressive stigma being a member of the Force once possessed.[5]

Police duty changed little during the resurrection of Gaelic culture that occurred around the turn of the century, and which found outlets in nationalist language, sport and political societies throughout Ireland. Surveillance reports of membership and leadership within the Gaelic League, Gaelic Athletic Association and United Irish League were

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[1] *Irish Independent*, 2, 16 Oct. 1915; memorandum of John Redmond, n.d. (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259).
[2] Eugene Bratton (B.M.H., W.S. 467); Patrick Meehan (B.M.H., W.S. 478); Liam O'Riordan (B.M.H., W.S. 888).
[3] Liam O'Riordan (B.M.H., W.S. 888).
[4] Donal J. O'Sullivan, *The Irish constabularies, 1822-1922: a century of policing in Ireland* (Dingle, 1999), p. 222; 227.
[5] W.J. Lowe and E.L. Malcolm, 'The domestication of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1836-1922' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, xix (1992), p. 32, *passim.*

methodically submitted to R.I.C. Inspector General, Sir Neville Chamberlain (K.C.B, K.C.V.O.), between 1900 and 1914. The high visibility of these organisations contributed to the ease with which they were monitored. Secret societies, though known to exist, were of little concern. Chamberlain's monthly report from January 1900 provides evidence to this effect:

> The sentiment of disloyalty is undoubtedly strong and widespread, but all efforts to give effect to it by seducing the young men of this Country into a great secret organisation, have up to the present been failures. This illustrates the fact that the young Irish enthusiast of today is a different man to the young fellow of 1866. He may be disloyal at heart as his prototype, but the present day Fenian is too well educated to risk the consequences of open rebellion. He will talk freely but go no further.[6]

Policing was an attractive profession during this period. A constable's pay, pension and job security ensured a steady stream of applicants to the R.I.C. depot. Prior to the Great War, an Irish policeman's loyalty to the Crown was judged by the competent execution of his responsibilities. While police assignments at times revealed the banality of service in the R.I.C., several duties remained indefinitely defined. Successive Hague conventions had limited the role of Irish police in the event of an invasion – a habitual concern of the War Office prior to 1914. The ability of Irish police to resist a foreign army was doubted despite their semi-military position and intimate knowledge of the country and its people. In the scramble for recruits that followed the outbreak of the Great War, the duties of the R.I.C. were redefined by an Irish population which had come to view itself as over-policed, and an Irish executive eager to fill recruiting quotas with men who already possessed some degree of training. Enlistment became not merely an imposed duty on Irish policemen, but was increasingly viewed as an expression of loyalty to both Ireland and the Crown. Despite this, constables entered war service reluctantly. A sedentary profession with steady pay prevented many from exchanging blue for khaki. Additional factors, such as unresolved labour issues, familial responsibilities and, as it was often claimed, inhibiting social habits, provided further excuses. Only a small portion of

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[6] Inspector General's monthly report, Jan. 1900 (T.N.A., CO 904/69). Although employed ten years after this report was filed, one constable, Jeremiah Mee, noted how reporting on secret societies required 'the writing of endless and vague reports' and was therefore sometimes ignored. J. Anthony Gaughan (ed.), *Memoirs of Constable Jeremiah Mee, R.I.C.* (Dublin, 1975), p. 29.

constables enlisted during the Great War, drawing criticism from government circles and painting Irish police as 'wasters' and 'slackers'. For these reasons, descriptive accounts of war service are as rare. The memoirs of John M. Regan, an R.I.C. officer posted to the 36th (Ulster) Division following the Easter Rising, provide a welcomed exception.[7]

As the war progressed, and the Easter Rising helped turn the tide of Irish national sentiment, the R.I.C. became increasingly isolated and ostracised within their communities. The result was further public rebranding of the R.I.C., this time as traitors and oppressive servants of the Crown. The maintenance of approximately 10,000 constables in Ireland did not alleviate native suspicion of over-policing. This transformation of opinion occurred gradually, but was nevertheless apparent prior to the acceleration of revolutionary activity between 1919 and 1921. By 1918 the R.I.C., whose presence had become accepted in Irish society by the early twentieth century, were widely considered by their neighbours to be public enemies.

To examine this radical transformation of opinion, and its wider application to the study of historical loyalty, several broad yet definite questions must be pursued. Namely, what were the duties of the R.I.C. prior to 1914? How had perceptions of a future war, and the rise in paramilitary activity in Ireland, altered these responsibilities? Can enlistment for the war be defined as an expression of loyalty? If so, why was the R.I.C. specifically targeted for war service? And finally, to what extent did the liminal identities of Irish policemen – Irishmen in the service of the Crown – result in conflicting loyalties?

Historians have engaged with these topics to some degree. David Fitzpatrick has commented on the ambiguity regarding the status of the R.I.C. in the event of a European war, drawing conclusions from available War Office files.[8] A constables' transformation in the eyes of the Irish public has also been documented by Augusteijn and Hart, although in the context of the I.R.A.'s identification of domestic enemies. The war service of the R.I.C. remains most elusive. Although of distinctly rural stock, members of the R.I.C. who were of military age between 1914 and 1918 represent a broad sector of Irish society. But in the absence of readily accessible qualitative or personal records, many historians have neglected any in-depth analysis of the R.I.C. relative to the Great War. Several prominent scholars provide approximate enlistment figures with little supporting commentary. Others neglect the subject of R.I.C. war service entirely.[9] In addition, several constables, whose

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[7] Augusteijn, *The memoirs of John M. Regan*, pp 97-112.
[8] Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, pp 16-17.
[9] For instance, Donal O'Sullivan claims that 'approximately 800 members of all ranks volunteered', though he provides no source citation. Donal O'Sullivan, *The Irish constabularies, 1822-1922: a century of policing*

personal memoirs help to form our understanding of policing in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Ireland, neglect to comment on the social or professional impact of the Great War on the Irish constables. For instance, Thomas Fennell, though retired during the period, overlooks its importance. His observations and insights are reserved for the 1919-1921 period – further evidence of the influence of the independence struggle on collective memories and individual memoirs. Samuel Waters also ignored the role of the R.I.C. in the Great War. The editor of his memoirs, Stephen Ball, makes no mention of it in his overarching introduction. Waters does, however, mention the war in the context that it provided training for the Irish Volunteers.[10] Jeremiah Mee, who abandoned the constabulary following the Listowel mutiny in 1920, mentions the war in a passing context. He describes an occasion on which the outbreak of war brought 'a very mixed cross-section of Irish life' together at the local pub. Locals, police, Irish Volunteers and their leaders 'drank toasts to the king, the Kaisier, John Redmond and the [R.I.C.] sergeant.' Although twenty-five-years-old, physically fit and the only single man in his barracks, Mee did not enlist, empowered, perhaps, with the knowledge that he could not be made do so by his superiors.[11] Finally, John D. Brewer produced an oral history of the R.I.C. from amongst surviving members. Two of his interviewees, John Fails and Joseph Thompson, fought in the Great War. Unfortunately, these men were not constables during the war, and joined the Black and Tans in 1920.[12]

The works of three historians in particular who have studied the Irish police have similarly failed to analysis the wartime contributions of the R.I.C. Jim Herhily has produced several works on the R.I.C. and D.M.P., which comprise concise histories as well as genealogical guides and remain pillars of reference for police scholars. Though he praises the R.I.C. fulsomely for their service during the war, his handling of police enlistment is brief. His figures for R.I.C. distribution in the British Army are not accompanied by relevant sources, and his analysis of wartime participation is confined to an amalgamated appendix.[13] Donal O'Sullivan dedicates one paragraph of his 402 page

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in Ireland (Dingle, 1999),, p.249. In addition, in her chapter on police duties, Elizabeth Malcom makes no mention of the duties of the R.I.C. during the Great War, or their enlistment. Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, pp 97-128.

[10] Stephen Ball (ed), *A policeman's Ireland: recollections of Samuel Waters, R.I.C.* (Cork, 1999), pp 90-1.

[11] Gaughan, *Memoirs of Constable Jeremiah Mee*, pp 37-8; Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, p. 162.

[12] John D. Brewer, *The Royal Irish Constabulary: an oral history* (Belfast, 1990), pp 20-22.

[13] Herhily's works are indispensable to the study of the R.I.C. His tallies for enlistment vary slightly with my own, particularly regarding the service of R.I.C. officers. Jim Herhily, *The Royal Irish Constabulary, a short history and genealogical guide* (Dublin, 1997), pp 19, 98-100; *The Royal Irish Constabulary, a complete alphabetical list of officers and men, 1816-1922* (Dublin, 1999). Regarding discrepancies, Herhily states that constables served in fifty regiments of the British Army, but does not state in what proportion. Similarly, he

work to the R.I.C. in the Great War, making statistical references yet providing no sources for his information.[14] Most recently, Elizabeth Malcolm has produced a fine work of the social history of the R.I.C. Nevertheless, her chapter on police duties makes no mention of the R.I.C. during the Great War, and thus neglects their additional duties, the uncertainty surrounding their status in wartime, the threat of invasion, and their enlistment. The strength of Malcolm's work rests on her application of personal letters collected by ex-R.I.C. men and their families in the late 1980s and early 1990s. These letters provide various and unique insights into what she describes as the liminal nature of police life during and after the Irish revolution. However, as these letters are unavailable to other scholars, we are dependent on Malcolm's interpretation. Several of her arguments are based on letters which only she possesses.[15] Finally, Fitzpatrick's monumental study of the Irish Revolution in Clare perhaps best illustrates how the breadth of evidence regarding Irish policing may be utilised toward a more complete study. His handling of the R.I.C. during the Great War is brief, however, and on the whole confined to but a few pages.[16]

Evidence provided within this section will therefore fill a gap in police scholarship which has neglected the Great War. Furthermore, by examining the enlistment patterns of Irish policemen, as well as the social and professional circumstances in which they occurred, a clearer picture will emerge regarding the various labels of loyalty attached to the R.I.C. throughout the course of the war, and how these changed following the Easter Rising.

I. In case of war, do nothing.

While many constables maintained an aloof indifference to the Home Rule debate,[17] the paramilitary bodies it inspired required the increased attention of the R.I.C. The Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell, preserved his conciliatory stance toward both the Ulster and Irish Volunteers; no action was taken by Dublin Castle to directly suppress the growth of

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claims that 'by the end of the war nearly 700 former R.I.C. men had served with the Irish Guards alone', but does not elaborate on transfers, preference for division or social factors influencing enlistment.

[14] O'Sullivan, *The Irish constabularies*, p. 249.

[15] Elizabeth Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, p. 71; 97-128; 182.

[16] David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life 1913-1921: provincial experiences of war and revolution* (Cork, 1998 edn), pp 3-7.

[17] Eugene Bratton (B.M.H., W.S. 467); Patrick Meehan (W.S. 478). Meehan, while regarding the majority of R.I.C. rank and file in favour of Home Rule, believed that 'the majority of the officer class were opposed to Home Rule.'

these organisations.[18] In some instances the R.I.C. acted as instructors, and helped to train Irish Volunteers in the use of arms and proficient drill.[19]

While constables may have detached themselves from national events, their training had ensured that duty and fidelity to the government remained premium. Charged with the protection of the state and its property, constables were required to swear allegiance to the 'Sovereign Lord the King'.[20] For some police recruits, this traditional prerequisite resembled indoctrination. Patrick Meehan, who was trained at the Phoenix Park Depot in 1910, recalled his experience: 'Throughout the period of training by means of lectures and otherwise it was continually being impounded into us that we were now undertaking a great responsibility and that what counted above all was absolute loyalty to England.'[21]

Descriptions of R.I.C. training during this period are few and varied. What has been established, however, is that a gradual reduction in both the rigidity and harshness of instruction had occurred by the early twentieth century. Strict adherence to the R.I.C.'s policy of military procedure was nevertheless maintained.[22] Thomas Fennell, a member of the R.I.C. during the Land War, noted that police recruits were 'drilled as soldiers' within the barracks-style depot, and were instructed by some former military men. 'On the whole,' he said, 'depot training went much more to the making of a soldier than a policeman.'[23] Training of this type produced the desired effect in the majority of recruits. In order to prevent complacency, constables were initially posted to counties devoid of friends, family or familiarity. It was reasoned that the 'strict military discipline and isolation from the community helped foster a potent *esprit de corps*' amongst police.[24]

Liam O'Riordan, who underwent police recruit training concurrent to Meehan, dismissed the notion of indoctrination within his statement to the Bureau of Military History:

> I should like to remove the common belief that Recruits at the Depot had to be good Britishers. [sic] That is utterly untrue. There was never the slightest British

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[18] Patrick Meehan (B.M.H., W.S. 478).

[19] Ibid.

[20] 'Royal Irish Constabulary in time of war', Neville Chamberlain, 17 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174); 'Royal Irish Constabulary oath of allegiance to the Crown', c. 1947 (T.N.A., HO 144/23308).

[21] Patrick Meehan (B.M.H., W.S. 478); Liam O'Riordan (B.M.H., W.S. 888).

[22] Lowe and Malcolm, 'Domestication', pp 30-31.

[23] Thomas Fennall (Rosemary Fennell, ed.), *The Royal Irish Constabulary, a history and personal memoir* (Dublin, 2003), p. 11, 32.

[24] Elizabeth Malcolm, *The Irish policeman, 1922-1922: a life* (Dublin, 2006), p. 43.

> propaganda by subtlety or a suggestion of that. The training was strictly confined to the educational side which covered police duties... [25]

Jeremiah Mee's experience at the depot was similarly apolitical. A contemporary of Meehan and O'Riordan, Mee considered his depot training as 'six happy months' filled with practical police training and athletics, though he recorded that Gaelic games were forbidden.[26]

The variety of men who held positions in the R.I.C. naturally produced varied accounts of basic training. Essential detective work, maintenance and use of firearms and the supremacy of law, however, appear to have been unwavering templates of instruction. Lectures on loyalty to the sovereign and duty to the government may simply have left a more definite impression on some recruits than on others – particularly in the hindsight of a nationalist revolution. It must also be considered that the majority of available accounts on the period were recorded long after national events in Ireland had helped form more concrete impressions of the historic relationship between Britain and Ireland. Propagation of government policy and the stressing of supremacy of law may be expected by-products of police training – particularly as the carrying of firearms by police was exclusive to Ireland within the British Isles and in respect to Ireland's long history of rebellion. Furthermore, contemporary politics and domestic events predictably dictated the duties of constables and, it has been argued, helped shape the lives and outlooks of their families.[27] Reflections on depot training such as that of T.J. McElligott, who claimed that 'six months in the Dublin depot made me a rebel', must be taken in the context they were given.[28]

Britain's declaration of war in August 1914 altered the traditional duties of the R.I.C. The force of Volunteer recruiting and arming throughout Ireland in both Unionist and nationalist camps, which had intensified throughout 1914, was sidelined by the war. Respective Volunteer movements declared a political truce, and redirected their own efforts toward the war in an attempt to win favour in London. In September 1914, Chamberlain reported to the Under-Secretary for Ireland, Matthew Nathan, that,

> For the present a better feeling has sprung up between the parties, and Unionists and Nationalists have joined together at various places to give a hearty send off

[25] Liam O'Riordan (B.M.H., W.S. 888)
[26] Gaughan, *Jeremiah Mee*, p. 14; pp 32-3.
[27] Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, p. 9.
[28] T.J. McElligott (B.M.H., W.S. 472).

not only to reservists leaving for mobilisation but also to members of the Ulster Volunteer Force going to join Lord Kitchener's Army.[29]

A scheme for Irish national defence in the event of invasion had been in place since 1900. However, the Irish executive remained unsure of how, and in what capacity, the R.I.C. would be expected to repel a German landing. Questions also arose regarding the maintenance of internal security amidst nearly 300,000 Irish and Ulster Volunteers. [30] The projected inability of the R.I.C. to perform their primary duties caused anxiety within government circles, and produced several radical changes in defence policy between 1898 and 1914.

Ireland had presented a dilemma for British defence planners as early as November 1898. A major concern was the opportunity for domestic social upheaval which a foreign war presented, and it was believed that a second engagement with the Boers would provide dissident Irishmen with such an opportunity. A confidential letter to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, George Cadogan, outlined such anxieties:

> If circumstances, which would involve a considerable withdrawal of Regular Troops from Ireland, should unfortunately arise, the question of the preservation of the public peace might, at very short notice, become an extremely dangerous one. Assuming that England were engaged in a war which would severely tax her military resources, it may not unfairly be concluded that disaffected Irishmen would seize the opportunity to give trouble, and that internal disorder would ensue, if the means of checking it were not at once available.[31]

It was eventually decided that in order to prevent such a scenario, the R.I.C. would be concentrated at strategically selected points throughout Ireland for the protection of property, and to calm any local excitement. Care was taken to clarify that while Irish police would be utilised for the protection of property, it was not intended that they would 'assist actively in military operations'.[32]

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[29] Inspector General's monthly report, Sept. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/94).
[30] 'Defence scheme memoranda, chap. IV: cooperation with civil authorities', 2 Oct. 1912 (T.N.A., CO 904/174). Focus on the strategic importance of Ireland has been examined in a recent study on diplomacy, see Jérôme aan de Wiel, *The Irish factor 1899-1919: Ireland's strategic and diplomatic importance for foreign powers* (Dublin, 2010).
[31] D.H. to George Cadogan, 5 Nov. 1898 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[32] C.A.H. to Mathew Nathan, 2 Oct. 1912 (Ibid.).

The Committee of Imperial Defence brought fears of R.I.C. inadequacy and Ireland's strategic military position into greater perspective. In 1906 Richard Haldane, the Secretary of State for War, conceded that Ireland possessed no large military stores and, outside Belfast, little industrial capital. Indeed, because of the lack of industry Lord Tweedmouth, First Lord of the Admiralty, considered a raid on Britain of greater economic and military importance.[33]

Ireland's strategic proximity as a backdoor to England and potential staging point for an invasion was an overriding imperial concern. In this regard, the then Chief Secretary for Ireland, James Bryce, focused debate again toward the threat posed by domestic Irish agitation, and efforts by dissidents to aid the landing of hostile parties. He reassured the committee by stating that in the wake of the Land War, Ireland was more pacified and contented than it had been for many years past. 'It was true', he concluded in 1906, 'that there were local symptoms of disaffection inspired by clubs and societies encouraged or subsidized from America, but the police reports were generally satisfactory'. Furthermore, not only had the Spanish and French attempts to land in Ireland resulted in 'unqualified failures even at period[s] of general disaffection', the attempted rebellions of 1848 and 1867 were hopeless failures.[34] Moreover, the performance of the Irish constabulary in helping suppress the 1867 rising had been particularly impressive. The prefix of 'Royal' being subsequently bestowed on the force by Queen Victoria following the disturbance. The committee concluded that a dual approach would be employed during peacetime: the R.I.C. were to be charged with suppressing any internal disturbances, while the British Army would remain stationed throughout Ireland to confront a foreign attack. In the event of war, however, a majority of troops would be withdrawn and the rest would be concentrated to defend Irish ports.

Although recent scholarship has highlighted the great efforts to maintain peace in Europe at this time, the potential for conflict nevertheless existed.[35] A German landing in Ireland was a reality which, by 1912, demanded the fullest attention of the War Office. An anticipated war with Germany, Europe's rising economic and military power, meant Britain would require its troop reserves from Ireland. The duties of the R.I.C. were again redefined to suit the various situations perceived by government ministers and military strategists.

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[33] 'Extract from minutes of the 86th meeting of the Committee of Imperial Defence', 23 Mar. 1906 (T.N.A., CO 904/223).
[34] Ibid.
[35] William Mulligan, *The origins of the First World War* (Cambridge, 2010).

Internal security remained a primary concern as agitation or insurrection would only invite and perhaps facilitate an invasion. Forty-five points were identified throughout Ireland as harbouring strategic military and industrial importance. They consisted mainly of railway bridges, and major waterworks and viaducts supplying Belfast, Dublin and Derry.[36] One point of particular interest was Kynoch's factory at Arklow, County Wicklow, on Ireland's east coast, which produced munitions during the war.[37] In times of civil disturbance coinciding with war, the R.I.C. was charged with the protection of these points. Additionally, R.I.C. barracks in major towns were to be reinforced with up to seventy constables each. Needless to say, some of the duties outlined for a wartime emergency were unfamiliar to many constables. For instance, Jeremiah Mee confessed that 'it was only after consulting the dictionary that we learned what a viaduct was.'[38]

In addition to normal surveillance work designed to gauge public opinion and temperament throughout Ireland, a list was compiled of counties and locations in which 'disloyal persons ... might assist an Invading Army by acting as guides and supplying information. They might also obstruct the movements of British Troops in any way feasible without actually opposing them with arms.'[39] Coincidentally, counties listed, particularly Cork, Kerry and Kilkenny, were the same that would possess the greatest amount of Irish Volunteer activity in 1914. Though Dublin was not exclusively mentioned, it was envisioned that 'any conspiracy against British Rule in Ireland would have its Head Quarters and find most of its active agents in the Capital.'[40] Several files also outlined places of amusement where 'disloyal' Irishmen were known to frequent.[41] These included, but were not limited to, certain theatres, political clubs and dance halls.

Previous drafts for local defence required the R.I.C. to mobilise and direct populations in principal towns to form 'a nucleus of a loyal and armed body of citizens', a sort of citizen's militia which would quell 'internal disorder'.[42] This initiative was

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[36] It is unknown whether the industrial strikes orchestrated during 1913 and periodically throughout the Irish Revolution required the R.I.C. to attend to these specific posts. See Conor Kostic, *Revolution in Ireland: popular militancy 1917-1923* (2nd ed., Cork, 2009).
[37] C.A.H. to US, 2 Oct. 1912 (T.N.A., CO 904/174); Maxwell to Nathan, 3 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/223).
[38] Gaughan, *Jeremiah Mee*, pp 39-40.
[39] 'List of counties where opposition might be expected in time of War', c. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[40] Ibid.
[41] 'Disloyalty in places of amusement' (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 17375); 'Abbey Theatre as hotbed of disloyalty' (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 20855).
[42] 'Defence scheme memoranda, chap. IV: cooperation with civil authorities', 2 Oct. 1912 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).

scrapped in the early months of the war, however; civilians were ordered to remain in their homes and avoid any contact with an invading enemy.[43]

Two particular issues surrounded the defence of Ireland by the R.I.C. The first involved the ability of Irish police to meet and contain an invading army; the second explored the legality of doing so. The Irish Command Defence Scheme, drafted in 1912 in consultation with Neville Chamberlain, explained that although the R.I.C. was organised and trained along military lines, 'its members have only a rudimentary training in the use of firearms, and cannot be regarded as a military force in ... the event of a hostile landing in Ireland.' Colonel H. Bruce Williams further explained that should the R.I.C. serve in any defence capacity, it would most certainly be viewed and treated as an enemy combatant. 'We can hardly expect a foreign government to differentiate between the Royal Irish Constabulary and any other civilian police force', concluded Williams.[44] As a result, Irish Command struggled to define the status of the R.I.C. during wartime for over two years. Chamberlain eventually agreed with Williams and, after consulting a report of the Hague Convention, concluded that, 'An armed constable in uniform, if acting as part of a military body would be a soldier.'[45]

Debate over what the R.I.C. was to do in the event of war was not resolved until 1915. In an attempt to spare the R.I.C. the responsibility of confronting an invading force, Chamberlain argued that although constables had taken an oath of allegiance to the Crown to defend the peace of Ireland, they were not soldiers and it was outside the jurisdiction of civil servants to act in national defence.[46] It also bore upon Chamberlain and the Irish executive that assigning the R.I.C. to the protection of vital works and hostile populations during an invasion was equally ineffective; they would no doubt still be considered legitimate combatants. This line of thinking no doubt contributed to the dismissal of Irish National Volunteers in Cork in 1915, as explored in chapter two.

In what capacity was the R.I.C. to act in the event of an invasion of Ireland? In what sense was it legally permitted to act? These unresolved issues dominated a series of secret government correspondence between 1912 and 1915. Letters exchanged between Chamberlain, General Friend and Nathan illustrate the complexity of the issue beyond the

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[43] Chamberlain to County Inspectors, 22 Apr. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174). Earlier defence schemes called for civilians to destroy anything which would be of use to an invading force including all stores. They were also instructed to keep clear of highways, and remove livestock to a safe location. R.I.C. circular, 11 Jan. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).

[44] Bruce Williams to Chamberlain, 6 Sept. 1912; 'military status of the Royal Irish Constabulary in time of war', 17 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).

[45] Chamberlain to Nathan, 20 Aug. 1914 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).

[46] 'Military status of the Royal Irish Constabulary in time of war', 17 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).

straight forward legal parameters of the Hague Convention. A delayed decision by the government was the result of personal uncertainty and hierarchical bureaucracy. Chamberlain hesitated to act without sanction of the Irish executive, Nathan required the advice of the generals, and Friend feared harsh reprisals by an invading force should the police act in a military capacity. Friend's main concern, however, was focused on a standing order previously distributed to R.I.C. County Inspectors, which called for non-resistance and absolute surrender by the constabulary in the face of an enemy. In greater detail, the order provided that in the event of a landing by a foreign power, the R.I.C. in the area, to avoid being confused for combatants, 'should at once disarm, and render their weapons useless by the removal of the breech blocks.'[47] Though not wishing to place the R.I.C. in harm's way, Friend illustrated the absurdity of this standing order in a conceivable scenario:

> A concrete case may be stated at Arklow, where since the commencement of the war a guard of 50 Royal Irish Constabulary have been protecting the Works of Messrs. Kynoch ... Under existing orders if an enemy submarine was to land a party of say 12 armed seamen the guard would disarm, and the enemy's detachment would be free to destroy the works.[48]

Though the majority of works protected by the R.I.C. were inland, the point was valid and Nathan and the Irish executive conceded that the current policy was senseless.[49] The alternative was either to replace the police with soldiers, or clothe constables in a special military-style garb and give them the status of soldiers. Needless to say, troops were immediately sent to supplement the R.I.C. detachment at Arklow following the presentation of Friend's hypothesis.[50]

Nevertheless, the intermediate existence of Irish police remained unresolved, and their duties during the war undefined. The Lords Justices provided an opinion on another reasonable situation, ultimately concurring with Chamberlain:

> Military service is quite distinct from Constabulary service. We think that it is quite clear that the Irish Constabulary are not a military force. ... Suppose they

[47] Friend to Chamberlain, 4 Feb. 1915; E. O'F. to Nathan, 2 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/223).
[48] Friend to Nathan, 2 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[49] Memorandum of interview with Colonel James and Nathan, 4 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[50] E. O'F to Nathan, c. Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/223).

refused to face the German bayonets, could they be liable to the military penalty for cowardice in the face of the enemy? We think they clearly could not.[51]

To overcome this prevailing confusion, the Lords Justices suggested that each officer and man in the R.I.C. be given the opportunity to volunteer for military service and to be placed in a position for Irish home defence, relieving in one action both the necessity for domestic guards and its legal ambiguity.[52]

By February 1915 the failure of the Irish National Volunteers's own bid for domestic defence duty, coupled with the growing necessity for additional recruits for the Front, discouraged many constables from pursuing this scheme. The security and general ease of the policing profession, and the ever-present body of young men eager to reach the R.I.C. training depot – particularly during the war – prevented any organised scheme for Irish home defence from materialising. Constables were also aware that they could be easily replaced. In fact, Malcolm describes R.I.C. pensioners as the 'fifth element' of the force, able to be called back to the ranks during periods of unrest.[53] The limitations of utilising the R.I.C. as a domestic defence force in time of war, therefore, remained apparent yet unresolved.

Ireland was not alone in debating how best to employ its police. England and Scotland faced similar practical and legal difficulties. Most dire perhaps, was the decision to place weapons in the hands of traditionally unarmed constables. In an effort to protect the civilian status of the police it was suggested by several chief constables stationed along the east coast of England that arms distributed to police should be withdrawn from areas threatened by invasion.[54] Anxiety superseded legality, however, and numerous English constables remained armed and ready to defend vital public works.

The shooting of 27-year-old James Carroll near the command at Aldershot provided a contemporary legal precedent regarding the authority to fire on those suspected of threatening the state in wartime. Carroll had been challenged at a railway bridge by Territorials in late August 1914. Failing to halt, he was fired upon and killed in broad

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[51] 'Military status of the Royal Irish Constabulary corisprudence[sic]', 1912-1915, 9 Mar. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[52] Unknown to Nathan, 22 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[53] Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, p. 49.
[54] 'Status of police in event of a hostile landing', memorandum of Captain Mayne, Major Bower and Captain James, 29 Aug., 4 Sept. 1914 (T.N.A., HO 45/10940/227740; WO 32/9098). Debate regarding the removal of rifles and police from areas in danger of occupation continued until early 1918. See 'GHQ Home Forces emergency measures', 1 Jan. 1918 and 'Duties of police in case of invasion', 25 Feb. 1918 (T.N.A., HO 45/10940/227740).

daylight. Although Carroll's father attested that his son was nearly deaf, it was found that the soldiers had acted within the parameters of the Defence of the Realm Act. Suggestions regarding firing into the air as a warning, or an attempt to arrest the suspect were dismissed.[55] The general paranoia that gripped both Britain and Ireland regarding invasion prevailed, and was captured adequately in a letter to the coroner of Aldershot: 'in dealing with the defence of communication in time of war the safety of the State is the supreme law.'[56]

Confusion surrounding the duty of the R.I.C. prior to, and in the early years of the war, is a further testament to their greater domestication into Irish society, and the declining militaristic status of the constabulary in the early twentieth century. Personal complacency can be observed within police ranks during this period – particularly amongst those who were nearing retirement or those seeking a quiet career and security in the civil service. With no evident aspiration to engage an invading force, the R.I.C. continued to execute the duty for which it was created and maintained: to keep the peace, and a suspicious eye, on Irish society.[57]

Throughout the war, the R.I.C. were deployed as recruiting sergeants, and charged with soliciting those with which they had built a professional relationship and social rapport.[58] Enlistment frenzy receded gradually throughout the spring and summer of 1915. An initial enlistment of over 40,000 Irish reservists and recruits slowed to a monthly average of just under 4,500 recruits by August 1915.[59] As a result, Ireland swelled with soldiers awaiting deployment during this period.[60] The question in government circles remained how best to employ the R.I.C. – this sizable body of well-trained, professionally administered pseudo-soldiers. To utilise the experience and training of the R.I.C., while simultaneously filling recruiting quotas, it was suggested that rather than finesse complex international legal issues or distribute special uniforms, 'each officer and man of the force should be given the opportunity of volunteering for military duty in Ireland during the

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[55] Regarding a warning shot, it was determined that 'if sentries were ordered to do so these preliminary rounds might kill perfectly innocent people a mile away whilst the delay caused might enable the ill disposed person to escape.' Statement of Major R.H. James, 5 Sept. 1914 (T.N.A., WO 32/13745). Regarding arrest, it was determined that 'Were such orders made or even issued it would be a simple matter for a resident enemy to thus decoy away the guard whilst his accomplices carried out their intended work. There is no question of shooting or killing a civilian on the high road; any person of normal intelligence must know that in time of war sentries are armed with ball ammunition and that challenges must be obeyed.' Statement of F.C. Beatsen, Farnz Solicitor, H. McAnally, 25 Aug. 1914 (T.N.A., WO 32/13745).

[56] A.H. Dennis to Aldershot Coroner, 25 Aug. 1914 (T.N.A., WO 13745).

[57] Gaughan, *Jeremiah Mee*, pp 38-9.

[58] Ibid., p. 39; Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, p. 162; Fennell, *The Royal Irish Constabulary*, p. 103.

[59] Table III (B) recruiting statistics, c. 1917 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259).

[60] Estimated to be 11,000 in November 1914 compared to the normal 4,000, *Eire-Ireland*, 5 Nov. 1914.

war'.[61] Their status determined as being analogous to that of civilians, the R.I.C. thus became the target of military recruiters.

II. The Royal Irish Constabulary targeted for enlistment.

Several types of recruiting propaganda were directed at the R.I.C. during the war. For instance, the moral pressure attached to wider Irish recruiting was at times specifically tailored to influence the police. As upholders of the law, the R.I.C. was identified as responsible for restoring law and order to Europe following what was propagated as the lawlessness of Germany and its illegal invasion of Belgium. When Nathan addressed a body of R.I.C. who had enlisted, he highlighted their individuality as policemen within the broader context of the war:

> You have all of you been doing good work in maintaining law and order in Ireland. Now you are going to fight for the law of nations against a nation that criminally violated it, and you are going to prevent a new system of order being established in Western Europe and in these Western isles under the iron heel of the German Emperor and of Prussian landowners. ... You will help to make a glorious history for your battalion of Irish Guards, and when you have done that you will, I hope, return to a united and happy Ireland, which will recognise that you have done well for your country, and that you have the gratitude of your fellow citizens.[62]

Such wording attached a legal as well as moral dimension to the allied cause. Other references relied upon emotion. Referring specifically to Belgium, Thomas Tweedy, County Inspector for Cork, explained how: 'The blood of priests and nuns was calling them, the slaughter of women and children was calling them, and their brothers in the trenches were calling them.'[63]

More direct recruiting campaigns, however, focused on professional groups. And in this sense the R.I.C. was not the only division of the civil service invited to enlist, although it was certainly the most desired. Several attempts were made to entice other 'Servants of the State' into war service. A circular letter of 25 November 1915 from

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[61] Memorandum, 22 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174); Chamberlain memorandum on the military status of the R.I.C. in time of war, 17 Feb. 1915 (T.N.A., CO 904/174).
[62] *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Jan. 1915.
[63] *Irish Independent*, 7 July 1915.

Nathan outlined the necessity for additional recruits from the Irish Civil Service, as well as the provisions which would be made for them. The employment of substitutes for the duration of the war, women and men of non-military age, would, Nathan argued, allow Irish Civil Servants who were anxious to enlist, but whose civil work was previously found to be indispensable, an opportunity to go to the Front.[64] A form of undertaking was distributed to the heads of civil departments in Ireland to allow military-aged men who wished to enlist to cite their current pay, and the number of dependents they had. Various negative responses to Nathan's circular were returned in late 1915. The papers of the Assistant Under-Secretary, Joseph Brennan, provide evidence of some typical replies: P.E. Holland excused himself on the grounds that he was a married man with a dependent family, and a widowed mother-in-law who required his care. He also added that he had five relatives serving in the army, three of whom were at the Front.[65] Numerous others excused themselves on similar grounds, citing a dependent family and relatives already serving.[66] Others declined without stating a reason.[67] Enlist and leave it 'to the State to say if his services can be spared' was the call;[68] 'If at any future time I become convinced that I am acting wrongly, I shall not hesitate to join up'[69], was the predominant answer. An anonymous observer, called 'Irish Solicitor', offered his interpretation of the situation:

> The writer's business takes him into many Government Departments in Ireland, and he has no hesitation in stating that few offices have done as well in the matter of recruiting as they should have done. As a contrast to the Land Registry there are Dublin Offices from whom not a single man has joined the Army or Navy; and there are certain Offices in which "eligible" young men are still enjoying short hours and long holidays, as in pre-war days. These stay at home shirkers are having a good time at the country's expense and snap their fingers at Treasury minutes and Lord Lieutenant's appeals. It is nothing to these self-satisfied young fellows that other Civil Servants of a different type are fighting and dying daily. The "Indispensible" amongst junior Civil Servants are few in number; much of the

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[64] For a look at the evolution toward policy of Irish Civil Servant enlistment, see Unknown to Chief Secretary, 4 Feb. 1915; M.P.A. Hankey to Committee of Imperial Defence, 4 Feb. 1915; W. Bailey to Nathan, 10 Feb. 1915; Neeham to Nathan, 22 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Joseph Brennan papers, MS 26,168).
[65] P.E. Holland to Nathan, 26 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168).
[66] A.P. Donnelly to Nathan, 26 Nov. 1915; Joseph Lindsey to Nathan, 26 Nov. 1915; Lawrence Keogh to Nathan, 26 Nov. 1915; P. O'Connor to Nathan, 27 Nov. 1915; (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168).
[67] J. Campbell to Nathan, 29 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168).
[68] Memorandum, n.d. (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168).
[69] Keogh to Nathan, 26 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168).

> work performed by these hefty young men being of a routine character, and of the simplest nature. Hundreds of men eligible for army service are now employed on duties which might be done by Boy Clerks, Women and Ex-Soldiers; and much of the work is quite unnecessary during war time. ... There are many Civil Servants in Dublin who are strangers to a full day's work. In the Four Courts, for example, healthy young men who are fitted for more strenuous duties enjoy from six to eight or more weeks holidays annually, and during the vacations many of these fortunate Government servants only attend their Offices on alternate days from 11am to 2pm. This in war time is a scandalous state of affairs.[70]

The response to Nathan's circular was selective, but was perhaps not as negative as 'Irish Solicitor' described. A return of civil servant enlistments through 30 November 1915 revealed that nearly 1,200 men from public departments had enlisted for war service. This included a fair number of clerks from the Department of Agriculture, the Office of Public Works and the Land Commission. The proportion of Irish police included in this tally was dwarfed by contributions from other public offices. The number maintained in the ranks (approximately 10,000 at the outbreak of the war), coupled with their visibility as an armed force, increased expectations and demand for mass R.I.C. enlistment.[71]

The greatest pressure exerted on the R.I.C. to enlist came from two distinct quarters: the War Office and the Irish public. The R.I.C. was directed to aid in a major recruiting campaign which began in the spring of 1915. As they canvassed for recruits, questions surfaced from the public regarding government expenditure on police in Ireland, and the obvious suitability of police as soldiers. Many of these concerns found an outlet in Ireland's daily papers, though were mainly penned in pseudonym. As wartime economy had increased the cost of living, armchair economists questioned why, 'when the best brains in the Empire are engaged in trying to find the silver bullets and when economy is preached from the platforms and the pulpit, ... I have not yet seen where anyone suggested a saving in the R.I.C.'.[72] 'One District-Inspector in each county is sufficient, and the sinecure of County Inspector might be abolished', wrote 'A.T.I.' to the *Irish Independent* in November 1915: 'Then the individuals at the Depot and the Castle, who live like

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[70] 'Civil servants and recruiting', 'Irish Solicitor' to editor, 1 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168). For follow-up commentary, and public defence of civil servant enlistment, see 'Civil servants and recruiting', 'Fair play' to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 12 May 1915; 'X' to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 29 Oct. 1915.
[71] 'Return of numbers of staff who have joined the armed forces', 30 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Brennan papers, MS 26,168).
[72] 'Economy' to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 19 Oct. 1915.

princes, might be retired or sent to the front. They are vampires both on the ratepayers and the over-efficient police force'.[73]

Over-policing and the cost of maintaining the R.I.C. were issues inextricably linked in the public mind. 'Whenever the R.I.C. authorities in Dublin Castle go in for economy it is some mean principle that is adopted such as not supplying thread for making up uniform,' quipped one pundit, whose practical suggestions included decreasing the officer class and altogether abolishing the position of District Inspector (D.I.).[74] 'One of the workers' concurred that, 'The rank of D.I. is a useless and costly branch', and offered several additional suggestions to Maurice Headlam, Treasury Remembrancer for Ireland, to produce to the Retrenchment Committee, which had convened in London to trim the budget. They mainly advised an overhaul of the officer class of the R.I.C., deemed unnecessary in a 'crimeless poor country' such as Ireland. 'I suspect the ornamental branch will not escape the pruning knife this time', continued 'One of the workers', 'A saving of at least £100,000 per annum can be easily effected by giving this most useless and extravagant establishment a thorough overhauling.'[75]

Although associated with an attempt to employ greater fiscal economy, over-policing was an issue that had gained its own voice throughout 1915.[76] In an effort to curb spending rather than appease public opinion, the R.I.C. suspended recruiting in April 1915 for the duration of the war.[77] At this time the strength of the force stood at approximately 10,000, but decreased to 9,668 by December 1915.[78] The war had evoked a cautious demeanour amongst constables eager to maintain their stability. Annual resignations decreased an average of 72 per cent between 1913 and 1916, while retirement decreased 69 per cent for the same period. They would not return to pre-war levels until the War of Independence intensified.[79]

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[73] 'ATI' to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1915.
[74] 'R.I.C. extravagance', 'Economist' to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 27 Nov. 1915.
[75] 'Extravagance in the R.I.C.', 'One of the workers' to the editor, *Irish Independent*, 1 Dec. 1915.
[76] *Irish Independent*, 19 Oct., 25 Nov. 1915.
[77] Chamberlain to Nathan, 22 June 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 14810); *Irish Independent*, 1 July 1915. In March 1915 the Secretary of State expressed his opinion that recruiting for the English police force should be suspended for the period of the war – especially of men of military age. Lord Halifax to Home Office, 20 Mar. 1915 (T.N.A., HO 45/10740/263190).
[78] Anxious to release 100 men a month for military service, and maintain order in Ireland, Chamberlain devised a school of instruction for non-commissioned officers housed at Portobello barracks. Its aim was to select prime candidates from the R.I.C. to be trained and admitted to the Army. The circular was responded to instantly; 150 men were selected and begin training in the first week of March 1916. The significant boost in R.I.C. enlistment in May 1916 is attributed to the release of these men for service, not as a reaction to the Easter Rising. G. H. Mercer to department of recruiting in Ireland, 4 Mar. 1916 (N.A.I., MFA 24/16); Chamberlain to unknown, 22 Feb. 1922 (N.L.I., Redmond papers, MS 15,175/6).
[79] Returns relating to the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1913-1919; strength of the Royal Irish Constabulary on 31 Dec. 1914 and 31 Dec. 1915 (T.N.A., HO 184/54).

While the R.I.C. received a barrage of public scrutiny for poor enlistment and what was determined to be excessive spending, government enquiry was at times incessantly inquisitive and insensitive. Although committed to his own agenda of promoting home defence for the Irish National Volunteers, Irish Party leader John Redmond referred to the R.I.C. in 1915 as 'a standing army', and excessive to the needs of the country. 'It is no exaggeration', he wrote,

> to say that one-half the number of the Royal Irish Constabulary would be quite sufficient to do all the police work necessary in the country parts of Ireland. ... The Royal Irish Constabulary would be made recruits of an exceptionally fine order. They are all trained men. In fact, it might be said that every one of them would be fit to take up the position immediately of non-commissioned officer, and would be absolutely invaluable.[80]

Redmond blamed the War Office whose priorities regarding Irish security, he believed, had resulted in obstacles being placed before ambitious Irish police willing to go to the Front. 'This seems unaccountable,' he exclaimed, 'in view of the fact that a couple of thousand men could be withdrawn from the Constabulary tomorrow quite consistently with the maintenance of good order and peace in this country.'[81] Redmond's observations were echoed by other critics who continued to question why the R.I.C. was kept at full-strength, 'except to keep alive the obsolete idea that Ireland is a land of crime and rebellion'.[82] In December Birrell announced in Parliament that there were 6,268 'highly disciplined men of military age in the R.I.C.', though only a fraction had enlisted.[83]

Public criticism of 'poor' enlistment from the R.I.C. throughout the war must be weighed against broader Irish contributions to test its validity. If the 709 rank-and-file constables who enlisted, examined in greater detail below, are set against the 6,268 men of military age in the R.I.C., as identified by Birrell, it produces an enlistment rate of 11.3 per cent. This figure is nearly double the proportion of eligible Irishmen who enlisted overall during the war, which has been estimated at 6 per cent. Furthermore, both Kevin Kenny and Keith Jeffrey have commented that Irish contribution was less than that of both the white male populations from the Dominions, which ranged from 13 to 19 per cent, or from

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[80] Memorandum of John Redmond, c. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,225).
[81] Ibid.
[82] *Irish Independent*, 12 Apr. 1915; 'National Economy, Extravagance in the R.I.C.', *Irish Independent*, 1 Dec. 1915.
[83] *Irish Independent*, 3 Dec. 1915.

England, Wales and Scotland which produced 24, 22 and 24 per cent respectively. In this light, and taking into account the proportional number of men concerned, R.I.C. contribution to the war effort cannot be deemed low.[84]

Several overriding issues can be attributed to the poor enlistment for which the R.I.C. was highly criticised during the Great War. The first problem, alluded to above, involved the prevention of enlistment by the War Office. The Committee of Imperial Defence and the War Office continued to hold the view that Ireland provided too strategic a base for an invasion to be left to the Irish National Volunteers, outlined in Redmond's home defence scheme. Continuous monitoring, both of the shores and possible dissident elements within Irish society, required professional attention. Numerous additional duties levelled on the R.I.C. under the Defence of the Realm Act also necessitated maintaining a strong police force. Constables willing to enlist had to secure permission from the Inspector General. The language of contemporary reports, particularly that within the R.I.C. general register, highlights this policy.[85] It was through this method that minimal R.I.C. enlistment quotas were met; candidates were selected from amongst eager recruits, and the police force maintained its strength.[86]

Nevertheless, the general public demanded to know why so many constables 'held back'. In early 1916 Chamberlain responded to a parliamentary question on the matter that revealed the willingness of constables to enlist had indeed receded:

> No members of the rank and file, who are of military age, have expressed their willingness to serve in the Army in addition to those whose services have been accepted. Since September, 1915, every man of military age who has expressed his willingness to join the Army has been given permission to do so.[87]

In the autumn of 1915, however, Lord Kitchener became 'persistent' in the matter of R.I.C. recruiting, and pledged his political support for Ireland once recruits had been

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[84] Keith Jeffrey, '"An Irish empire"? Aspects of Ireland and the British empire' in Keith Jeffrey (ed), *The Irish military tradition and the British empire* (Manchester, 1996), pp 94-122; Kevin Kenny, 'The Irish in the Empire', pp 90-122.

[85] 'The R.I.C. and the army: why not send more to the front?', *Irish Independent*, 12 Apr. 1915; 'The War Office and recruiting', *Irish Independent*, 27 July 1915 ; 'Recruiting in Ireland', *Irish Independent*, 17 Nov. 1915.

[86] 'The R.I.C. and recruiting', *Irish Independent*, 1 July 1915.

[87] Parliamentary Question, no. 50, 1 Mar. 1916; memorandum of Chamberlain to Fetherstonhaugh, 29 Feb. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 7319).

obtained.[88] A private meeting between Kitchner, Birrell and Redmond committed 1,000 Irish constables to the war effort. Chamberlain was absent from this meeting; the proposition was explained to him by Birrell:

> I am afraid you won't like this – but you must stomach it. I am sorry the necessity for men is as great as it is – but it is *great*, and as I could not honestly say that I *believe* this number of men cannot now be spared I could not resist a request made by the Secretary of State and accompanied by a promise of military assistance if the need arose – so there it stands.[89]

Birrell summarised this meeting to Nathan, and quipped 'the *mice* all agree the *cats* may go to the Front.'[90] The constables who enlisted as a result of this meeting, however, fell far short of the 1,000 recruits Kitchener had hoped for.

The second obstacle preventing enlistment from the R.I.C. was personal, and involved a policeman's pay, and level of reimbursement and separation allowance for war service. Numerous letters addressed to the Chief Secretary's office enquired about a war-time bonus to counter the rising cost of living, especially in Dublin.[91] It was common knowledge amongst the Irish police that a war bonus had been extended to various English police centres, and that levels of duty and compensation between Irish and English police constables were disproportionate.[92] It was not until the summer of 1916, following the reorganisation of the Irish executive after the Easter Rising, that a bonus was secured as part of a pacification package. James Byrne, who replaced Neville Chamberlain as Inspector General following the Rising, Andrew P. Magill, private secretary to H.E. Duke, and Robert Chalmers, who replaced Nathan, all lobbied for a police bonus from both economic and sentimental standpoints. This stance was justified on the logic that the enlistment of several hundred members of R.I.C. prior to April 1916 had resulted in a

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[88] Birrell to Chamberlain, 29 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, 15,261/9). Ó Broin notes how Wimborne, the Director of Recruiting in Ireland, had made his opinions about the recruiting the 'untouchable' R.I.C. known to his contemporaries. Ó Broin, *Dublin Castle*, p. 51. For examples on letters soliciting general enlistment see Anthony Kinsella, 'Wimborne and Kitchener letters on recruitment, 1915' in *The Irish Sword*, xxvi, no. 104 (winter 2008), pp 217-8.

[89] Birrell to Chamberlain, 29 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, 15,261/9). Previous to Birrell's request, Chamberlain had issued a circular on 24 September calling for volunteers. This was followed by circulars of 16 October and 2 November.

[90] Birrell to Nathan in Ó Broin, *Dublin Castle*, pp 51-2.

[91] Dublin Metropolitan Police to Chief Commissioner, 24 July 1915 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 14810).

[92] *Irish Independent*, 1, 4 Nov. 1915, 18, 21 Mar. 1916; 'The R.I.C. and the army, conditions of enlistment', 'A constable' to the editor, n.d. (N.L.I., Redmond papers, MS 15,259).

savings to the state of approximately £45,000.[93] Thus, in effect, the economy provided by constables who had left Ireland for the Front was to be redistributed to those constables who had remained in Ireland. New scales of pay were subsequently enacted in April 1916.[94] They were instituted in the hope that recent unrest amongst Ireland's policemen (particularly within the D.M.P.) would subside. As noted above, Chalmers argued in favour of a pay bonus for the R.I.C. It was important, he explained, 'to remove any reasonable ground for discontent on the part of the Police'.[95] A weekly bonus of 3s 6d was granted by the Treasury for the remainder of the war beginning 1 July 1916, simultaneous to the allied assault at the Somme.

Inadequate and unequal separation allowance and potential loss of service experience while serving in the army were the most common monetary concerns of Irish policemen. One constable who had enlisted provided the following rational:

> Their grievance is one relating to their pay when they change the blue for the khaki. ... I think there can be no doubt that a policeman could serve his country better on a battlefield than walking around a lonely Irish road, and all he asks is that he should be paid as well, and I have absolutely no doubt that there would be hardly a man in the R.I.C. of military age who would not offer his services. It seems too much that a man should be asked to offer not only his life, but his income, when millions are being spent every day.[96]

Days later, and in response to the above letter which had been published in the *Irish Independent*, 'Another R.I.C. volunteer' wrote in support of these views:

> It seems hard to understand why the Constabularyman is asked to serve his country for 3s or 4s per week while [other members of the civil service], who are quite untrained when enlisting, are allowed the full pay which they receive from their departments before joining the colours. ... Another matter which seems to be overlooked by the military authorities and Parliament is the fact that the widows of members of the force who have fallen in the war are only entitled to receive the

[93] Byrne to unknown, 22 June 1916; Chalmers to unknown, 24 July 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 14810).
[94] 'New rates of pay provided by the constabulary and police (Ireland) act of 1916' (T.N.A., HO 351/124).
[95] Chalmers to unknown, 24 July 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 14810).
[96] 'R.I.C. volunteer' to editor, *Irish Independent*, 1 Nov. 1915.

miserable pensions of 4s per week, and no distinction is made as to rank held by their deceased husbands, from Sergeant-Major to private.[97]

The attitude within government circles toward R.I.C. enlistment changed somewhat following the Easter Rising. It was felt that, in addition to duties required in connection with the Defence of the Realm Act, the R.I.C. now also had 'the task of dealing with a dangerous and disloyal element in Ireland', against whom they had 'showed great courage and loyalty' during Easter week.[98]

A final explanation for low enlistment returns of Irish police identified the inhibiting social characteristics exhibited by a majority in their profession. Although applying his theory to Ireland as a whole, H. McLaughlin, Honorary Director of the Irish Recruiting Council, concluded: 'Those who hung back [from enlisting] are found in classes, not in areas: and the defaulting classes are, broadly, farmers' sons and commercial assistants.'[99] He also described the 'natural shyness in the agricultural districts' as 'perhaps the greatest obstacles of recruiting'.[100]

A demographic survey of the R.I.C. at this period reveals that the overwhelming majority of constables had come from rural backgrounds. Malcolm has speculated that the selectiveness of the church and the army, and the funnelling of gifted boys into teaching or civil service professions, resulted in the sustention of approximately 10,000 farmers' sons undertaking steady and secure employment as Irish policemen.[101] The timid demeanour characteristically associated with farmers and farmers' sons produced a convenient stereotype, although its true applicability is difficult. Chamberlain, for one, agreed with this class-based assessment of R.I.C. demeanour, and lambasted the agricultural class in Ireland as 'backward as regards enlisting.'[102] In his criticism he highlighted the numerous opportunities the R.I.C. were afforded, particularly military commissions for R.I.C. officers, and concluded to the Chief Secretary that 'The fact of so miserable a response to an offer so attractive makes it clear, I regret to think, that the men as a class do not desire to enlist'.[103]

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[97] 'Another R.I.C. volunteer' to editor, *Irish Independent*, 4 Nov. 1915.
[98] A.P. Magill to W. Byrne, 24 June 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 14810).
[99] *Irish Independent*, 8 Oct. 1915.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Malcolm, *The Irish policeman*, p. 129. Though not directly connected to this study, Fergus Campbell's analysis of the make-up of the R.I.C. officer class prior to the war may provide a useful complement. Fergus Campbell, 'The social composition of the senior officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1881-1911' in *Irish Historical Studies*, xxxvi, no. 144 (Nov. 2009), pp 522-41.
[102] Chamberlain to Birrell, 11 Mar. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 25104).
[103] Ibid.

One final observation must be presented regarding the poor enlistment of the R.I.C. It was not the case that Irish police withheld their service for political or nationalist reasons; as explained above, many policemen were aloof to national or political events prior to April 1916. While many constables became politically active during the conscription crisis of 1918 and War of Independence, professional security, monetary concerns and administrative restraints remained the greatest harbingers to enlistment amongst members of the R.I.C. during the Great War.

With over 150,000 Irishmen serving with the colours by December 1915, the R.I.C. found little sympathy from the general population or within government circles regarding social inadaptability (real or imagined), or incomparable pay with the English police force. Irish society sought recruits, and a war weary population, whose relatives and friends were in the trenches or already in their graves, were not forthcoming in their sympathy.[104] A private reflection from Redmond perhaps best summarised the outlook of the Irish population at this time. 'It is not an edifying sight', he stated, 'when one is appealing to young men to enlist, to see, in little country villages, four or five Royal Irish Constabulary men hanging around, doing nothing, when we know that not only are they invaluable material'.[105]

How many Irish police enlisted during the war? Was the enlistment of a few enough to rectify the damaged reputation of the R.I.C. as a whole? And to what extent can enlistment and participation be defined within the realms of historical loyalty? An examination of the definite contribution of the R.I.C. to the war effort will illustrate its involvement in greater detail, help provide answers to these questions, and clarify the complicated connotations of Irish loyalty during the Great War.

III. Enlistment as loyalty?

War service as a form of loyalty is not simply a matter of separating those who enlisted from those who did not. Motivation to enlist varied within all sections of Irish society and, as the war progressed, individuals increasingly weighed the economic benefits, personal hardships and post-war advancement which might be gained through their personal sacrifice. This intangible psychological variable greatly inhibits the label of 'loyal' being so easily applied to individuals. Furthermore, if a study of loyalty is to magnify its focus upon a particular demographic or professional group, such as the R.I.C., contemporary

[104] 'A true friend of the Empire' to Nathan, 16 Feb. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 4664).
[105] In this Redmond was reflecting the discrepancy in army pay. 'Memoranda of John Redmond', c. 1915 (N.L.I., Redmond papers, MS 15,259).

reflections obtained through journals, diaries or memoirs must provide insight as to how individuals viewed their circumstances and decisions. Unfortunately, such records of the R.I.C. are scarce. Subsequent national events in Ireland, as well as their commemoration in the decades that followed Irish independence, marginalised the narratives of those who had had an imperial connection. R.I.C. commemoration societies could only declare that former members of the force had done their duty to Ireland:

> The R.I.C. are gone but never more
> Shall Ireland own or see their like again
> A force of regal worth – a royal corps –
> To duty's dictates staunch through thick and thin.[106]

In determining loyalty, therefore, consideration must be given to definitions and labels attached to the R.I.C. by other sections of society – regardless of their ignorance of the additional personal and professional pressures that influenced or decided enlistment. This evidence is abundant and must serve as a window toward the overall view of enlistment as a form of loyalty during the Great War.

Far from the surge of recruits and reservists that characterised initial enlistment throughout Ireland and Britain, enlistment of Irish police occurred sporadically, due in no small part to the desire to maintain a substantial police presence in Ireland. Coming in small bursts, these enlistments were ultimately unsustainable; reports touting police enlistment pale in comparison to those which portray them as wasteful shirkers. Public reactions to such low enlistment by the Irish population have been established here; the question remains: in what capacity did the R.I.C. directly participate in the Great War? How many Irish police enlisted, and when did they do so? Were there geographic or demographic patterns to enlistment? And to what extent was police enlistment affected by national events in Ireland?

Various contemporary estimates exist regarding the number of Irish police who enlisted on different dates.[107] Official records and papers of the Irish executive produce an

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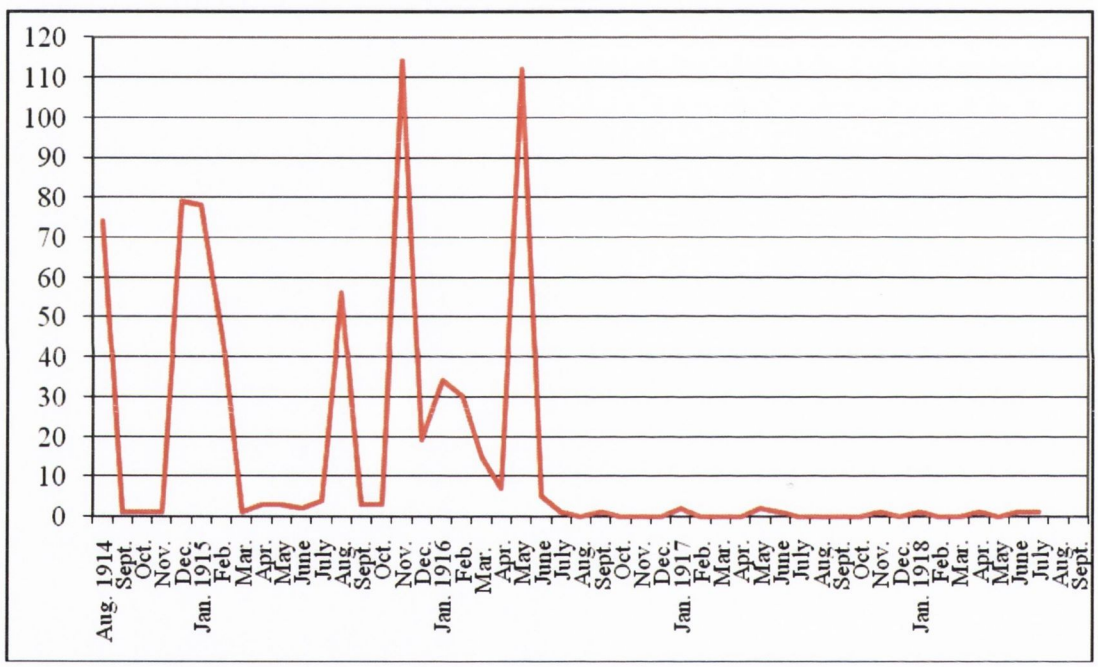
[106] 'R.I.C. reminiscences', n.d. (T.C.D., J.R.W. Goulden papers, MS 7377/11-12).

[107] Various contemporary sources reveal the inconsistency of the total men who enlisted. The John Redmond papers cite 536 men, n.d. (N.L.I., Redmond papers, MS 15,259); the Joseph Brennan papers cite 562 men, 'Return of numbers of staff who have joined the armed forces to 30 November, 1915' (N.L.I., Brennan papers MS, 26,168); the Chief Secretary's Office cites 502 men, 14 Mar. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no. 25104); the *Irish Independent* cited 500 men and 98 reservists, 21 Mar., 4 Nov. 1915, but this receded to 'Only 31 officers and 536' by *Irish* 3 Feb. 1916. The War Office provided the most accurate account, citing

equally uneven and inconsistent record; estimates within personal papers are often written in pencil, rubbed out and recalculated. A more accurate tally of R.I.C. enlistment was therefore required, and necessitated consultation with the original R.I.C. service within the files of the Home Office. An analysis of over 16,800 constables was carried out for this study, and a database was created which details the careers of Irish constables between 1 January 1890 and late October 1918.[108] It was found that approximately 768 men – 709 constables and fifty-nine officers of the Royal Irish Constabulary – enlisted, or were called to the colours as reservists, in the British Army, Navy and Royal Air Force during the Great War.[109] Four constables failed to report the date on which they enlisted; the enlistment patterns of the rest are illustrated below in chart 3.1.

Chart 3.1: Enlistment patterns of the Royal Irish Constabulary, 1914-18



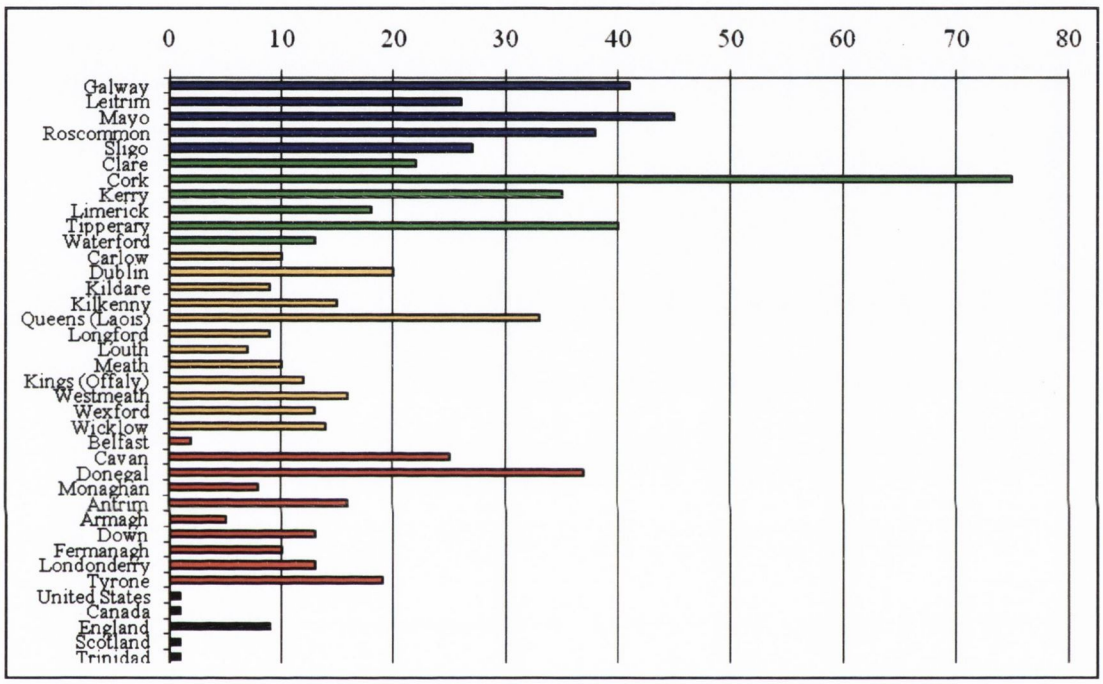
782 men, 15 Mar. 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP no. 25104); Harold Tennant was also quoted as citing this amount in *Irish Independent* 15 Mar. 1916.

[108] All figures used in statistical analysis come from my own analysis of 16,848 R.I.C. service records of the Home Office by date of appointment beginning 1 Jan. 1890 (T.N.A., HO 184/28-35); figures for R.I.C. Officers also determined by the analysis of returns by date of appointment beginning 1 Jan. 1890 (T.N.A., HO 184/46-7). Although examining a much broader period, Lowe and Malcolm's study of the domestication of the R.I.C. was based on a stratified sample of policemen, and examined approximately 7,000 constables between 1837 and 1920.

[109] As Jim Herhily has undoubtedly spent the most time with the records of Irish police, it is appropriate to contrast his findings. Herhily cites 752 R.I.C. having served, 34 of which were officers. The organic method by which R.I.C. records were kept (particularly officers) allow for obvious mistakes. Furthermore, Herhily's tally includes those officers who had retired from the R.I.C. prior to enlistment – the fifth column described by Malcom. My count examines those who enlisted while still serving in the R.I.C. Due to the unreliability of the R.I.C. officers register, the statistics which follow are based on the 709 rank-and-file constables who enlisted or were called to the colours during the Great War. Fitzpatrick's tallies 689 men and 36 officers cited from a list compiled in 1919. Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life*, 'notes to pages 8-14', p. 243.

In addition to the number of enlistments, an analysis of this data allows for a clearer picture of the social origins and mobility of the R.I.C. to emerge. A provincial breakdown of R.I.C. enlistments reveals a general evenness, with Munster maintaining a slightly higher return.[110] Examining enlistment by native county of constables supports the observation that the R.I.C. were of agricultural stock. Large enlistment returns from natives of Cork, Mayo, Tipperary, Galway and Donegal challenge contemporary observations that constables of agricultural stock hesitated to enlist.

Chart 3.2: Enlistment of Royal Irish Constabulary by native county



Furthermore, nearly 40 per cent of R.I.C. claimed to be either farmers or farmers' sons prior to police work, a far greater percentage than any other reported calling.[111]

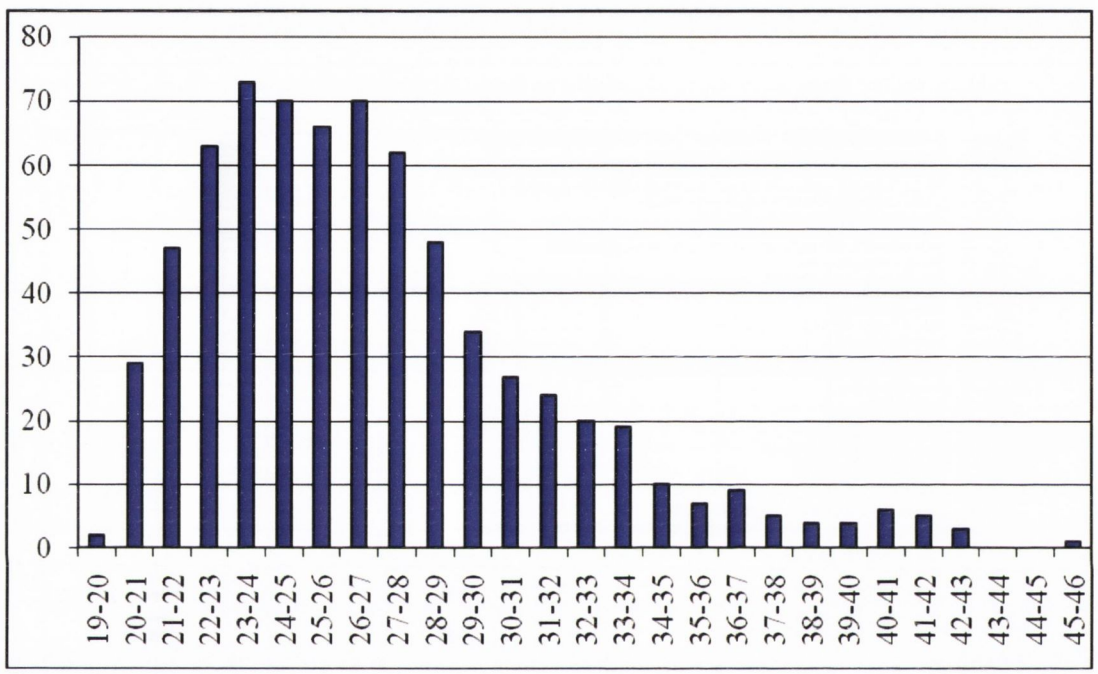
However, as constables were hardly ever assigned to the counties from which they came, the influence of their professional surroundings must be examined. To what degree did an unfamiliar local population, its customs and traditions, and an area's degree of war fervour influence a constable to enlist? Ulster was the predominant supplier of recruits throughout the war, challenged only by Leinster due to the high returns of Dublin city.[112] It is no surprise that a majority of constables, though originally from other provinces, had been stationed in Ulster prior to their enlistment. Dublin, however, supplied only nine

[110] (Ulster=146 or 20 per cent, Leinster=168 or 23 per cent, Munster=203 or 28 per cent, Connaught=177 or 25 per cent, England, Scotland, and United States, Canada=13 or 1 per cent).
[111] See appendix, table 3.1: Trades of men prior to enrolling in the Royal Irish Constabulary who subsequently enlisted in the British armed forces during the Great War.
[112] Recruiting estimates by province (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS 15,259); (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no 21680).

constables as the R.I.C. patrolled the county and not the city. The Dublin Metropolitan Police contributed only fifty-two members toward the war effort.[113] This is perhaps a testament to anti-war sentiment that was ripe in the capital following Easter 1916.

The majority of recruits were young, 49 per cent being between the ages of twenty and twenty-five, while thirty-four percent were between the ages of twenty-six and thirty. This distribution is illustrated in the figure below.

Chart 3.3: Mode age of Royal Irish Constabulary recruits during the Great War



Just 7 per cent of constables were married prior to enlisting, leaving the remainder with no apparent familial responsibility. Youth coupled with freedom suggests that, for many, war service was viewed as an act of professional development. The vast majority of constables survived the war, and consequent entries into their personal files reveal that they were credited with continuous R.I.C. service despite being absent from Ireland. This perhaps helps explain why the vast majority of R.I.C. enlistments came from constables with little service in the force. Sixty per cent had served five years or less in the R.I.C., while 32 per cent had experience of between six and ten years.

There were numerous sentimental elements in recruiting propaganda which drew Irish police toward the British Army. One major theme was that of individuality within the ranks. This technique was not unique to Irish police; the Irish and Ulster Volunteers were courted in a similar manner. When constables did enlist, they almost exclusively joined the Irish Guards. In fact, their numbers within the Guards far surpassed enlistment in any

[113] *Irish Independent*, 7 Apr. 1915; Chalmers to unknown, 24 July 1916 (N.A.I., CSORP 1916, no.14,810).

other regiment.[114] It is with little surprise that the R.I.C. found the Irish Guards accommodating. Recruited almost entirely from Ireland,[115] it was the Irish Guards to which Irish Victoria Cross winner Michael O'Leary had belonged. The regiment was nicknamed the 'Micks', had an Irish wolf hound as a mascot and celebrated the anniversary of its formation on St Patrick's Day. Furthermore, enlisting with the Guards was a way to represent not only Ireland, but the Irish police. For example, a contingent of Belfast-based constables en route to the Irish Guards arrived in Dublin and marched to the R.I.C. Depot behind a crest adorned with a harp and crown with 'R.I.C. Volunteers' inscribed across the front – fusing their pride in enlisting with their pride as policemen.[116]

Similar to the pals battalions to which civilians were encouraged to join, constables enlisted in ways that would simulate the greatest degree of familiarity. Constables enlisted in patterns that allowed them to maintain 'proximity to and contact with one or a few specific individuals', in other words, with those who would provide psychological familiarity and thus ease the transition into war.[117] For example, when a contingent of D.M.P. enlisted in April 1915 they almost unanimously chose to serve with the Guards as they were assured that: 'When they had got to headquarters they would find some of their own men and a number from the sister force, the R.I.C., waiting to welcome them.'[118]

R.I.C. enlistment at times provided public spectacle. Four Tralee constables were treated to a smoking concert, and presented with gifts of wrist-watches and under-clothing by their officers, before departing in January 1915 amidst patriotic tunes played by the local Boherbee band.[119] Similar displays were reported to have occurred in Derry, Mayo, and Dublin on the same day. The *Freeman's Journal* reported that, in Kilkenny, several constables were met by 'a considerable number of the general public' who had crowded the railway station 'to bid them bon voyage.'[120]

Nevertheless, Government regulation still prevented greater R.I.C. enlistment. As a result, contributions remained sporadic. R. McCominsky, an eight year veteran in the R.I.C. and twice rejected ('gently let down') for military service, accused ministers of dodging serious questions surrounding R.I.C. enlistment which had existed since the outbreak of the war. He accused the War Office and R.I.C. command of 'tomfoolery' and

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[114] See appendix, Table 3.2: Regiments joined by Irish constables during the Great War.
[115] *Irish Independent*, 7 Apr. 1915.
[116] *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Jan. 1915.
[117] Michael B. Sperling and William H. Berman (eds), *Attachment in adults* (New York, 1994), p 8.
[118] *Irish Independent*, 7 April 1915.
[119] *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jan. 1915.
[120] Ibid. 28 Jan. 1915.

general indifference when it came to recruiting from their ranks. 'Hence the public at large need not be surprised', he wrote,

> that only 600 or 700 men have joined. ... The bungling of those in high places goes on, and class hatred is still a smouldering sentiment with some while the nation is fighting for its existence. ... There is an aftermath coming and many of these matters may be remembered to the great discouragement of those in high-places.[121]

While perhaps not the aftermath McComiskey had foreseen, the Easter Rising took place one month after his letter to the editor. The event eroded previous popular arguments that the 1867 rising was the last display of Irish defiance, and that a sea change in Irish insurrectionary attitudes had followed the Land Wars. War, death and destruction, which had existed only in daily news columns and film reels, was brought directly to the Irish police and soldiers stationed in Ireland. The Rising, and execution of its leaders that followed, altered nationalist Ireland's support for the war and participation in it. A substantial number of R.I.C. enlistments in May 1916 following the Rising ended significant police contribution to the war effort.[122] Enlistments from the Irish population also decreased, as did political support for the Irish Party which had championed the war and enlistment.

The R.I.C. ultimately suffered from this reversal of opinion. Beginning in early 1917, it was charged with a range of new duties including the policing of Sinn Féin meetings, the suppression of the Irish Volunteers and the arrest of political agitators. Constable Patrick Meehan noted 'a cooling off in the relations between the police and the men who had been the Volunteers. You could sense' he stated, 'this feeling that the Volunteers were suspicious of us'.[123] Taking names, capturing photographs, and transcribing speeches certainly helped to strengthen this suspicion among the populace. The prohibition of meetings, assemblies and proceedings in public places throughout Ireland, as established under the Defence of the Realm Regulations, and the proclamation of Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan and the Gaelic League in early July 1918 only accelerated this process, and transformed the public image of an Irish policeman

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[121] R. McComiskey to editor, *Irish Independent*, 21 Mar. 1916.
[122] Enlistment during this time was not response to the Easter Rising. Those who left for the Front after April 1916 had enlisted before Easter Week and only departed after completing basic training.
[123] Patrick Meehan, (B.M.H., W.S. 478).

from protector to prosecutor.[124] R.I.C. Inspector General Joseph Byrne reported throughout the autumn of 1918 that there existed 'bitter feeling against the Police aroused by their activity in suppressing the rebel movement', and that 'efforts were made in the Counties of Galway, Cork and Limerick to boycott them.'[125]

More than anything to date, the threat of conscription in Ireland, to be enforced by the R.I.C., brought Irish police into direct confrontation with their fellow-countrymen and helped to further align the force with the image of a repressive tool of the government. Examining the attitude of the R.I.C. during this brief period, however, reveals an unprecedented individuality, and offers an explanation toward what would become the new Irish patriotism.

The proposed extension of conscription to Ireland in April 1918 produced two unique reactions. First, it drove men of military age into the rank of the Irish Volunteers.[126] Constable J.J. McConnell observed that the threat of conscription 'converted the youth of the country to Sinn Féin and made it a power in the land.'[127] Second, conscription became a useful electioneering tool, and heavily contributed to the political success of Sinn Féin in 1918. The threat of conscription also influenced the outlooks and actions of many Irish police during the period, and contributed to an unprecedented degree of individual expression within the force. Coercion of the native population was to become a standing order, alongside defence against a foreign enemy and suppression of domestic disorder. In early 1918 constables were directed by their District Inspectors to report on the feasibility of enforcing conscription in their locality. Byrne predicted that such duty would be difficult. Conscription was popularly opposed by both the Irish Party and Sinn Féin, and enthusiasm for the war as it had existed in 1914 was altogether absent. In these circumstances, Byrne underscored the necessity of a strong military presence in Ireland in case of any 'sudden emergency' stemming from discontent or protest, but also to aid the police in enforcing conscription.[128] Eugene Bratton provided

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[124] Inspector General's monthly report, July 1918 (T.N.A., CO 904/99).
[125] Ibid., Aug., Nov., Dec. 1918 (T.N.A., CO 904/99).
[126] For individual narratives of conscription and its effect on the Irish Volunteers see John Crimmins (B.M.H., W.S. 1039), Vinnie Byrne (B.M.H., W.S. 423), Michael Doyle (B.M.H., W.S. 1038), Patrick Egan (B.M.H., W.S. 327), joint statement of James O'Mahony, Denis Crowley and John Fitzgerald (B.M.H., W.S. 560), Michael FitzPatrick(B.M.H., W.S. 1433), James Flood (B.M.H., W.S. 606), Michael Foley (B.M.H., W.S. 1534), Patrick Garvey (B.M.H., W.S. 1011), Daniel Healey (B.M.H., W.S. 1067), Michael Hennessey (B.M.H., W.S. 1412), John (Jack) Lynch (B.M.H., W.S. 967), Patrick Kelly (B.M.H., W.S. 1735), Robert Kelly (B.M.H., W.S. 549), James Leehy (B.M.H., W.S. 1335), a different James Leahy (B.M.H., W.S. 1454), Michael Lynch (B.M.H., W.S. 511), Joseph Martin (B.M.H., W.S. 1723), John McCarthy (B.M.H., W.S. 883) and Patrick McCarthy (B.M.H., W.S. 1163).
[127] J.J. McConnell (B.M.H., W.S. 509).
[128] Inspector General's monthly report, March 1918 (T.N.A., CO 904/99).

a policeman's insight. He recalled that growing antipathy within the police toward conscription was observed 'to a man and I believe that had an attempt been made to enforce it, the police would not have done it.'[129] Patrick Meehan, stationed at Trim in early 1918, recalled police in his district openly contributing to an anti-conscription fund: 'About 90 per cent of the police were opposed to conscription and would not have helped to enforce it.'[130]

Resignations were a common feature in the professional ebb and flow of the R.I.C. since its inception. Men had traditionally left policing 'to better their lot', or to 'take up the family farm'; following the Easter Rising, however, many explanations for resignation were enigmatic, recorded as 'no reason', 'private reasons' or possibly phoney reasons. That policemen might be called upon to enforce conscription on their fellow-countrymen resulted in more direct motives for quitting the force.

Conscription evoked popular resentment toward the R.I.C. Many constables resigned after being harassed or ostracised in their own communities, although this was more prominent during the War of Independence period.[131] A typical explanation for resignation in connection with victimisation is that of William Costelloe, who resigned in July 1918 citing the unpopularity of the force.[132] More often, however, resignations during this period were statements of protest or of sympathy with the Irish population.[133] A brief survey of constables who resigned in protest during this period reveals that they did so in April 1918 or shortly thereafter – that is, at the height of the conscription crisis. The dates of resignation also reveal that many constables chose to resign rather than enforce conscription on fellow Irishmen. Those who resigned but stated no specific reason also showed professional latitude – they were young, single and could make a new career for themselves.

It is also important to note the language of resignations in connection with conscription. The differences between resignation as protest and resignation in sympathy are subtle, but significant. Those who resigned in protest either stated so directly, or explained that they *refused* to enforce conscription. Those who resigned in sympathy stated that they *feared they would have to* enforce conscription, or that they were 'anti-

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[129] Eugene Bratton (B.M.H., W.S. 476).
[130] Patrick Meehan (B.M.H., W.S. 478).
[131] J.J. McConnell stated that 'From 1918 onwards enforcement of the law became daily more difficult and even dangerous. Resignations from the Force grew from a trickle to a steady stream, the motives being genuine patriotism, pressure from terrified parents and wives, and sometimes personal fear, as shootings of police were of daily occurrence.' J.J. McConnelle (B.M.H., W.S. 509).
[132] William Costelloe, R.I.C. no. 66086 (T.N.A., HO 184/35).
[133] Eugene Bratton (N.A.I., W.S. 334).

conscription sympathisers'. One man, John O'Her, stated that he conscientiously objected to enforcing the law.[134] Liam O'Riordan, who was also opposed to R.I.C. enlistment for the war, took this line along with two of his colleagues. O'Riordan reported to his sergeant in April 1918:

> I stated that the Bishops had just declared that the enforcing of conscription was immoral and unjustifiable, and that being a Catholic I could no longer take any action which would help towards the enforcement of conscription. ... I said then that, being a Catholic and having noted the terms of my oath of office, I could no longer conscientiously discharge my duties as a policeman.[135]

'Three nice bloody cowards' was the reaction of the sergeant.[136]

Nationalist sympathies among police did not uniformly result in resignation or refusal to enforce the law. New interpretations of Irish patriotism and loyalty, and how both could be displayed, resulted in a radicalisation of a portion of the force – evident in the formation of a police union,[137] and increasing R.I.C. collusion with the Irish Republican Army. This transformation of outlook was captured by Inspector General Byrne in his monthly report for January 1919:

> There was no improvement in the attitude of the people towards the R.I.C. who, in the more disaffected Counties, are treated with bitter hostility and are boycotted in various ways. This is done in the pursuance of a conspiracy to undermine their loyalty and sow discontent in the Force by making it appear that their loyalty to duty is condemned by nationalist opinion as unpatriotic.[138]

The definitions of R.I.C. loyalty as it had existed prior to and during the Great War changed drastically following the Easter Rising. Low enlistment returns were condemned by the public, but were not viewed within the context of a policeman's personal or family responsibilities, or the reluctance of the government to release them for war service. The unpopularity of conscription in Ireland allowed for increasingly personal interpretations of

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[134] John O'Her, R.I.C. no. 65824 (T.N.A., HO 184/35)
[135] Liam O'Riordan (B.M.H., W.S. 888). O'Riordan's colleagues were John Lydon, R.I.C. no. 63949, and Hugh O'Donnell, R.I.C. no. 66321. They resigned 24 April 1918.
[136] Liam O'Riordan (B.M.H., W.S. 888).
[137] For details on the formation of the police union and its activities, see the narratives of John Duffy (B.M.H., W.S. 580) and T.J. McElligott (B.M.H., W.S. 472).
[138] Inspector General's monthly report, January 1919 (T.N.A., CO 904/99).

police duty among the R.I.C. Resignations in protest and sympathy coincided with a great transformation in Irish political and national opinion during the period. Loyalty of Irish police during the Great War, therefore, was dependent on the complex and competing variables upon which it was formed.

Conclusion

Nearly 800 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary enlisted during the Great War. Many endured the terrible realities of war foreign to the docility that had previously characterised their profession. Eighteen had been prisoners of war. Many others were wounded; seven returned to Ireland as amputees. Overall, 130 were killed in action or died of their wounds – an 18 per cent casualty rate when weighed against the overall R.I.C. enlistment. Two constables, Francis Shortall and Kyran Dunphy, served for the duration of the war, enlisting in August 1914 and May 1915 respectively. They survived bullets and bombardment only to be killed during the Anglo-Irish War by their own countrymen following the labelling of Irish policemen as traitors to Ireland and enemies of the Republic. These two men were exceptions, however; 387 constables, or 54 per cent of those who had enlisted, rejoined the R.I.C. following the war. The majority remained in the force until its disbandment in 1922.

Despite conflicting definitions of duty prior to the war, labour issues and pay disputes which occurred throughout the period, 'inhibiting' social traits which prevented enlistment, and an overall reluctance by the Irish executive to release constables for war service, can R.I.C. enlistment during the Great War been seen as a form of loyalty? Such a label is difficult to assign outright. Although enlistment may be measured, it does not necessarily reflect a sense of loyalty. Balanced with evidence of changing Irish public opinion, the outlook of government ministers regarding the pacification of Ireland, and the contemporary views of constables, this concept becomes more concrete. Assessing loyalty by measuring participation can at times neglect to consider these externally-affixed definitions and measurements of loyalty. The influence they had on a constable's decision to enlist endured throughout the Great War. Ultimately, loyalty remained with the individual, interpreted and justified as it suited each personal, professional, or patriotic scenario.[139] Belonging to a generation labelled 'intensely disloyal to the English

[139] Josiah Royce concludes his lectures on the philosophy of loyalty by explaining this concept. He states that loyalties which are chosen are morally right if they have been decided upon with a clear conscience. Josiah Royce, *The philosophy of loyalty* (New York, 1916 ed.), pp 195-6.

connection', the Royal Irish Constabulary rendered service to Ireland during the Great War, home and abroad, despite various and changing definitions and requirements of duty.

CHAPTER FOUR

LOYALTY AND TREASON: ROGER CASEMENT AND THE IRISH BRIGADE

Roger Casement's immersion in the Irish independence movement, following his retirement from the British Consular Service, seemed a likely transition for a man whose heart ached for the oppressed. Those close to Casement affectionately referred to him as 'friend of the helpless'.[1] Casement saw in Ireland further evidence of British imperial subjugation – examples of which he had previously witnessed in Africa and South America. He viewed the Great War as a similar injustice, and deemed Ireland's involvement illogical. 'It seemed to be the duty of all Irishmen who loved their country' he explained, 'to do their utmost to keep Ireland out of this war – a war that had no claim upon their honour or their patriotism.'[2]

Casement's absence from Ireland as national events accelerated between late 1914 and Easter 1916 mirrored his peripheral involvement in planning the Rising. The isolation he had experienced in the jungles of the Congo and Amazon would again be experienced in America and Germany, where he had travelled in search of financial and moral support for the Irish independence movement. Although entrenched amongst the advancements of modern, civilised society, Casement found his American and Teutonic hosts similarly savage.[3] He returned to Ireland in April 1916 to stop the Rising with the knowledge that his efforts had failed. Moreover, his conscience bore the weight of the undetermined fates of over fifty fellow-Irishmen left behind in Germany: the ill-fated Irish Brigade.

Casement's life, and the controversy that surrounds it, have provided historians and biographers with ample material with which to champion his humanitarian work, examine his nationalist ideals, and debate, ad nauseam, his sexual preferences and the authenticity of his diaries. However, with few exceptions, the major works regarding Casement tend to follow a formulaic pattern, highlighting episodes and characters to which the author has a particular interest, but nonetheless rephrasing the established narrative of Casement's life. The studies conducted by Brian Inglis, B.L. Reid, Roger Sawyer, Angus Mitchell and

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[1] 'Ruari Mac Asmunde, friend of the helpless, patriot and martyr', Sidney Parry, c. 1916 (N.L.I., Roger Casement papers, MS 13,082/1/iii).

[2] 'Why I came to Germany', Roger Casement, 16 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/11).

[3] Writing to his cousin, Gertrude Bannister, Casement observed, 'I don't like [the] U.S.A. The more I see of it the less I like it – but it *is* a great country. The people are ignorant and unthinking and easily led by anything they read in their rotten press.' 'Scodgie' [Casement] to 'Gee' [Bannister], 1 Sept. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,074/9).

Séamus Ó Síocháin fall into this category.[4] Conversely, a collection of essays edited by Mary Daly help place Casement's career and legacy within a wider historical context, while the work conducted by Jeffrey Dudgeon offers a glimpse of Casement's family background and intimate relationships.[5] The premise of Casement 'the traitor' is also common, and it too has found expression in several works.[6] Historiography of Casement's trial, sentencing and execution reveal a fascination and insistence on the label of 'traitor', as well as a sombre acquiescence toward the method in which traitors were traditionally neutralised. Scholarship on Casement in connection with the Irish Brigade, however, is fairly limited. Those which attempt to engage the subject either conclude in April 1916, or rely on the testimony of repatriated prisoners – British soldiers who refused to join Casement and were hostile to his suggestions.[7] Two exceptional examples are the studies conducted by Andreas Roth and Reinhard Doerries.[8] Both make excellent use of German files which remain inaccessible to many Irish historians.

Despite these inroads, little attempt has been made to examine the lives, circumstances or motivations of those Irish prisoners of war whom Casement succeeded in recruiting, and who remained in Germany following his departure. As the bulk of prosecuting evidence presented during Casement's civil trial sought to highlight not only his treason but his seduction of fellow-Irishmen toward treasonable paths, it would seem that the men who comprised the Irish Brigade would occupy a place of prominence in Casement scholarship. Strangely, these men have been overlooked, and little is made of Casement's Irish Brigade except the fact that it failed.

Idioms of loyalty are often used to defend interpretations of duty and patriotism, while at the same time accuse dissenters of disloyalty or treason. Such language is applied liberally throughout the episode of Casement and the Irish Brigade. In this sense,

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[4] Brian Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London, 1973), B.L. Reid, *The lives of Roger Casement* (London, 1976), Roger Sawyer, *Casement, the flawed hero* (London, 1984), Angus Mitchell, *Casement* (London, 2003).
[5] Mary Daly (ed.), *Roger Casement in Irish and world history* (Dublin, 2005); Jeffrey Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: the Black Diaries, with a study of his background, sexuality and Irish political life* (Belfast, 2002).
[6] See, for example, Brendan Clifford, 'Traitors-patriots in the Great War: Casement and Masryk', in *Belfast magazine* (2004); Giovanni Costigan, 'The treason of Sir Roger Casement' in *The American historical review*, 60, no. 2 (1955), pp 283-302; Denis Gwynn, *Traitor or patriot, the life and death of Roger Casement* (London, 1930); Adrian Weale, *Patriot traitors: Roger Casement, John Amery and the real meaning of treason* (London, 2001).
[7] Two conference papers have been examined for this study: Julia Eichenberg, 'Foreign impact on national struggles for independence: the recruitment of P.O.W.s for the Polish and Irish independence movement', delivered at the Irish War of Independence conference, Dublin, 2-3 October 2009, and Heather Jones, '"The English were a lot of narrow-gutted bastards": Irish prisoner of war reactions to Casement's attempt to recruit an Irish Brigade', delivered at the Irish and imprisonment conference, Dublin, 4-5 September 2009.
[8] Andreas Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful": Sir Roger Casement and the Irish Brigade in Germany during the First World War' in *The Irish Sword*, xix, no. 78 (winter, 1995), pp 313-32; Reinhard Doerries, *Prelude to the Easter Rising* (London, 2000).

Casement was chief antagonist toward Irishmen in the British Army. He believed the only loyalty worth possessing was toward one's country. The thousands of Irish Prisoners of War he attempted to recruit for the Irish Brigade could hardly disagree. Diverging definitions of Irish loyalty, coupled with Casement's insensitivity toward a soldier's oath of allegiance, produced few recruits for the Brigade.

Those who did abandon king and country for Casement and Ireland, as well as those who refused, brought loyalty and opportunism into sharp contrast. Methods of recruiting, however, bore the stamp of Casement's personal interpretation of Irish history. Examining his attempts to recruit an Irish Brigade within the broader context of loyalty therefore requires a progressive observance of Casement's mental and emotional state. Casement repeatedly confessed to his diary and professed in his letters that in recruiting an Irish Brigade he was committing high treason. His subsequent internal struggle was compounded by the fact that he had asked his fellow-countrymen to do the same.

In addition to examining the overall history of the Irish Brigade, this chapter will explore the burden that loyalty placed on individual and group consciences during the Great War – particularly within the bleak uncertain realities of a German P.O.W. camp. Furthermore, it will consider the stigma of treason as it existed within British public and military mindset during the Great War, evident during Casement's trial and in the professed pride many Irishmen felt in serving the British Army. Finally, the aftermath of treason will be analysed by tracing the lives of several men of the Irish Brigade following the war.

I. Casement in Germany

Since 1911, Casement had published editorials in support of German ambitions – the most supportive being penned in pseudonym.[9] He praised German resolve, and pitied its stymieing at the hands of the British economic and naval supremacy. Casement imagined that the emerging Continental power would make a powerful Irish ally, and believed Irish and German interests to be intertwined. [10] British dominance of the seas could only be checked, he argued, if Ireland, the 'gateway to the Atlantic', was freed.

On the surface it may seem contradictory that Casement could condemn the actions of one imperial nation, while promoting the rise of another. It was perhaps Casement's long history with the British Empire that contributed to his pro-German attitude. Contrary

[9] For the evolution of Casement's pseudonyms see Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, pp 51-2.
[10] In 1908 Casement fantasised a scenario in which a German force liberated Ireland, allowing the Irish to form their own government. Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 226.

to folk wisdom, Casement was intrigued by the devil he did *not* know. The devil he did know had disappointed him on several occasions throughout his professional life. He had become resentful at what he felt were 'the evasions and procrastinations of the Foreign Office,' which became mired in bureaucracy while 'his beloved and helpless Africans were still being flogged, mutilated, or put to death.'[11] His frustration was not confined to Africa. Docking in Barbados in August 1911, Casement was distraught to find a man named O'Donnell, an exploiter of South American labour, 'living in great luxury and popularity, in no way hampered by the authorities for his crimes in Putumayo.'[12]

Other contributing factors toward Casement's anti-British stance were his Irish origins and nationalist outlook. However, to digress into the nationalist sentiments of Casement would be a discourse in the familiar. When attempting to understand Casement's nationalism it is instead important to acknowledge the duality of his character. Like countless other Irishmen, he had entered into the service of the Crown, and, like others, his professional character had been forged within the template of British imperial sentimentality. Casement's Irish roots, however, presented him with contradiction. Sidney Parry, the husband of Casement's cousin Gertrude Bannister, explained it thus:

> He, and the other Irishmen in the service of the British Government, always felt themselves hampered by their nationality, and that to a large extent they were, owing to their Irish sentiments always regarded with suspicion. The spirit of mysticism, self-forgetfulness, and idealism, which are the prevailing characteristics of the Irish character, were ever in conflict with the cold, calculating, logical and persistent mind of the British Government.[13]

Parry's assessment is as flattering as it is narrow. He suggests that all Irishmen employed by Britain yearned for both spiritual and patriotic freedom, elements kept at bay by the requirements of imperial employment. Brian Inglis has offered a more feasible explanation: Casement 'preferred to give his loyalty to men and institutions only so long as they deserved it.'[14] This explanation allows for Casement's nationalism to be observed progressively, taking into account his compounding disappointments with the Foreign

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[11] Costigan, 'The treason of Sir Roger Casement', p. 286.
[12] Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, p. 98.
[13] 'Ruari Mac Asmunde', Sidney Parry, c. 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,082/1/iii).
[14] Inglis, *Roger Casement* (London, 2002 edn), p. 230. In addition, Sawyer and Reid have explored this liminal nature of Casement's character and the uninformed, or 'divided loyalty', which has been used to describe his concepts of national identity, religion and professionalism. See Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, p. xi (preface); 1; 148; Reid, *Lives of Casement*, p. 454.

Office over their failure to act on his reports. Considering these precedents, Casement came to view the Great War as catalyst to further Irish victimisation, and to render Britain subsequently unworthy of Irish assistance.[15] He departed the United States, where he had been fundraising for the Irish Volunteers, and embarked for Germany via Norway in the autumn of 1914. Casement arrived in Berlin on 31 October and began negotiations with the German Foreign Office with a view to secure military assistance in a bid for Irish independence.

Casement's plans for international collusion evolved during his first months in Germany amidst diplomatic talks and informal understandings.[16] He had arrived with the provisional title of 'republican envoy', bestowed upon him by John Devoy and Clan na Gael – links he had established during previous visits to New York and Philadelphia. Casement's three objectives, so far as Devoy and the Clan were concerned, were to further enlighten Germany to the plight of Ireland, secure their military assistance and organise Irish P.O.W.s into a military unit.[17] Though initially distracted by the 'Findley affair', he set to work immediately.[18]

Casement gained an audience with prominent members of the Imperial Government. He met with the Chancellor, Theobold von Bethmann-Hollwegg, the Secretary of State, Gottlieb von Jägow, the Under-Secretary of State, Arthur von Zimmerman, Richard Meyer of the Foreign Office, and Georg von Wedel, head of the Foreign Office, English department. On 18 November Casement reported his progress to Eoin MacNeill in Dublin:

> You know who writes this. I am in Berlin, and if Ireland will do her duty, rest assured Germany will do hers toward us, our cause, and our whole future. ... Once our people, clergy, and volunteers know that Germany, if victorious, will do her

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[15] For further explanation of Casement's insights regarding Ireland, the Great War and the Home Rule Bill, see 'Why I came to Germany', Roger Casement, 16 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/11).
[16] Andreas Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', pp 313-15.
[17] Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 279; 'Memorandum regarding the Irish Brigade', 7 May 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/7a).
[18] The Findlay affair refers to the brief period while Casement was in transit from New York to Germany via Norway. During this time he was under surveillance from the Foreign Office and felt his life threatened by one of its agents, Sir Mansfeldt de Cardonnel Findlay, the British ambassador at Christiania, Norway. Casement wrote to Edward Grey throughout his time in Germany, threatening to make the incident public. The episode was eventually published in diary form as *Sir Roger Casement's diaries: his mission to Germany and the Findlay affair* (1922). See also, Jeffrey Dudgeon, *Roger Casement: the Black Diaries with a study of his background, sexuality, and Irish political life* (Belfast, 2002), chapter fifteen: 'Germany 1914-16 and Adler Christiansen, pp 432-58. In addition to historiography of the episode, two large files contain consolidated evidence of the Findlay Affair, see 'Irish conspiracy – Roger Casement' (T.N.A., FO 337/107), and 'Casement's movements and activities, 1911-16' (T.N.A., FO 95/776).

> best to aid us in our efforts to achieve an independent Ireland, every man at home must stand for Germany and Irish freedom. I am entirely assured of the good-will of this Government towards our country, and beg you to proclaim it far and wide.[19]

Further negotiations throughout December produced a guarantee of friendship and cooperation between Casement and the German government.[20] A treaty and formal agreement between Germany and Casement was also established; it contained ten articles which outlined the goals of German-Irish cooperation.[21]

Of the ten articles, recruiting and maintaining an Irish Brigade was the top priority. Approaches toward its realisation developed slowly, and were revised following initial difficulty. More immediate, however, was Casement's view of his mission and his central role in its success. Surrounded by German military might and astute government authority, recognised as envoy of Clan-na-Gael and serving as diplomat for the Irish independence movement, Casement completely understood how actions would be viewed in British circles. On 7 November 1914, he reflected that: '[I]t is not every day that even an Irishman commits High Treason – especially one who has been in the service of the Sovereign he discards and not without honour and some fame in that service.'[22] Casement was not ignorant of the irreversible stigma that was treason to the Crown. Although he internalised his duplicity as being committed in aid of Ireland and therefore justified, the tarnishing of his international reputation nevertheless haunted him. Agatha Grabisch, an Irish-American secretary at the Foreign Office in Berlin who became acquainted with the Irish Brigade, reflected on Casement's growing depression during this period:

> Ireland's cause, he used to say, is a penniless one, unless you go in to betray. Those faithful to it meet always with disaster. There is no living in being an Irish patriot. It is *the* lost cause of history: men can serve only by sacrificing themselves.[23]

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[19] Casement to MacNeill, 18 Nov. 1914 (T.N.A., CAB 37/152).
[20] 'Casement's movements and activities, 1911-16' (T.N.A., PRO 95/776); Reid, *Lives of Casement*, pp 234-5.
[21] The Germans preferred a delay in publication of the treaty until 200 Irishmen were enlisted in the Irish Brigade. German-Irish treaty, 23-28 Dec. 1914 (U.C.D.A., Boehm/Casement papers, P127/2); Doerries, *Prelude*, pp 71-4; John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish rebel* (New York, 1929), pp 433-5.
[22] Roger Casement's German diary, 7 Nov. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).
[23] Agatha Grabisch, 'Roger Casement and the "German Plot"' in William G. Fitzgerald, *The voice of Ireland, a memorial of freedom's day* (Dublin, 1924), p. 123.

That he was a traitor had been established in Casement's mind; that he might never see Ireland again was just being realised.[24] Writing to his cousin in early December 1914, Casement turned his attention to others' opinion of him, and toward his own mortality.

> I know what will be said of me – and for your sake and for poor old N's [Casement's sister Agnes Newman, otherwise known as 'Nina'] I am wretched. She will not understand – you will. Comfort her and help her. ... If I die you know it was for Ireland and that my thoughts shall be of the N and you two dear darling girls.[25]

That Casement foresaw failure of his mission at this early stage suggests an understanding of the difficulties which lay ahead in realms both personal and international. To prevent failure, prolong his life and maintain (and in some circles elevate) his reputation, Casement would have to satisfy his financiers (Devoy and the Clan in America), his contemporaries in Ireland (the Volunteers and their leaders), and his German hosts. The sole element toward which these ends could be met lay in the successful recruiting of an Irish Brigade. Casement would have to convince Irishmen to commit similar treason and abandon an oath they swore to uphold.

The British Expeditionary Force (B.E.F.) met stiff German resistance near Mons in Belgium soon after the outbreak of war. Many soldiers, such as Michael Keogh, soon found themselves 'passive spectator[s] in the historic cockpit of Europe', becoming prisoners following just a few weeks.[26] Coincidentally, Casement had approached the Kaiser, through Franz von Papen in Washington, simultaneous to the German halting of the B.E.F.[27] Casement equated nationality with loyalty, and assured German authorities that 35-40,000 of the 150,000 British prisoners were of Irish birth, and that their loyalty to Britain was therefore doubtful.[28] The Germans entertained Casement's claims. Irish

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[24] Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 280; Reid, *Lives of Casement*, p. 241.
[25] 'Scodgie' to 'Gee', 2 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,074/9). Casement's friends and contemporaries found his support of Germany troubling. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle explained Casement's alleged treason to the *Daily Chronicle* as resulting from prolonged exposure to tropical climates. See Reid, *The lives of Roger Casement*, pp 203-4; 254.
[26] Michael McKeogh, 'Roger Casement, Germany and the World War', in *The Catholic Bulletin*, XVIII, no. 2 (Feb. 1928), p. 167.
[27] The memoirs of Franz von Papen contain but a few lines regarding Casement and the Irish Brigade. Von Papen revealed that the Irish independence movement was advantageous for Germany so long as it provided distraction for the British Army, but displays little actual sympathy toward Irish aspirations toward independence. Franz von Papen, *Memoirs*, trans. Brian Connell (London, 1952), pp 34-6.
[28] Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 313.

prisoners of war were collected from various camps throughout Germany, most notably Sennelager, and concentrated in one camp at Limburg.

Casement arrived at Limburg camp on 4 December 1914, and bore witness to the emotional dejection and physical deterioration of its prisoners. He observed the Irish as being 'dirty and shivering in their thin khakis', looking terribly demoralised compared to the French prisoners.[29] Unlike the French, Casement recorded in his diary, the Irish 'were not fighting for their country – they were indeed as they are always called on the Continent, a "mercenary army".'[30] Surveying the collection of Irish N.C.O.s at Limburg, Casement noted that there was 'no spark of patriotism in the eye', and claimed: 'The crime against Ireland stood there before me in their poor, sodden-sick faces, demoralized into the ranks of the one *anti*-national army in the world.'[31]

Casement dismissed the fact that many thousands of Irishmen had joined the colours at the behest of John Redmond, who promoted enlistment as a way of fighting for and defending Ireland, and instead inserted his own reality: Irishmen in the British Army enlisted as a last resort, forced into military service due to financial difficulty. Casement's inability to reconcile his interpretation with fact caused great difficulty in his recruiting. Moreover, Casement's insistence that a British soldier and a 'true Irishmen' were irreconcilable won him little favour within the camp.

The specific tactics used by Casement in recruiting, including the type of language he employed, is a point of contention among historians. It has been argued that Casement's speeches to prisoners were clear, coherent, well-argued and non-confrontational.[32] In this light, Casement's failure is often pinned on soldiers' ignorance, social class and lack of nationalist education. Scholars conversely argue that Casement's approach was at fault. Overall, evidence suggests that an unsophisticated anti-British message was communicated to a body of Irishmen who possessed little advanced nationalist or separatist aspirations. Casement's offer was interpreted as blackmail, and viewed by Irish P.O.W.s as a German plot to sabotage England.

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[29] Reid, *Lives of Casement*, p. 244; Roger Casement's German diary, 4 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).
[30] Roger Casement's German diary, 5 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).
[31] Ibid.
[32] Heather Jones has identified Casement's language as 'much akin to the type of Sinn Fein language that in 1918 gained such ground with the Irish electorate.' The obvious difference was the audience addressed, and the circumstances in which the message was delivered and received. Jones, 'Casement's attempt to recruit an Irish Brigade'.

Angus Mitchell, Reinhard Doerries and others have identified this group approach as paramount to Casement's failure.[33] He often left the men with time to think and discuss his proposals amongst themselves, returning to hear their decision at a later date. Joseph Zerhusen, German-appointed interpreter to the Irish Brigade, also identified the infiltration of English soldiers as a key problem in this regard, one which had originated from an incomplete segregation system during the Limburg camp selection process. A third category of blame, explored exclusively by Andreas Roth, affixes blame for failed recruiting to both Casement *and* the German command, 'an example of how a promising project was thwarted by human ineptitude on both sides.'[34] Zerhusen provided a contemporary analysis of Roth's claim:

> Instead of going by the identity cards of the prisoners of war to select the soldiers of Irish nationality to put them into a separate camp, they let the men come on parade and then the order was given 'All Irish to the right'. Now, amongst the soldiers were, of course, a lot of well-seasoned men and these immediately smelt a rat, that there was something in this order. Therefore, quite a lot came forward although they were really no Irishmen and afterwards these very men were the stumbling block which practically handicapped Casement's adventure.[35]

However, the gathering of men together was not as damaging as what was said to them. During his initial meeting with prisoners on 5 December, Casement told Irish N.C.O.s that Home Rule was a 'fade', and that he didn't think they were brave enough to do what he had done, that is, to fight for Ireland.[36] He called Redmond a traitor, and denounced Home Rule as a mere pretence of Irish recruiting.[37] He claimed to be 'the right-hand man of the Kaiser', and later justified the invasion of Belgium to a group of Irish sergeants.[38]

Typical of Casement's recruiting performance was the recitation of the history of England's oppression of Ireland. William Egan, James Wilson and John O'Neill all provided testimony to this effect: 'He started talking about 1798, our rotten Government,

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[33] Angus Mitchell, *Casement*, p. 105; Doerries, *Prelude*, p. 9. The traditional approach to recruiting Irish revolutionaries was to approach men individually, thus eliminating peer pressure or outside influence. This was employed by Brigade recruiting sergeants only after Casement had publicly declared his intentions.
[34] Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 313.
[35] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728).
[36] Roger Casement's German diary, 5 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).
[37] Statement of John Cronin, interview no. 446 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).
[38] 'Short history of P.O.W. camp at Limburg', n.d. (T.N.A., WO 141/49).

and what our forefathers bled for, and that we should be ashamed to call ourselves Irishmen, and advised us strongly to join the Irish Brigade.'[39] O'Neill and others were also told to 'remember Bachelors Walk in Dublin',[40] and were informed that England and her interests were of no more concern to Irishmen than the Fiji Islands.[41]

Casement compounded his message by distributing literature, mainly his own articles featured in *The Gaelic-American*, *The Irish World* and *Continental Times*, as well as pre-war manifesto, *Crimes against Ireland*.[42] Additional circulars distributed in May 1915 reiterated the terms of Casement's treaty with Germany, secured the previous December.[43] Written propaganda was supplemented by examples of favourable German treatment toward Irishmen, and further propagated by Casement's efforts to free Irish prisoners from the civilian internment camp at Ruhleben.[44]

Two men who enlisted, Sergeant MacMurrough and Corporal Timothy Quinlisk were quickly transformed into recruiting sergeants, and paraded through the camp as examples of the improved conditions that awaited members of the Irish Brigade.[45] Neither man truly impressed Casement.[46] Casement was also aided by Michael Kehoe, who had emigrated to America at sixteen, been educated at Fordham and was living in Germany when the war broke out. He was put in contact with Casement by Boehm, an officer of the German General Staff.[47] Joseph Dowling was another influential recruiting sergeant. A native of Queen's county and an established British Army veteran, Dowling had enlisted in the Leinster Regiment in 1904 and afterwards transferred to the Connaught Rangers.

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[39] Statements of James Wilson, interview no. 331, William Egan, interview no. 308 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829); statement of John O'Neill, interview no. 463 (T.N.A., WO 161/49).
[40] Ibid.
[41] 'German offer to Irishmen', *Times*, 9 Jul. 1918.
[42] Statements of A. Osborn, interview no. 301, and John Cronin, interview no. 466 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).
[43] Copy of hecktographed [sic] circular distributed to prisoners of war at Limburg, 9 May 1915 (MA, George Gavan Duffy collection, CD 45/15/3).
[44] Roger Casement's German diary, 8 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,690); Casement to von Wedel, 17 May 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/iv); 'Letters and papers dealing with Irish civil prisoners in Ruhleben, c. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/4); Memorandum on Irish civil prisoners at Ruhleben, 14 Apr. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/10).
[45] Sergeant MacMurrough claimed he had joined the British Army out of financial trouble. He was 32 years old and asserted he had no intention of returning to Ireland after the war 'with a red coat'. Corporal Timothy Quinlisk was nearly 19, had witnessed his brother killed near La Bassée, and confessed that he 'was quite prepared to be put on trial for high treason.' Roger Casement's German diary, 8 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., 1,690).
[46] MacMurrough and Quinlisk were both absent when Casement returned for a visit, claiming to have fever. German diary, 7 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).
[47] Slight confusion pervades both the character and evidence of Kehoe. He is referred to in contemporary correspondence as both 'Kehoe' and 'Keogh', but provided evidence to the Bureau of Military History under the name 'Kehoe' and published a series of articles in *The Catholic Bulletin* under the surname 'McKeogh'. In order to avoid confusion, he is referred to throughout this chapter as Michael Kehoe, although citation of his publications maintain their given spelling. Michael Kehoe is not to be confused with a less-active member of the Brigade, Patrick Keogh. Roger Casement's German diary (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689); Michael J Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).

Recruiters strutted throughout camp in distinct Irish Brigade uniforms – in reality German uniforms with shamrocks sewn into the collar. Prisoners were forced to line up and watch members of the Brigade smoking cigars, eating good food and drinking wine, warm and distinguished-looking in their new uniforms.[48] Bribery in the form of food and freedom became common policy. It was also established that should the Brigade fail, each member would receive free passage to America, be found employment, and given £20 with which to start a new life. All of these material incentives influenced rank-and-file prisoners to view Brigade men as mercenaries whose loyalty had been bought. Recruiters also reiterated Casement's general message: 'It will be better for you if you turn out and fight for your own country as now is the time'. Daniel O'Brien reported of his attempted seduction: 'They told me the English were a lot of narrow-gutted bastards.'[49]

Challenging the patriotism of prisoners was not beyond the sergeants. Called into a converted recruiting station, Private John O'Neill later recounted how he resisted Quinlisk's pressure to join the Brigade:

> I told him I would not join the brigade, and he told me I was a traitor to my country for not going to join the Irish Brigade and fight for my country ... He also called me a coward, and if I had blood in me now I would fight against England ... After this we were marched before the recruiters every day for a fortnight, and the same thing happened every day.[50]

It was the intervention in religious matters, however, which won least favour. Two priests, fathers O'Gorman and Crotty had been assigned to Limburg from the Irish College, Rome.[51] When Father O'Gorman was recalled to Rome in February 1915,[52] he was replaced by Father Nicholson, a Limerick-man ordained in America and based in Philadelphia.[53] The presence of Father Nicholson created tension in the camp; his insensitive pursuit of recruits created further distance between the men and the Irish

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[48] Statement of A. Osborn, interview no. 301 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).
[49] Statement of Daniel O'Brien, interview no. 284 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).
[50] Statement of John O'Neill, interview no. 463 (T.N.A., WO 161/98).
[51] Both priests were reported to have provided excellent ministry with no political bias, and were described by prisoners as gentlemen. 'They were good to us' claimed James Wilson, 'and simply preached religion to us.' Crotty in particular provided constant encouragement to Casement. Statements of Daniel O'Brien, interview no. 284, and James Wilson, interview no. 331 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).
[52] There was no outside influence in O'Gorman's removal, his term had simply expired. The Imperial German Minister at the Vatican to the Foreign Office, 20 Nov. 1914, in Doerries, *Prelude*, p. 62.
[53] Roth cites assessment of Nicholson by various scholars, Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"',p. 317.

Brigade. Daniel O'Brien recalled how Nicholson's anti-English attitude isolated him from the prisoners:

> He ... was always going about among the men running down England and saying what Germany would do for Ireland. I would not go near or salute or speak to him. ... He worried the life out of men until they had to give way to him. ... We refused to go to mass with him; we would not get out of his way, and insulted him every way we could, except speak to him.'[54]

Private Timothy Macarthy told a similar story: 'On another day a strange priest came to say Mass, said to be an Irish-American. He did not say Mass but addressed us and tried to persuade us to fight against England.'[55] O'Neill, too, was subject to Nicholson's unique homilies:

> Every time he held Divine Service he mentioned the Irish Brigade and Sir Roger Casement, and how Casement was doing his best for Ireland. He used to hear confessions every Saturday, but I never confessed to him. Father Crotty told me never to go to confession to him. A man of the name of Hyland in the Royal Irish, a private, told me that Father Nicholson had mentioned the Irish Brigade at confession. Hyland never went to confession to him again.[56]

Episodes such as these caused many within the camp to doubt that Nicholson was actually a priest.[57]

Casement's recruiting tactics were based on his own interpretation of Irish history and Britain's irredeemable place in it. Casement recorded in his diary that he found prisoner opposition stemming from two distinct positions. One, a belief that the Irish Brigade would be used to fight for Germany, rather than for Ireland with German aid. And two, 'because England had given them Home Rule (!) and because Germany had burnt and

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[54] Statement of Daniel O'Brien, interview no. 284 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).
[55] Statement of Tim Macarthy, interview no. 7180 (T.N.A., WO 141/15).
[56] Statement of John O'Neill, interview no. 463 (T.N.A., WO 161/98).
[57] Nicholson was indeed a priest. He had met Casement in America, and his mission to Germany was orchestrated by Joseph McGaritty. Nicholson later became Vicar-General of the Diocese of Cheyenne in the United States. *Leitrim Observer*, 17 Oct. 1931.

pillaged the R.C. Churches and wantonly attacked little Belgium.'[58] Both Irish and British propaganda had found advocates among the soldiers at Limburg.

However, prisoners' refusal to join the Irish Brigade was of greater substance. Many held a stake in a British victory. They had homes and families in England, had served in the army for many years, and were about to draw their pensions. Others were simply proud to serve the Crown. Private David Tormey refused to join the Irish Brigade on the grounds that he 'was proud to say he had faithfully served under three Sovereigns.[59] Loyalty stemming from the common experience of imprisonment was also a factor. Though segregated as Irishmen, prisoners still maintained a common bond as soldiers. In 1931, in a critique of Casement's career, Pádraic Colum aptly observed:

> These soldiers were not conscripts; they had joined the British Army on their own initiative, they had pride in and loyalty to the famous regiments they belonged to, and the leaving of their command to form a Brigade in the German service was bound to be regarded as desertion by them.[60]

Uncertainty about the length and outcome of the war was a further dynamic which bound men together and prevented the growth of the Irish Brigade. Father Nicholson reported to Casement in February 1915 in this context, stating, 'no one will take any blind step.'[61] Nevertheless, propaganda touting Germany's early success in the east, such as the Russian defeat at Tennenberg and subsequent withdrawal from Warsaw, were given as examples of an inevitable German victory.[62] This was neutralised to a great extent, however, by the stalemate which ensued on the Western Front, and the possibility of Italy joining the allies. An intercepted letter between prisoners at Limburg validates this outlook:

> When you go to America [upon the collapse of the Brigade] unless you are a skilled tradesman you will find it very hard to get on, and the Irish Brigade will very soon

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[58] Roger Casement's German diary, 7 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,690). Father Nicholson reported that Zerhusen found similarities when visiting the camps in February 1915, Nicholson to Casement, 23 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, N.L.I., 13085/25).
[59] Statement of David Tormey, interview no. 372 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).
[60] Pádraic Colum, 'The career of Roger Casement' in *Dublin Magazine: a quarterly review of literature, science and art*, vi, no. 4 (October-December 1931), pp 32-3.
[61] Nicholson to Casement, 23 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/25).
[62] Zerhusen to Casement, 12 Aug. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/28).

> show you the cold shoulder. If England wins the war she can claim you all and you will be hanged. Now that Italy is joining her it's a cert[ainty].[63]

Italy joined the Entente in May 1915. Described at the time by Joseph Mary Plunkett, a leading figure in the Irish Republican Brotherhood and a chief strategist of the Easter Rising, as 'Italy's accomplished Treachery', it provided Roman Catholic prisoners further grounds on which to shun the Brigade. Plunkett, who had travelled to Berlin in 1915 to consult Casement, weighed in on the inseparability of the Irish with the Pope and Rome:

> It must not be allowed to run across the track of the Irish Brigade on which so much depends, and even if the Brigade itself were to volunteer for such work *faute de mieux* it would appear quite useless while his Holiness remains in Rome. … After all the Vatican is still officially neutral – that is the real crux – and as long as the Pope refuses to leave Rome it will be hard to show that he is really on our side – or even on any side in particular that would give an excuse for fighting for him.[64]

In the minds of many Irish P.O.W.s, Germany's aid to the Irish Brigade was irreconcilable with the fact that she had declared war on Italy.

Perhaps the greatest factor inhibiting prisoners' enlistment in the Irish Brigade was interpersonal. Similar to political prisoners in Ireland during the War of Independence, discussed in the next chapter, the Irish prisoners at Limburg encouraged one another to remain diligent in order to maintain morale. Resisting Brigade recruiters was no doubt made easier by the fact that the majority of Irish P.O.W.s resented their objectives. Some in fact believed that by helping to subdue sedition within their ranks they would be looked on with favour following demobilisation.[65] In addition, parcels of food, clothing and cigarettes sent on from aid societies in Britain and Ireland, as well as letters from family, helped to stave off hunger, preserve hope and maintain morale.[66]

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[63] 'N' to Ryan, 18 May 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/21).
[64] JM Plunkett to Casement, 24 May 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, 13085/26).
[65] Nicholson to Casement, 15 March 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/25). On the whole, men maintained strength through solidarity. Julie Eichenberg has commented that 'The fear of being betrayed by their Irish comrades [on returning home] and the relief on learning most of the Irish declined the offer is revealed in many of their war memoirs.' Julia Eichenberg, 'Foreign impact on national struggles for independence'.
[66] Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).

Prisoners' refusal of Casement, though nearly universal, was not merely verbal. Casement's appeals for recruits were often met with heckling,[67] and at times refusal turned violent. In fact, violence was targeted not only at Casement, but threatened against fellow-prisoners who considered joining the Brigade – a rare occurrence in the history of P.O.W. camps during the Great War. Those who did join were ostracised from camp life, and threatened with hostility when they returned to Ireland.

As the British were concerned about the treatment of their prisoners, inspections were conducted in camps throughout Germany. Daniel J. McCarthy's account, *The prisoner of war in Germany*, was constructed from the intimate contact he had with P.O.W.s over several months.[68] McCarthy observed poor attendance of Casement's lectures, and noted: 'as soon as the real purpose of the lectures was disclosed serious trouble developed in the camp whenever Casement appeared.' McCarthy recorded how Casement was forced to move amongst the camps with a German guard 'to protect him from the indignant Irish who resented both his presence and his mission.' Private John Cronin witnessed such an episode in January 1915: 'as soon as the men realised who he was and what was his aim, they set upon him, and he was only saved by the German sentries from serious injury. After that he did not visit camp again.'[69] One of Casement's chief recruiters, Joseph Dowling, faced similar hostility. The *Times* was delighted to report that: 'It was satisfactory to know that Dowling ... got part of his desserts for his treachery.' He was similarly set upon by several 'loyal men' who began to beat him, and only escaped with the help of German sentries.[70] Violence had been used as a threat against joining the Brigade from early on. Daniel O'Brien recalled how in January 1915 he and fellow-prisoners gave Patrick Keogh 'a terrible hiding' when they discovered he was going to join the Brigade.[71] Private James Scanlan recalled seeing a new Brigade recruit 'come to our part of the camp with a belt and a side bayonet. The Irish prisoners crowded around him and I saw them knock him down and kick him.'[72]

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[67] Aylward, v. Boetzelaerlaan 187, The Hague, Holland, 3 Mar. 1918 (N.A.I., M 6808, shelf 2/478/9); statements of Thomas Higgins, Thomas Fahey, Joseph Mahony, Tim Mcarthy and Andrew Duffy (T.N.A., WO 141/15).

68 McCarthy's can be deemed a truly authentic account of conditions at Limburg, as he had received permission to inspect camps without having first to arrange it. Daniel J. McCarthy, *The prisoner of war in Germany* (New York, 1918).

[69] Statement of John Cronin, interview no. 463 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).

[70] *Times*, 9 Jul. 1918.

[71] Statement of Daniel O'Brien (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).

[72] Statement of James Scanlon, no. 520 (T.N.A., WO 161/98).

It was not uncommon for members of the Brigade to require protection from their former-comrades. It is the intense accusatory language of these men, however, that allows for a deeper understanding of their resentment of Casement and his Brigade. They identified Casement's Irish Brigade with treason, and those who joined as traitors. Officers threatened to report prisoners who joined as deserters or 'seceders'.[73] Quinlisk stated that the prisoners had threatened to inform on him 'and have him hanged as a traitor' after the war.[74] It is interesting to note that in attempting to extract a loyalty to Irish nationalist ideals, Brigade recruiters suffered the collective harassment of fellow-Irishmen. Similar to Ireland as a whole, Limburg camp was not devoid of loyalty. Each prisoner had constructed their view of Ireland and loyalty throughout their lives. The propositions offered by Casement and Brigade recruiters were simply contradictory to many prisoners' views of the relationship between Britain and Ireland. This should perhaps have been made apparent by their enlistment in the British Army.

Amongst the prisoners, Casement was considered chief traitor. Addressing a group of men on 6 January 1915, Casement found he was uncomfortably surrounded and without his German guard. 'Some of the youths made silly remarks, calling out over the heads of those near me – and declaring that they were "Englishmen and had no need for an Irish traitor" ... and had the friends of Mr Redmond been as brave in body as they were in words I might have had to use my cane.'[75] A sergeant of the Munster Fusiliers threatened to 'lay out Sir Roger if he visited the camp'.[76]

Refusing the Brigade on the grounds that one did not wish to be labelled a traitor was common occurrence. O'Neill informed Quinlisk: 'I would trample on the men who were joining the Irish Brigade, for it was for England I had come to fight for, and it should never be said I was a traitor.'[77] Patrick Cullen reported a similar scene in February 1915, once the purpose of the Brigade had been made known to all in his section of the camp:

> I was with a number of men who were assembled before the 'Irish Brigade recruiting hut,' when two men, Privates Bailey and Quinless [sic], who had joined the Brigade passed by. I do not know the regimental numbers of these men. We all shouted 'Traitors!' at them, whereupon two German sentries rushed at us.[78]

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[73] 'Short history of Irish brigade', n.d. (T.N.A., WO 141/9).
[74] Roger Casement's German diary, 8 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,690).
[75] Casement to von Wedel, 10 June 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/v).
[76] Ibid.
[77] Statement of John O'Neill, interview no. 463 (T.N.A., WO 161/98).
[78] Statement of Patrick Cullen (T.N.A., WO 161/99).

The British Government would later recognise the sacrifices prisoners made in the face of favourable treatment in the Irish Brigade:

> [I]f to the 47 who lie buried at Limburg, where they died chiefly from exposure and starvation enduring there and in other German camps before arrival, be added to the total of their compatriot prisoners who succumbed privations undergone at the hands of the enemy, and the number of those who were driven mad by their sufferings, it will be found that many more Irish sacrificed themselves voluntarily for the British cause by refusing to join the German-American-Irish Brigade than broke faith under duress by enrolling in it.[79]

Violence and depravation were also self-directed, although in a hypothetical manner. Tim Macarthy and others informed Father Nicholson that they would prefer to be shot than join the Brigade;[80] James O'Neill told Quinlisk he would stay a prisoner for life before becoming a traitor;[81] Private Sullivan told Casement, 'If you are waiting for any of us to join, and you are going to shoot us or ill-treat us if we don't, you'd better start now'.[82]

Threats and acts of violence against Casement and his recruiters evidence the solidarity of Irish P.O.W.s. Violent refusal of the Brigade was due not only to its message and mission, but to perceptions that Casement was attempting to undermine the morale and unity of the camp. Daniel McCarthy summarised this antipathy:

> This resentment was so deep-seated that months after the episode had passed the mere mention of this gentleman's name [Casement] was sufficient to stir up the fighting blood of these men. They could see nothing humorous in the whole affair and any attempt to joke about the matter was resented. ... One can well imagine the deep injury to the sense of loyalty of these men with their keen sense of humour, they could see nothing particularly funny in these thirty-two men marching out of the camp in their green uniforms. They even would not admit that the thirty-two

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[79] Unknown to Secretary of State, 30 Dec. 1920 (T.N.A., WO 141/49); S.T. Banning to the Editor, *Times*, 12 Apr. 1918. Anthony O'Brien has written an excellent illustrated essay providing, amongst other things, the names and regiments of the dead Irish P.O.W.s inscribed on a memorial cross at Limburg. Anthony O'Brien, 'The Celtic cross at Limburg an der Lahn, Germany: a sentimental journey' in *The Irish Sword*, xxiv, no. 97 (Summer, 2005), pp 241-76.

[80] Statement of Tim Macarthy, interview no. 7180 (T.N.A., WO 141/15).

[81] Statement of James O'Neill, no. 463 (T.N.A., WO 161/98).

[82] Statement of James Wilson, no. 331 (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829).

were Irish. 'Scotch Irish or renegade Irish from America,' they said, in excuse for these hated few who failed to live up to their plighted trust.[83]

As mentioned briefly above, refusing to join the Brigade often resulted in harsh, unfavourable treatment.[84] An N.C.O. who threatened to report Brigade 'seceders' at Gustrow camp was 'hauled by the Germans the length of the camp, savagely beaten with sticks and weapons, tied up to the post for some hours, then imprisoned for a night and a day without food.'[85] Patrick Cullen was pistol-whipped, kicked whilst on the ground, and confined to a cell for three days with only bread and water.[86] Scanlon and others were punished with imprisonment for their assault on the belt and bayonet-clad Brigade recruit.[87]

However, blanket explanations that Irish P.O.W.s were simply loyal to Britain are too simplistic to explain their rejection of the Brigade and its comforts amidst the hunger, disease, exposure and abuse of Limburg camp. The nerve touched by the suggestion to abandon their loyalty was truly sensitive, but why were the convictions of Irish prisoners so deep-seated? What was their interpretation of their loyalty to Ireland and the British cause? And how did they view their oath of allegiance to the army and the Crown?

The soldiers' oath of allegiance, given following enlistment, governed many of the men's interpretation of loyalty. Casement's address to prisoners in May 1915 perhaps best illustrates his interpretation of an Irish soldier's oath. He conceded that an oath binds one to service for king and country, but in the case of Irishmen, this produced a divided allegiance. 'The only country that can claim an Irishman's allegiance is Ireland', he said. 'So far as the oath of allegiance went it was an obligation to serve one's Country first of all and to Irishmen there should be only one country. If an Irishman serves another country then he is not loyally doing his duty to his own.'[88] Father Nicholson had manipulated the Findlay episode as justification for abandoning Britain, and 'to show that I would consider

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[83] McCarthy, *Prisoner of war*, ch. IX: political camps, pp 121-35.
[84] Several statements give evidence of a reduction in rations as the result of refusing the Irish Brigade. Attempts to starve prisoners into submission were openly denied by Casement. The naval blockade of German ports resulted in the overall reduction of food throughout Germany, and reduced rations to prisoners may be seen as merely the trickle-down effect.
[85] 'Short history of Limburg' (T.N.A., WO 141/49).
[86] Patrick Cullen (T.N.A., WO 161/99).
[87] Statement of Scanlon (T.N.A., WO 161/98); Casement to von Wedel, 21 Mar. 1915 in Doerries, *Prelude*, p. 100.
[88] 'Objects of the Irish Brigade in the present war', Roger Casement, 15 May 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, 13,085).

it a duty to renounce an oath to serve such a government.'[89] A German priest, Father Hammerstein, considered the Irishmen's oath to Britain 'only a passing fancy'. Conversely, he considered the German oath of allegiance binding, explaining that 'every German had to be a soldier.'[90]

Again, Casement's intellectual interpretation of Irish national duty was not attuned with that of the collected Irish soldiers at Limburg. They viewed their oath as binding both legally and morally. James Wilson announced that he 'was taught in school that an oath was binding in the sight of God' and refused to break it. Father Crotty provided further guidance to Wilson on the issue: 'Sure an oath is binding and you will be committing a sin if you break your oath of allegiance.'[91] Casement's arguments failed to penetrate the logic of the men; nor could the prisoners justify the revered form of Irish treason, of which Casement boasted, if it meant a black mark on their souls.

Casement became disillusioned by the attitudes and resistance of the Irish prisoners. This is evident as early as December 1914; 'I used to be proud to be Irish', he stated. 'Since I saw the Irish "soldiers" and read Redmond's speeches I feel ashamed to belong to so contemptible a race.'[92] He incessantly attacked prisoners' 'Irishness', and classified it as being 'Anglicised' and false. Following reports of Casement's difficulty, Joe McGarrity, a leading Irish nationalist based in Philadelphia, also considered the reluctant Irish prisoners 'dupes of false teaching and treachery.' Their names, he assured Casement, 'will be despised and forgotten.'[93] Diary entries from early 1915 go some length in revealing Casement's assessment of the Irish prisoners, again using the French as a base for standard patriotism:

> These men [French prisoners] will not speak or associate with the Irish prisoners. They call them, and rightly, 'English' and despise them as frankly as their German guards do. On all hands I hear the most unfavourable comparisons between these 'alleged Irishmen' and the French prisoners of war. The latter work cheerfully and are civil and well behaved. The 'Irish' are lazy, dirty and have a most forbidding aspect – slouching, hands in pocket, loafing and cheering 'dear old England' all the time. They expect that this Motherland of theirs will arrive with 2,000,000 of men in the spring and smash Germany – when they will be freed in triumph and get

[89] Nicholson to Casement, 23 Feb. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, 13,085/25).
[90] Statement of James Wilson, no. 331 (HO 45/10763/270829).
[91] Ibid.
[92] Reid, *Lives of Casement*, p. 251.
[93] McGarrity to Casement, 2 Apr. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,073/31/ii).

'home' to England and get their accumulated 'blood money'. ... [Bryan] Kelly called them 'contemptible' – I endorse the opinion to the full. Even Father O'Gorman who is to some extent 'pro-English' thinks them 'miserable specimens of Irishmen'.[94]

Casement was to some extent comforted by the handful of Irishmen who had enlisted in the Brigade. They had resuscitated his belief that 'we are not a contented, loyal country of West Britons'. But the verbal abuse he had suffered spoilt what little energy he retained for recruiting. 'I will not return to Limburg to be insulted by a handful of recreant Irishmen', he wrote to Father Nicholson. 'I cannot meet them on *that* ground. I cannot meet insults from cads and cowards with insults. I can only avoid cads and cowards.'[95]

Casement publicly attacked reluctant prisoners in the *Continental Times* and distributed the paper to the camp, thus destroying any remaining hope of gaining recruits. Daniel O'Brien recalled how Casement called the prisoners: 'traitors, blackguards, and corner boys, and the scruff of Ireland, and that we were not Irishmen, but renegades and Redmond's bastards.'[96] Casement recanted this in a letter to von Wedel in June, but his views on the Irishmen's motivation for enlisting in the British Army remained unaltered: '*All* the Irish prisoners of war at Limburg are not renegades or corner boys – but then all of them are now followers of Mr Redmond or fighting for British ideals of Civilisation, progress and humanity.'[97]

Casement's failure in recruiting an Irish Brigade contributed greatly to his mounting depression. Despite small bursts of optimism and letters of encouragement, he became isolated.[98] A letter addressed to Boehm, dated 2 September 1915, illustrates his feelings at this time: 'To be alone in a big city in a big Hotel is the most lonely abominable life I have ever experienced'.[99]

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[94] Bryan Kelly had been recruited from the civilian camp at Ruhleben. Though not a member of the Irish Brigade, he kept Casement informed of its activities. Roger Casement's German diary, 16, 18 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,690). Muiris MacConghail painted Kelly as a 'lonely introverted man who did not make friends easily'. His attraction to Casement warrants little explanation. Muiris MacConghail, 'Brian Ó Ceallaigh, Tomás Ó Criomhthain and Sir Roger Casement', in *Kerry Historical Society Journal*, no. 23 (1990), p. 185.

[95] Casement to Nicholson, 16 Mar. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/8).

[96] Statement of Daniel O'Brien (T.N.A., HO 45/10763/270829); Roger Casement's German diary, 10 Dec. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).

[97] Casement to von Wedel, 10 June 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/v).

[98] Crotty to Casement, 17 Feb.; 6 June 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/20); McGarrity to Casement, 2 Apr. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13073/31/ii).

[99] Casement to Boehm, 2 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/9).

In addition to blaming Irish prisoners' lack of patriotism, courage and vision, Casement increasingly questioned Germany's commitment to Irish interests.[100] Toward the end of 1915 Casement came to terms with his failure, and what it meant for his reputation. 'I am sick at heart', he wrote to Devoy, 'sick to death at heart and I do not wish to live beyond this war. I have nothing to live for but personal shame, degradation and scorn from those whose opinion I value much. I have struck my blow and failed.'[101] Casement was not reluctant in communicating his misery to a wide audience. He closed a pessimistic letter to Fritz Pincus in mid-December 1915, 'I wish you a very – no I can't say happy Christmas – it is impossible – but I wish you a hopeful Christmas. More one cannot say today. I have no hope.'[102]

Men of the Brigade were restless as well, as evident in reports of their drunkenness, absence from camp and insubordination.[103] Having been removed from Limburg to a camp near Zossen (possibly for their own protection), they awaited instructions, work and privileged accommodation in barracks away from what they termed the 'Darkie Soldiers' of the colonies.[104]

In an effort to rectify the growing embarrassment of his mission, Casement hatched a plan to employ the Irish Brigade on the Eastern Front, possibly in Turkey: 'to hoist our green flag beside the green flag of the prophet!'[105] He reasoned that a blow struck against England anywhere would rectify the situation. Articles seven and eight of the German-Irish treaty of 28 December 1914 provided for deployment of the Irish Brigade in the east as an extension of war against Britain. Recognising that Brigade men had 'burnt their boats',[106] Casement told Devoy that the men wanted to do *something* for Ireland: 'All of us want to justify our treason.'[107]

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[100] Casement to Nicholson, 14 Mar. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/8). Casement later observed, 'I think the military here are thoroughly sick of the whole idea of an "I.B." and very sorry they ever touched it.' Casement to Devoy, 28 Sept. 1915; Casement to Boehm, 8 Apr. 1915 (U.C.D.A., Boehm/Casement correspondence, P127/5).

[101] Casement to Devoy, 28 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/9/vii).

[102] Casement to Pincus, 16 Dec. 1915 (TCDA, Roger Casement letters to Fritz Pincus, MS 8,274).

[103] Hahn to Casement, 24 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/17); Monteith to Casement, 15 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/24).

[104] M. Kehoe to Casement, 17 July; 14 Aug; 4 Sept. 1915; Quinlisk to Casement, 12 July 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/vii; 13,085/21).

[105] Casement to Reilly, 17 Aug. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9).

[106] Casement to Boehm, 11 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9).

[107] Casement to Devoy, 29 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/vii). Casement laid out his reasons for the Irish Brigade going on active service on the Turkish front in a memorandum on 9 December 1915. He cited his personal duty to utilise the men who volunteered for the Irish Brigade, the political capital which could be gained from such a venture, and, principally, that a blow for Ireland could be struck by attacking Britain in other theatres of war, namely, Egypt. The venture was entirely the brainchild of Casement; German military command made no efforts to coax the men into action. 'Memorandum defining the present aim of the Irish Brigade now in Germany', Casement to Nadolny, 8 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement

The plot directly contradicted Devoy's instructions not to employ the Brigade in ventures beyond the direct confrontation with British forces in Ireland. Casement's brooding, fencing with Edward Gray over the Findlay affair, and suggestion of employing the Brigade in a foreign theatre of war all helped to erode his position with Clan-na-Gael in America.[108] Although forty members of the Brigade agreed to go to Egypt,[109] Field-Marshall von der Goltz Pascha refused to take them.[110]

By August 1915, Casement felt he could no longer remain in Germany, 'idle and unclear.'[111] He sought to be useful in some form, and wrote to von Wedel seeking a passport which would allow him to cross into Switzerland or, preferably, Sweden, from where he could return to America.[112] It was not granted. Casement was only informed of plans for an insurrection in Ireland by Robert Monteith, his deputy who had won the confidence of Devoy throughout the latter half of 1915. Devoy had come to the realisation that Casement was not the powerful diplomat his reputation had suggested, but instead an idealistic amateur.[113]

German aid to Ireland was to be limited to 20,000 rifles, ten machine guns and 5,000,000 rounds of ammunition, described by Casement as 'one day's supply'. Under these circumstances he opposed open rebellion, and considered the venture idiocy. 'The whole project really took my breath away', he confessed to von Wedel:

> I found myself confronted with a proposal for a 'rebellion' in Ireland I believed to be wholly futile at the best and at the worst something I dreaded to think of. ... I have little hope of anything but disaster accruing to Ireland – that is, in my saner moments. [114]

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papers, MS 13,085/2); 'memorandum stating some of the reasons for active service of the Irish soldiers now at Zossen', 9 Dec. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/viii).

[108] Devoy to Casement, 1 Jan. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,073/44/i); Devoy to Casement, 21 May 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,073/44/iv).

[109] Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).

[110] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728). Michael Keogh later argued that Casement's actions caused alarm within Clan and IRB circles in American and Ireland. 'Thus', he claimed, 'Roger Casement gained his home-stroke to force more concentration to matters in Ireland.' A flattering yet doubtful observation. Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).

[111] Casement to von Wedel, 8 Aug. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/vi).

[112] Ibid.

[113] Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, p. 119.

[114] Casement to von Wedel, 30 Mar. 1916 (N.L.I., Eoin MacNeill papers, MS 10,880). At this stage, Casement concerned himself with preserving his own legacy, which would emphasise his selflessness and patriotism. Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 309.

Joseph Zerhusen's memoirs reveal that the German Government wished Casement to take the Irish Brigade with him, no doubt to rid them of the men and end the Brigade episode.[115] The efforts of Rudolph Nadolny of the German General Staff certainly support this.[116] Casement's statements on the subject reveal both sincere regret of the men's involvement, and a wish to spare them from what he was sure would be a tragic and infamous end.[117] A lengthy explanatory letter to von Wedel, penned two weeks prior to his departure, reveals Casement's regrets, disappointment with the terms of German assistance, and his motivation for abandoning the Brigade in Germany:

> [W]hatever might be my own end in this business, in which I was advancing blindly and with reluctance, I felt my responsibility towards the Irish soldiers who were to be brought into it at the last moment, step by step increasing. They had committed treason on a distinct and formal promise, signed, sealed and delivered by the Imperial German Government ... I felt I was betraying them, ... But while I may be prepared to take my own life to avoid the indignities and infamies reserved for me should I fall into the hands of the Government I have dared (so unwisely) to defy, I am not at liberty to make arrangements for thus shielding from a felon's fate the band of Irish soldiers I am now to be the means of inducing to go on board with me. ... I am entitled to incur all the risks, which I shall do very gladly, but I am not entitled to involve others in those risks – contrary to the terms of the engagements on which I induced them to reject their allegiance and follow me.'[118]

Two men, however, were permitted to depart with Casement; their names accompanied Casement's on the official farewell letter delivered to the Brigade on 11 April 1916. They were Monteith and Daniel Bailey.

The choice of Monteith stemmed from his enthusiasm and involvement with the Brigade. Throughout 1915 Monteith had strengthened his contacts with Devoy and the Clan. The Germans trusted him (and saluted him), and Zerhusen observed that Monteith 'was from the beginning fully aware of the difficulty of the situation.'[119] It is hard to see

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[115] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728).
[116] Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 325; Doerries, *Prelude*, p. 15.
[117] Inglis, *Roger Casement*, p. 309; Casement to Boehm, 12 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, 13,085/21).
[118] Casement to von Wedel, 30 Mar. 1916 (N.L.I., Eoin MacNeill papers, MS 10,880).
[119] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728); Doerries, *Prelude*, p. 11

how Casement could disagree. He had observed Monteith arrive in Germany of his own free will, and direct the Brigade as its sole commanding officer.

The choice of Bailey is a bit curious. He was chosen not by Casement but by Monteith. The two had served together in the Indian Army and were close comrades.[120] In addition, Bailey had proven to be an able sergeant, and was an expert in Morse code and signalling – certainly necessary skills for a secret sea voyage. Certain members of the Brigade observed Bailey attracting the attention of Monteith at every opportunity, and attaching himself to the captain. Kehoe recalled that Bailey was not an obvious choice: 'I wish that he would take, instead of Sergeant Bailey, either Sergeant Joe Dowling, Sergeant Michael O'Toole, or some other dependable person.'[121] Nevertheless, the three set sail on 11 April 1916. Despite initial mechanical difficulties, they landed off the west coast of Ireland on Good Friday, and were washed ashore after their collapsible raft capsized. 'There are moments of despair' wrote Casement prior to the voyage, 'when I sweep the real aside and hope for some extraordinary action that may change the unreal to fact.'[122] From the time Casement set foot in Ireland, however – soaked, sick and exhausted – he was anchored to reality. Local Irish Volunteers had failed to rendezvous with the arms ship *Aud*, and her precious cargo was scuttled after being intercepted by the British *Bluebell*.[123] Casement was picked up and escorted to Tralee jail after an attempt to pose as an English tourist was exposed by the R.I.C. He had been left alone as Monteith and Bailey attempted to contact the Irish Volunteers and borrow a car.

Once in custody, Casement gave away his personal belongings to the constables, men he had never met – actions consistent with those of a condemned man.[124] Bailey was captured and quickly struck a deal with authorities to provide evidence against Casement in exchange for his own freedom. Monteith evaded capture, and later surfaced in America. Casement managed to smuggle a message to Eoin MacNeill in Dublin through a reluctant priest, confessing that the promised war material had been lost. This led to confused mobilisation orders on Easter Sunday, and further reduced the chance of military success. Casement was removed to London the following day, and informed of the Easter Rising from his cell in the Tower. Initially suicidal, Casement ascended toward serenity and awaited his day in court. Casement's 'last adventure', as Monteith later described it,

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[120] The history shared between Monteith and Bailey makes the latter's use of the alias 'Beverley' a point of contention.
[121] Michael McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', pp 734-5.
[122] Casement to von Wedel, 30 Mar. 1916 (N.L.I., Eoin MacNeill papers, MS 10,880).
[123] Ó Síocháin, *Imperialist, rebel, revolutionary*, p.439.
[124] Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, p. 126.

excluded the fifty-plus Irishmen he had recruited to serve Ireland.[125] Left in Germany at the height of the war, the guests of the Kaiser soon wore out their welcome.

II. The Irish Brigade in Germany

Upwards of 2,500 Irish prisoners were assembled from various prison camps and transferred to Limburg by early 1915.[126] Only a fraction, roughly 2 per cent, would join the Irish Brigade. Historiography surrounding the Brigade places the total number of recruits at fifty-five. Inclusive of N.C.O.s, Monteith, and several men who died during the course of their captivity, this total reaches sixty-five.[127] Such a poor response no doubt contributed to Casement's failing morale, as well as declining German interest in the project.[128] As Rudolph Nadolny expressed in mid-1915: 'Only fifty-three men and we had ordered 100 uniforms!'[129]

Who joined the Brigade? And, given the hostile reception its advocates received from the outset, why did men initially join and continue to join? The answers to these and other questions regarding involvement can perhaps best be determined by an analysis of the social, and familial demographic of Brigade members, as well as their level of education. While factors such as education, political traditions and cultural exposure habitually determine outlets of loyalty, none appear to have been dominating factors within the Brigade. Very few claimed higher nationalist ideals as a catalyst toward their involvement; 'only a dozen or less', the War Office observed, 'could be classed as political malcontents.'[130] In fact, only three, Michael O'Toole, Michael Kehoe and Bryan Kelly claimed patriotism as their motivation for joining the Irish Brigade.[131]

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[125] Robert Monteith, *Casement's last adventure* (Dublin, 1953).

[126] Roth puts the prisoner total at 2,486, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 315; a report of the XVIIIth Army Corps puts the number of Limburg prisoners at 2,247 by Jan. 1915 (T.N.A., WO 141/49).

[127] Demographic spreadsheet of members of the Irish Brigade. Statistics compiled from Roth, 'Casement and the Irish Brigade', p. 322; Doerries, *Prelude*, pp 211-14; N.L.I., John Devoy papers, MS 18,081/10; Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741); N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ii; 13,085/6.

[128] Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, p. 122; Casement to Boehm, 8 Apr. 1915 (U.C.D.A., P 127/5).

[129] Roger Casement's German diary, 28 Mar. 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,690).

[130] Unknown to Secretary of State, 30 Dec. 1920 (T.N.A., WO 141/9). 'Following the depiction of these individual fates, the question of why these fifty-five men joined the brigade poses itself. The vast majority had no definite ties to the Home Rule movement let alone to the IRB before the war, the exceptions being McKeogh, O'Toole and Private Meade from Limerick, who acted as a gun smuggler for the Irish militant nationalists even after the war.' Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 329.

[131] McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', p. 165; 'He [Kelly] had heard about the German declaration of sympathy for Ireland in Ruhleben and consequently on 28 November 1914 sent a postcard to his former teacher, the Celtic scholar Kuno Meyer, who was at this time in the U.S., asking to be set free in view of his Fenian origin.' Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 323. 'The Fenian movement had been half my schoolbook', explained Keogh, whose grandmother's cousin was the famed Boyle O'Reilly from Meath.

Various records and recollections provide insight into the type of man who joined the Irish Brigade, but simple categorical factors such as geographic origin, military regiment, profession prior to the war and family life, fail to reveal any significant outlier in Brigade membership when contrasted with the majority of soldiers who refused involvement.[132]

The professions of Brigade men prior to the war show a proportionately high return of skilled and commercial workers, comprising 37 per cent. With the exception of one student and one jockey, the remaining men can be classed as unskilled, having undertaken work as general labourers, gardeners, and labouring assistants. Level of education also provides evidence that they were proportionately learned and skilled. A sample of fifty-three Brigade members detail that while nearly all had a firm grasp of the English language, an additional sixteen were versed in English literature, eight had been taught carpentry and electrical skills, and three spoke foreign languages. In addition, nearly one-fifth possessed additional military training in areas such as signalling or machine gunnery. Of the thirty-five Brigade men described as 'ambitious', the majority possessed advanced military training; the seventeen described as 'not ambitious' represented those with the least education.[133] While these figures attest to the diversity of the Brigade, they also refute blanket assessment that the Irish at Limburg were comprised wholly of West British corner boys, as claimed by Casement and O'Toole.[134] In all, those who joined were both young and middle-aged, at least basically educated, and hailed from all parts of Ireland – quite typical of the average Irishman in the British Army.

Details of the men's personal lives and family circumstances allow for greater insight into what type of man joined the Brigade, and also provides transition as to why they joined. Of the forty-nine Brigade members who provided information regarding their families, few reported belonging to a complete family unit. Seven men (J. Sweeney, P.

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[132] Some basic features of the men reveal that they did not stand out amongst other prisoners. For example, the average age of Brigade men was 25, ranging from Patrick Keogh, John Curry, James Kennedy and Michael O'Callaghan who were roughly 19, to David Golden, Thomas Treacy and Patrick Waters who were approximately 35. Nor was physical size a factor. With the exception of Seán O'Mahoney, a 22-year-old Corporal who stood six feet and weighed 183 lbs, the average man was just over 5'7 and roughly 144 lbs – certainly average by contemporary standards. No regimental association dominated the Brigade, though the Royal Irish Rifles, Royal Irish Regiment, Connaught Rangers and Dublin Fusiliers were prominent.

[132] Consequently, the geography of Brigade members was also even spread, with Dublin, Cork and Tipperary claiming ten, nine and eight men respectively.

[133] Two men, Seán O'Mahoney and Thomas McGrath, reported that they were neither 'ambitious' nor 'not ambitious'.

[134] Michael O'Toole relayed this sentiment to an unknown recipient: 'You know the British Army is recruited from corner boys and ne'er do wells. They are mostly of the lowest and most ignorant. Very few decent Irishmen to be found in their ranks.' O'Toole to Unknown [Casement], n.d. (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/21).

Carr, J. Stacey, T. O'Donoghue, J. Beverly (Bailey), J. O'Mahoney, and J. McCabe) had lost both their mother and father prior to the war; Sweeney and Carr were completely alone, having no siblings. Sixteen men had a father, but no mother; 14 of these were single children. Eleven men had a mother, but no father, and all of these men were single children. Men with no parents, single parents, and a variety of siblings accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the Brigade. Of the remaining fifteen men who had both their parents, twelve of these had no siblings. While it is impossible to know the complete details of the men's family lives, the absence or fracture of support from home was a dominant feature for the majority of the Brigade.[135]

These factors may provide partial explanation as to why men joined the Irish Brigade, as dependence on parcels and provisions from home had become standard within many prison camps. Contemporary reports certainly reveal that the promise of better food and physical comforts were primary reasons for joining the Brigade; evidence from repatriated soldiers confirms that hunger was a prime motivator for joining the Brigade. In fact, Private Thomas Higgins claimed four men of his regiment, Seán Mahoney, Henry Burke, Joseph Stacey and Thomas Wilson, all of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, joined the Irish Brigade from hunger.[136] Private James Scanlan stated that one of the men he knew who had joined the Brigade 'was hardly more than a boy and I had seen him crying from hunger.'[137] Although Michael O'Toole claimed patriotic and political reasons for joining the Brigade, he would later confess that he 'only joined it in order to receive better food and better treatment and also because it afforded a more favourable opportunity to escape.'[138] Frank Sewell explained to Lady Rosse – a civilian sponsor who sent him parcels – that he joined the Brigade to escape camp life in order to work on a farm. 'There are also four or five such working parties in and around Zossen,' he explained in an attempt to dismiss her Ladyship's concerns regarding his alleged treason.[139] Despite threats and violence aimed at fellow-soldiers who had joined, or considered joining the Irish Brigade, an army report later disclosed that 'Little blame has been attached to them

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[135] Anthony Storr has identified correlations between the early environments of individuals – particularly as they apply to the family – and future anti-social, violent and destructive behaviour. See Anthony Storr, *Human destructiveness: the roots of genocide and human cruelty* (2nd ed., New York, 1991), pp 43-4.
[136] Statements of Privates William Dooly, Patrick Brien and Thomas Higgins (T.N.A., WO 141/15). Heather Jones has identified hunger as the main motivating factor for joining the Irish Brigade. Jones, 'Casement's attempt to form an Irish Brigade'.
[137] Statement of James Scanlan, interview 520 (T.N.A., WO 161/98).
[138] Memorandum regarding Michael O'Toole, 2 March 1922 (N.A.I., CSORP 1922, box 6199, R 65).
[139] Frank Sewell to Lady Rosse, 28 Feb. 1916 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).

by the loyal majority, who have ascribed the defection of this small group to inability to resist hunger, and have expressed surprise that the number was not larger.'[140]

Hunger and physical hardship were experienced by all prisoners during the Great War. They can hardly be identified as unique factors which drove Irishmen into Casement's Brigade. Social factors, which pre-dated the war and helped to form a prisoner's character, perhaps offer a more complete explanation.[141] For instance, police at Ballina, County Mayo, reported that prior to enlistment Brigade member John Daly was a frequent inmate of the local workhouse:

> He was [an] idle worthless fellow. His mother is a widow and of reputed grossly immoral character. She has spent most of her time in gaol in recent years for larceny, drunkenness and kindred offences. There is no reason to suspect them of disloyalty, but owing to the depravity of character of these people they could if opportunity offered lend themselves to any condition of things which might arise.[142]

A report from Major Ivor Price on the character of prisoner Thomas Harte provides further insight into the civilian lives of some of the Brigade members:

> Private Harte's character was very bad previous to his joining the Army; when the war broke out he spent the greater part of his time in gaol. He was convicted several times of larceny, robbery, assaults on the Police, drunkenness and disorderly conduct. His principle associates were tramps and tinkers; he used to camp out at night with those people when he was not in gaol. His father is a tramp shoemaker, and scarcely spends any time in Roscrea as he does not agree with his wife.[143]

Army command's summation of events surrounding the formation of the Irish Brigade concluded: 'Many of these were young men frightened by the pressure put upon them …;

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[140] 'Limburg on the Lahn, report of the XVIIIth army corps', n.d. (T.N.A., WO 141/49).

[141] Heather Jones has suggested that members' delinquency and poor social reputation were common. 'Some of those who joined the Brigade were often already outsiders within Ireland, coming from very deprived backgrounds and thus possibly less enmeshed within the collective group culture of the Irish prisoners at Limburg.' Jones, 'Casement's attempt to form an Irish Brigade'.

[142] I.H. Price to Lt. Colonel VGW Kell, 5 Apr. 1916 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).

[143] I.H. Price to MI5G, n.d. (T.N.A., WO 141/9).

many were men with questionable records'.[144] While such reports identify hunger, fear and delinquent pasts as factors identified with Brigade membership, contrast is provided by those closest to the Brigade, and may help to balance the possibly intentionally vindictive reports supplied by repatriated soldiers.

Though he did not detail men's motivation for enlisting in the Brigade, Zerhusen provided insight into some of the Brigade's more positive characters who were evidently motivated by nationalism. 'There were a few', he stated, 'who seemed to be of another class entirely and were intellectually superior, had also an astonishing knowledge of Irish history and politics.' He specifically praised Michael Kehoe and Joseph Dowling, whom he described as 'good men in every respect'; Dowling, he claimed, 'was a true patriot.'[145]

Zerhusen was not without his criticism of the men. He considered O'Toole 'a very bad man. ... We had always trouble with him, mostly drunkenness, absence from Camp, overstaying his leave, thieving, etc.' Zerhusen also disliked Quinlisk. Despite his education and suave demeanour, he considered the corporal 'a very dubious character ... who gave one always a peculiar inexplicable feeling of distrust.'[146]

The variety of Brigade members, and the limited information regarding their civilian, private and professional lives, removes licence to describe them as wholly delinquent or patriotic. They were not all motivated by personal gain or profit; some had the 'proper' nationalist background and outlook as defined by Casement. O'Toole provides a perfect example. He initially confessed to Casement that news of the Findlay affair had turned his heart against the Empire. 'Even for Ireland it would be called "Treason"', he explained, 'but I'd chance that. I know I would be doing right in that case.' O'Toole's base of nationalism had been established in the early years of the century. He was an Irish speaker and a former Gaelic League organiser. He was an acquaintance of Eoin MacNeill, and claimed to have worked with Sinead de Valera, conducting history lessons with her for the Gaelic League.[147] Additionally, according to Kehoe, O'Toole 'had played no small part as an I.R.B. agent in the English Army for about a year prior to the World War.'[148]

As explained above, Casement had created his own explanation for Brigade enlistment, and superimposed it upon various individual responses toward membership. In

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[144] Letter from unknown to Secretary of State, Edward Shortt, 30 Dec. 1920 (T.N.A., WO 141/49).
[145] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728).
[146] Ibid.
[147] O'Toole to Gaffney, 3 Aug. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vii; 13,085/21).
[148] McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the First World War', pp 732-3; 1046.

December 1914 he penned a manifesto, an explanation for why members had discarded the British Army in favour of the Irish Brigade. It stated:

> That, as we entered upon this war as members of the British army in the belief that we were fighting in the cause of Liberty and justice, and thereby advancing the cause of our Country, Ireland, to secure the rights and liberties of her people; and as we have assured ourselves and are now certain that in this belief we were misled by those we had trusted and that today, as always, the British State is the implacable enemy of our Country and of all its national rights and liberties, and, moreover, that in this war, which has been forced on the world by England and her allies the cause of national right, of justice and truth is the cause of the Germanic nations: Now, therefore, after full deliberation and with full sense of responsibility, we have taken the open course of severing, by our own act, all connection with the British State and army and of giving ourselves to the service of our Country to fight for Irish Independence.[149]

In an attempt to affix perspective and, perhaps, justify his actions within a broader context of rebellion, Casement utilised the language of John Redmond: 'If it were in the power of any Irishman to bring that result about tomorrow by honourable and brave means,' Redmond had stated in 1908, 'he would be indeed a coward and a traitor to the traditions of his race did he not do so.' Brigade members would apply this quote in later years to justify their actions in joining.[150]

It must be stated, however, that despite various justifications and explanations given by the Brigade, very few were actually sympathetic with Germany.[151] Contemporary evidence certainly demonstrates this conclusion. Brigade members collectively defended their actions on the basis that other great powers had organised cultural minorities of allied prisoners into separate fighting units. Keogh, Quinlisk, Dowling, Bailey and O'Toole collectively questioned:

> If these things be loyal and right for the allied sovereigns to do for the sake of Servia, of Italy, of Bohemia, of Poland, and to enrol the soldiers of the Austrian and

[149] Casement memoranda, Dec. 1914 (U.C.D.A., Boehm/Casement papers, P 127/3).
[150] Ibid.; 'Truth about the Irish Brigade', 24 Sept. 1915 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).
[151] Andreas Roth has stated that in fact 'no one joined as a result of sympathy with Germany.' Roth, 'Casement and the Irish Brigade', p. 330.

> German armies in corps pledged to fight against Austria and Germany, then how much more right is it for Irishmen to volunteer to fight for Ireland and for that cause alone?[152]

The influence of Casement in forming this line of thought is indisputable. They also cited the eighteenth century precedent of Edward Fitzgerald, Thomas Russell and John Boyle O'Reilly. Mainly, however, Brigade members maintained that it was for Ireland they fought, but not as soldiers of the Kaiser.[153]

While treason may have been considered honourable by some, Brigade members' overall conception of loyalty was quite complicated. And it may certainly have been the case that the extent of loyalty given to the Brigade by the rank-and-file members was proportionate to the food and comforts provided. Loyalty was both intra-personal and idealistic. Officers tended to attach themselves to Casement, and adopted his nationalist outlook.[154] Kehoe addressed Casement as 'a compatriot', and was a keen observer of his 'sacrificing work on behalf on your enslaved country.' He pledged himself solely to the Brigade, and stated that he did 'not mean to stop at even death in my endeavours until as the true-hearted Irish Hero Robert Emmett said: Until my country takes her place amongst the nations of the Earth then and not until then shall my epitaph be written.'[155]

This loyalty endured throughout Casement's absence. In August 1916, Hahn reported that the Brigade was 'disappointed' about Casement's execution, 'everybody thought he might get away.' Each man subsequently swore to take a life in retribution; 'I won't like to be an Englishman and pass their way', reported Hahn.[156] The anniversary of Casement's death was observed throughout the men's time in Germany. On 3 August 1917 O'Toole wrote, 'Today ... we do not feel in much humour for amusement or for music unless of its 'Keening' sort as our thoughts are extended on the noble man who one short year ago today laid down his life for the Old, Old Cause.'[157] Michael Ryan wrote to

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[152] Keogh, Quinlisk, Dowling, Beverley, O'Toole to Casement, 24 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/9/vii).
[153] 'Irish prisoners of war to fight for Ireland', n.d.; 'Truth about the Irish Brigade', 24 Sept. 1915 (T.N.A., WO 141/9); 'Letters of the Irish Brigade' (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/1/ii); Keogh, Quinlisk, Dowling, Beverley, O'Toole to Casement, 24 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/9/vii).
[154] MacMurrough was an exception. Several officers considered the loyalty of MacMurrough, one of the first to join the Brigade, quite false. 'He only withdrew from this patriotic standpoint when he found there was no 'Blood money' in the Irish brigade and that every man joining it would not only have to give himself, but would lose money as well. 'Keogh, Quinlisk, Dowling, Beverley, O'Toole to Casement, 24 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13085/9/vii).
[155] Kehoe to Casement, 20 Mar. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/21).
[156] Hahn to Mrs Gaffney, 15 Aug. 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/v).
[157] O'Toole to Gaffney, 3 Aug. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vii).

Thomas Gaffney, former U.S. Consul in Munich, in similar tones in September 1918: 'always remember that we are all members of the Irish Brigade and that whatever people say against us we are still loyal to our former Chief and will always respect his name and Cause'.[158]

It is difficult to examine these sentiments as evolving throughout the life of the Brigade – particularly following Casement's departure. As the majority of Casement's time in Germany was spent in solitude, with the German General Staff, or recuperating in Munich, interaction with the men was limited to a few initial and brief interviews and correspondence. It may indeed have been the case that the initial impression left by Casement, in addition to provisions for food and comfort, cemented the figure of Casement as saviour as well as patriot. Repetition of the patriotic gospel, both to Casement and later Gaffney, acted to solidify the constancy of their faith.

Prior to Casement's departure for Ireland, life in the Irish Brigade was characterised by both military training and personal mischief. The Brigade was removed to a special camp at Zossen in June 1915, and placed under the charge of Zerhusen.[159] The combination of general idleness, a sense of entitlement, freedom of movement and pocket money supplied from Clan-na-Gael, led to further trouble. Men were often found drunk in nearby towns, refusing to be removed due to their special status as members of the Brigade. Orders were subsequently issued forbidding German soldiers from supplying Irishmen with alcohol.[160]

In October 1915, Quinlisk, Dowling, Michael Collins and Patrick Keogh stood trial in Berlin for stealing money from an Algerian prisoner. They were sentenced to a fortnight's imprisonment.[161] On 18 November several men were absent from camp and found drunk; five were afterward arrested.[162] Serious trouble erupted on New Year's Eve at the canteen in Soissons between Brigade men and German soldiers. Maurice Meade was eyewitness to events:

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[158] Ryan to Gaffney, 16 Sept. 1918 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ix).

[159] McCarthy surmised that removal to Zossen was for the safety of the Brigade: 'The Irish brigade in its resplendent uniforms, drunk with liberty, aided abetted by other enthrals, did not present in this condition that material appearance which their Teutonic allies had proudly pictured to themselves. After a fitful and hectic moment in Berlin they underwent a sudden disappearance. Their whereabouts are unknown. Limburg was no safe place for them.' McCarthy, *Prisoner of war*, pp 121-30. Zerhusen recalled how the men arrived at Zossen still in prisoner of war clothes, with little to do; indiscipline was rampant. Zerhusen confessed that 'There was a lot of drunkenness and the men did keep curfew. It was very difficult for me to avoid as far as possible punishments.' 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728).

[160] Zerhusen to Casement, 9 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ii).

[161] Kehoe to Casement, 20 Oct. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/21); Doerries, *Prelude*, pp 149-50.

[162] Quinlisk to Casement, 22 Nov. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/24).

> When the Germans were singing we applauded them whether we liked their singing or not, but eventually when one of our fellows – Billy McGrath was his name – was singing, the Germans present indicated their disapproval, at which we took offence and, one word borrowing another, a fight began. Glasses were thrown and the fight then moved out on the square, where the Landstrum came along with their rifles to quell the disturbance. We turned our attention on the Landstrum then and took the rifles from them, bayonets and all. Retiring into our own barracks ... we defied the whole German army. This incident, which had begun simply enough, had now developed into a serious mutiny and we refused to allow any German soldier or officer into our camp.[163]

Casement and Monteith were eventually alerted and the two entered the camp to restore order.

The departure of Casement, Monteith and, to a much lesser extent, Bailey, on 11 April 1916 left the Brigade in a very difficult position. The man who had offered a chance to fight for Ireland had left the vast majority of the Brigade behind and in an irreversible position. The Germans were now left holding the remnants of the Brigade: over fifty ill-behaved Irishmen who refused to be integrated into the Germany army, and who were incapable of being employed in other theatres of war. The German General Staff absolved itself of responsibility for the Brigade, and sought advice from the War Ministry as how best to employ the men.[164] Within two weeks following the Easter Rising, the Brigade was relieved of its training duties, and deprived of its rifles, machine guns and equipment.[165] Kehoe described the remaining men of the Brigade at this time as mere 'pawns in the game'.[166] Brigade men were indeed as expendable as pawns. From Easter 1916 until the end of the war, however, the Brigade could perhaps be better described as unused pieces left on the field of play, disregarded after their king had fallen.

Casement's influence, however, endured. He had instructed that the Brigade was to be provided for from Clan na Gael funds held by von Wedel, roughly 8,000 marks.[167] The

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[163] Maurice Meade (N.A.I., WS 891).
[164] Roth, '"The German soldier is not tactful"', p. 326.
[165] McKeogh, 'Roger Casement, Germany and the World War', p. 942.
[166] Ibid.
[167] Zerhusen believed that by holding the remaining Clan na Gael funds over the heads of the men he and Gaffney might succeed in enforcing discipline. Keogh and Quinlisk concurred. Zerhusen to Gaffney, 18 Apr. 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/iii). This policy toward the men continued throughout the war. 'At the conference which took place in Berlin on the 11 January 1917 between the Camp Commandant

men were to be administered by Gaffney, who was to keep them out of trouble, find suitable employment for them for the duration of the war, and then send them to America.[168] 'Of course, Casement surmised, 'if things go well in Erin, they may follow.'[169]

Things had of course not gone well, and by the summer of 1916 the Brigade was again forced to move camps. They were removed to Danzig in June and charged with guarding Russian P.O.W.s.[170] Conditions improved somewhat for the men, and their freedoms expanded. 'The men got separate barracks and had every freedom', Zerhusen recalled. 'They could leave the camp. They could go to neighbouring towns and villages and work there as free labourers if they wanted to, and a good many of the men availed themselves to this opportunity.'[171] Toward the end of 1916 and throughout 1917 most of the men were employed in Dirschau and Stolp, as well as other towns that dotted the Baltic coast.[172]

The War Office received contrasting accounts of the Brigade at this time. It was reported that the Irish Brigade project was abandoned by the Germans following the move to Danzig, and that Brigade men became 'disillusioned' after being sent out to work. Many, it was reported, 'willingly shared their better rations with famished British captives, and twelve actually petitioned the *Kriegsministerium* to be reinstated as ordinary prisoners of war.'[173] An interview conducted between the War Office and an escaped Russian prisoner details the decline in prestige and status experienced by the Irish at Danzig:

> While the Irish still stood in high favour with the Germans one of their sergeants came one day to the post office to get his men's parcels. Their parcels were

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and Consul-General Gaffney, the latter gave his sanction, as a representative of the American Irishmen, to whatever proposals should be put forward with regard to these bad characters. He has just returned to America and has spoken with the Irish representatives there. It was decided to take all privileges from the bad elements of the Irish Brigade until the end of the war. ... I respectfully request permission to remove these bad elements so that they will no longer influence the good men.' Precis of W.C. Harrington, c. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/i).

[168] Reid, *Lives of Casement*, pp 345-6; Doerries, *Prelude*, p. 175; 211-14.

[169] Casement to unknown, 10 Apr. 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ix).

[170] Debate surrounded the wishes of the men versus the wishes of the officers. Keogh stated that 'The Irishmen do not wish to move particularly to a *Gefangerlager* without the whole matter being fully explained and it is due to them on the grounds of former experiences.' While several men wrote to Gaffney saying they welcomed the change, and that the NCOs wished to remain as they enjoyed privilege and a fair amount of pay at Zossen. Keogh to Gaffney, 29 May 1916; Golden, Rahilly, Mallon, Forde, Donoghue and McGrath to Gaffney, 11 June 1916 (13,085/1/iv).

[171] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728).

[172] McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', p. 951; Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).

[173] 'Limburg on the Lahn, report of the XVIIIth army', n.d. (T.N.A., WO 141/49); Private Alfred Adams recalled seeing Irishmen in German uniforms in Danzig but couldn't understand it. Statement of Alfred Adams (T.N.A., WO 161/100).

supposed to be left intact by the Germans, but on this occasion some of them were broken into and the Irishman turned with displeasure to the German Unter in charge and accused the Russians who were employed there with tampering. This offended the Unter, some words followed and he told the Irishman to get out. 'What right do you have to tell me that? I am your senior, I am a sergeant,' was the Irishman's retort. The German replied to that he was merely a prisoner and attempted to push him away. 'I a prisoner?' came in surprise from the Irishman. ... As time went on things went from bad to worse with the Irish, they were neglected by the Germans, their clothes became tattered, they went about with unshaven faces, [and] their food was that of the Russian prisoners. They looked utterly dejected and despondent.[174]

The dissolution of the Irish Brigade in Germany following Casement's departure brought into question the futures of the Brigade men. Their status became wholly ambiguous. Zerhusen recalled how, wherever the Irish Brigade went, it was unwelcome: 'It was a nuisance, it could only bring unpleasantness to everybody concerned. These men did not fit in within the general rules. They were neither fish nor flesh, neither prisoners nor soldiers nor free men and yet they were all of this.'[175]

One thing they were not were loyal British soldiers, a fact forwarded to the Treasury, War Office and various civilian aid societies that supplied both P.O.W.s and their dependents with provisions. Repatriated British prisoners had eagerly named deserters, and by 1916 Sir Bertram B. Cubbit and the War Office were able to accurately identify a majority of men who had joined the Brigade. Steps were immediately taken to stop their pay, separation allowance, parcels and post.[176] The Irishwoman's Association at Kensington Palace, responsible for aiding members of the Connaught Rangers, purposefully excluded parcels to Patrick Forde due to his membership in the Brigade.[177] Only one member, Michael O'Toole, was married. And while his wife contested the discontinuance of her separation allowance, she was informed that it was 'no use fencing with the question.'[178]

The men at Danzig turned to civilian employment for income and to alleviate their idleness. Kehoe witnessed one or two Brigade men a day leave the camp to take up

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[174] Statement made by escaped Russian prisoner 'Sergeev', 11 July 1918 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).
[175] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728).
[176] B.B. Cubit to Honourary Secretary, Prisoners of War Help Committee, 25 May 1916 (T.N.A., WO 141/9). Michael Kehoe's mother was also informed that her allowance had been halted. McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', p. 738.
[177] Mrs Alice Drew-Smith to Lord Newton, 14 Mar. 1917 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).
[178] J.L. Brierly for A.A.G., 6 July 1916 (T.N.A., WO 141/9).

employment. They donned the uniform of the Brigade to secure employment, military garb of any type commanding respect in Germany.[179] Kehoe and Carr found work as firemen on a steamship, Quinlisk worked as a clerk, Patrick Keogh got a job in a gas factory as a plumber, Delamore worked as a fireman at a brewery, Dowling and Kavanagh worked as blacksmiths, and McDonagh found work at a taddler shop. Hahn arranged for a number of men (Meade, O'Neil, Lynch, T. McGrath, Treacy, Fulforde, Berry, Sweeny, P McGrath, O'Mahony, D Murphy, O'Callaghan, Scanlon, J. Murphy, O'Donoghue, Wilson, Waters, Brandon, Rahilly) to undertake work at neighbouring farms in the place of Russian prisoners.[180] The experience was not positive. Michael Kehoe reported to Gaffney that a good deal of men simply refused to work, returning from short stints of employment claiming 'that does not suit me.'[181] For instance, ten Brigade men returned from farm work claiming the pay too poor and the hours too long. Zerhusen blamed the farmers, and explained that they had been previously spoiled with cheap Russian labour. Hahn insisted, however, that the Irish Brigade men were 'too lazy to do any kind of work, even too lazy to live. It is the very same lot I expected to get back when they left here!'[182]

Trouble with the Brigade men was not limited to finding and keeping employment. From 1916 to the end of the war the Irish Brigade caused great stress for their handlers, Hahn, Zerhusen and Gaffney. Zerhusen despaired in early 1917 that the men were 'guests who have outstayed their welcome and are nothing but a nuisance.'[183] By early 1918 several of the men had German wives and children. By April, sixteen men of the Brigade had to be 'put under special control, the same as the prisoners' as a result of their behaviour. These few were required to present themselves weekly to the control officer, or face expulsion from Dirschau altogether.[184] Zerhusen relayed to Gaffney the extent to which the Irish Brigade had disgraced itself:

> In some towns the police and magistrates have begged us to take the Irishmen away, as there is always some trouble, swindling, debts, burglaries, selling stolen goods, beating policemen (two men just got nine months each), living with *Kriegerfrauen* when the husbands came home … In some factories they will not

[179] Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).
[180] Keogh and Carr found work as firemen on a steamship. Quinlisk was employed as a clerk. Hahn to Gaffney, 4 July 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/v).
[181] Keogh to Gaffney, 9 July 1916; Hahn to Gaffney 24 July 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/v).
[182] Hahn to Gaffney, 24 July 1916 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/v); Hahn to Gaffney, 18 Mar. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vi).
[183] Zerhusen to Gaffney, 9 Jan. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vi).
[184] Hahn to Gaffney, 8 April 1918 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/viii).

> employ Irishmen, because they work too irregular, one day and the next day gone, or keep away in the afternoon, get advances on weeks pay and disappear. In short on the average they are a disgrace on the name of Irish.[185]

The lack of purpose and uncertainty of the future, frustrations which were vented in rowdy drinking sessions that resulted in arrest and punishment, also fuelled the gradual self-destruction of Brigade camaraderie.[186] A letter from Dowling to O'Toole in March 1918 details such undoing:

> To begin with you are so very kind as to remind me of my unfortunate failing, and that I get drunk occasionally, well, I never have disputed this, I have admitted it, and have fought this habit of mine, but I wish to say this much you as a comrade have never assisted me to overcome this weakness in fact whenever you were in the camp you have played upon my good nature, and in fact urged me on to drink. I of course can understand now why you did this, you tried purposefully to get me into trouble, because you thought my ruination might be your opportunity, you came under the guise of a friend, got money from me over and over again to get you out of difficulties (you were always in some difficulty) and you tried to work my ruination ... I protected you when you stole my belongings when I was in hospital, when you stole and sold the gramophone, when you stole the pressing iron ... You swindled in the name of the *Deutsch Irische Gesellschaft* ... You pretended to be my friend while it gave you money and when I stopped from doing so you and your friend Kehoe never ceased from intriguing against me and Zerhusen also Hahn.'[187]

Informing on fellow-Brigade members became common. Much correspondence exists between the men, addressed to Zerhusen, Hahn and Gaffney, which play one Brigade member against another. In fact, several Irishmen suffered at Quasdow prison camp, described as 'that Hell on Earth', due to 'tettle-tattle accusations' of their comrades.[188]

Indiscipline and the punishment which resulted were fairly evenly distributed. While nearly everyone in the Irish Brigade was punished for some infraction, offences

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[185] Zerhusen to Gaffney, 20 May 1918 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/iv).
[186] Hahn to Gaffney, 30 Jan. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vi); 'You know 7 of our men are now in Neuhammer a/Queis Silesia for punishment.' Zerhusen to Gaffney, 1 May 1918 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/viii).
[187] Dowling to O'Toole, 30 Mar. 1918 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/viii).
[188] O'Toole to unknown, n.d. (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ix).

against fellow-Brigade members were almost uniformly committed by officers.[189] There appears to be no relationship, however, between family situation and education – as explored above – and punishments received. The presence of a mother or father within the active family unit of a Brigade man was also not significant in determining misbehaviour and punishment. The explanation may simply be that in an atmosphere which afforded the Brigade more personal freedom than common prisoners, men collected for a foregone purpose displayed behaviour synonymous with desperation and depression. Justification for criminal conduct was summarised by O'Toole, who lamented the irreversible treason of the Brigade members: 'We have lost all for nothing. Drink is our only refuge from bitter thoughts. ... We are cut off and damned.'[190]

The whirlwind of accusation, indiscipline and self-destruction eventually claimed Zerhusen, who was dismissed from the Irish Brigade by the *Kriegsministerium* in late September 1918.[191] His sacking had been orchestrated by Kehoe, who had collected Brigade signatures in its support. A minority in the Brigade stood in silent opposition, simply seeking to survive the war amidst the machinations of their comrades.[192]

Throughout 1918 the future of the Irish Brigade remained uncertain. All aspects of military training had ceased, men were scattered in various forms of employment and landing the Brigade in the United States, in accordance with the German-Irish Treaty, became impossible following America's entry into the war.[193]

The only Irish Brigade member to escape Germany prior to the war's conclusion was Joseph Dowling. In 1917 the newly reorganised executive of the Irish Volunteers had communicated with the German Foreign Office with a view of securing arms and ammunition. Kehoe suggested the best way of achieving this was to make contact with Irish-speaking fisherman who would act as intermediary between a German arms ship and

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[189] For instance, the N.C.O.s were accused of stealing parcels from the men who were out working. These men claimed the N.C.O.s were immune due to their rank and German respect for position. P. Keogh, Burke, Fulford, McMahon, McCabe T McGrath and Carr to unknown [either Zerhusen or Gaffney], 20 May 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vi). For episode surrounding the pawning of camp goods, see Hahn to Gaffney; O'Toole to Gaffney, 26 July 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vii).

[190] O'Toole to Gaffney, 2 Aug. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, 13,085/1/vii). Zerhusen sympathised somewhat with the position of the Irish men. 'True there are some really bad characters some even who could not be trusted at all, some get drunk, but Mr Gaffney, they have the very worst example in our District, when drunkenness is for nearly all people the only form of amusement indulged in. The particular set of German soldiers, are not an atom better than our Irishmen, in drunkenness, nor in straightness of their dealings, there to just as such ... stealing, selling articles going on as in our lot.' Zerhusen to Gaffney, n.d. (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ix).

[191] Hahn to Gaffney, 27 Sept. 1918 (N.L.I., Casement papers, 13,085/1/viii).

[192] James Carr and John Barnacle to Zerhusen, n.d. (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/ix).

[193] Hahn to Gaffney, 18 Mar. 1917 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/1/vi).

the Volunteers.[194] He hypothesized that after winning the sympathy of the people of the west, a submarine base might be secured at the mouth of the Shannon. 'It was the German hope', he claimed, that:

> provided with sufficient arms securely landed from submarines, the Sinn Féin Army would create such a situation as would divert tens of thousands of British troops from the Western front and materially assist a victorious German offensive onwards to Calais and the Straits of Dover, where, from this base of hostilities, the 'Big Bertha' and 42 centimetre guns would be able to launch a final attack on the shores of England and strike with horror of a death knell the quickened ears of London.[195]

The authenticity of the plan is doubtful. Any diversion created in Ireland through armed conflict would, nevertheless, require the attention of the British. However, the realities of Britain's naval supremacy at this late stage of the war made anything but a brief deployment impossible.

Only four members of the remaining Brigade spoke Irish and could have been sent to make contact with west of Ireland fishermen – Michael McDonagh, John O'Mahoney, O'Toole and Kehoe. Kehoe was at that time attached to the German army. McDonagh, though a native of Galway, was only a private and showed no desire to undertake the mission. O'Mahoney, though promoted to Corporal, had had several disciplinary infractions. As O'Toole had been in contact with Boehm and the German military authorities, he was initially suggested for the mission. He was immediately replaced, however, once Zerhusen had been consulted.[196] In the end Dowling was selected as 'he seemed to be genuinely Irish', compared with others' 'internationalsim'.[197]

On 15 March Zerhusen and Dowling travelled to Berlin, and then on to Hamburg where a U-Boat awaited. He was launched shortly thereafter, but no evidence exists detailing the amount of arms and ammunition sent with him. Dowling was eventually found by a fisherman on a small island off the Irish coast in April 1918. He had embarked in a collapsible boat, possibly to retrieve provisions for the submarine, but then tried to

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[194] Michael Keogh (N.A.I., WS 741).
[195] McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', pp 1,043-4.
[196] 'Reminiscences of Joseph Zerhusen', 10 Nov. 1966 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728). Zerhusen also suggested that O'Toole had been liaising with Mrs Grabisch, who had contacts in England. Speculation exists regarding Grabisch's betrayal of the mission.
[197] McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', pp 1,043-4.

escape. Fifty pounds sterling were found on him, but no incriminating papers or evidence which would later be used to justify the arrests of Sinn Féin leaders under the guise of the 'German plot'.[198] Dowling was identified and arrested; like Casement, he soon found himself in the Tower.

The final break-up of the Brigade came not with the Armistice of November 1918, but with the German revolution in October. Kehoe lamented on the occasion, and the parting of ways with his comrade O'Toole (perhaps the sergeant's only friend in the Brigade):

> The hopes we had cherished were gone with the fortunes of war. Madame Germania had become impoverished by a prolonged warfare: her enemies were too numerous. What of Rory's Irish soldiers? ... I came to the conclusion that it was 'every man for himself and God for us all.'[199]

Armed with false papers and German names, the Brigade were told 'to shift for themselves', and scattered. Some went to Berlin. Maurice Meade had joined a Berlin regiment and saw action in Egypt. He was later employed in the capital with a wholesale liquor distributor.[200] Others got good jobs in Munich through the influence of Professor O'Curry of Munich University, a friend of Casement.[201]

Several Brigade members escaped through the port at Danzig; it was rumoured they returned to Britain. Some headed south to Bavaria, and fought for the German Government in repressing extreme revolutionaries.[202] Two Brigade members, Patrick Carr and Patrick McSweeney, were killed doing so.[203] Others attached themselves to the new German army of the Weimar Republic, and saw action throughout the country. According to Kehoe, 'at least half of those who elected to remain in Munich ... as members of the new Republican German Army were sent to do temporary frontier guard on the Troyl-Italian border.'[204] Kehoe remained in the German army until 1920.

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[198] 'Case of Dowling (prisoner) July 1918, notes from court martial' (MA, George Gavan Duffy collection, CD 45/15/2).
[199] McKeogh, 'Roger Casement, Germany and the World War', p. 1159.
[200] Maurice Meade (N.A.I., WS 891).
[201] Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).
[202] 'Limburg on the Lahn, report of the XVIIIth army corps', n.d. (T.N.A., WO 141/49).
[203] Michael Kehoe (N.A.I., WS 741).
[204] Ibid.

III. Infamy and ignominy

The stresses of war prompt decisions which, under peaceful circumstances, appear impossible or absurd. It is under duress, however, that base motivations come into sharpest contrast with established loyalties or conventional fidelity. Rarely does evidence exist which allows for comparative observation of those who discarded their loyalties and defected into what their native society labelled the enemy camp. Men of the Irish Brigade reflected on their time in the Irish Brigade in various ways. Some looked back with pride, while others sought to forget altogether. Regardless, revolutionary Ireland failed to recognise, exploit or celebrate the Irish Brigade.

Many Brigade men returned to Britain mindful that they were regarded by their former comrades in the British Army as traitors. Their repatriation went unobstructed following the war, though law officers were informed that Brigade men had been 'terrified as to what their reception would be in England'.[205]

The trial and execution of Casement in the summer of 1916 illustrated the gravity of treason in the national and legal mindset of wartime Britain.[206] Although there existed recent legal precedent of treason with reprieve – the case of Arthur Lynch following the Boer War – Casement's long career with the Foreign Office, his efforts to turn the loyalty of British soldiers and the length and method of his attempt, ensured the contempt of the Crown. 'Lynch's Treason was that of an individual', Casement recorded in his diary in 1914, 'mine is the premeditated, clearly thought out treason not of an individual but of a representative of a still remembering people.'[207] In Casement's own mind the failure of the Irish Brigade had transformed his actions from patriotic to criminal;[208] incessant focus on his own treason and fate, a feature of his writings since 1914, persisted after his capture.

The Crown touted a much earlier precedent of treason to not only secure conviction, but to ensure a dishonourable end for Casement. Legal opinion of treason surrounding the Casement trial drew heavily on the 1351 statute of Edward III, a fact the accused found humorous. Writing to Richard Morton, his 'dear, dear old Dick', Casement informed his friend how he could be recognised in the afterlife: 'You'll hear me clanking up the avenue – because I'll be in armour of course – look at the date, 1351! – and I'll ask (in Norman-French) if one Dick de Morten lives there, and demand his money or his

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[205] Robert Child to Sir Gordon Hewart, 2 Feb. 1919 (T.N.A., WO 141/36/1).

[206] The scene of the trial has recently been narrated by Angus Mitchell in his depiction of Sir John Lavery's painting, *High treason*. Angus Mitchell, '*High treason*: passion and politics' in *History Ireland*, xviii, no. 5 (September/October 2010), pp 48-9. One contention remains, however. The key to the painting featured on page forty-nine states that the man sitting beside Casement is 'Dowling'.

[207] Roger Casement's German diary, 7 Nov. 1914 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 1,689).

[208] Casement to Boehm, 12 Sept. 1915 (N.L.I., Casement papers, MS 13,085/21).

head'.[209] F.E. Smith, Edward Carson's former *aide de camp* within the Ulster Volunteer Force and Attorney General during the trial, insisted on hanging, and disregarded the suggestion of death by firing squad:

> 'Treason' has always been regarded as the most detestable crime deserving the most ignominious death. ... It would indeed be a violent stop in the opposite direction if it were now conceded that a traitor might seek and obtain from the Crown what is sometimes ... regarded as the more honourable death by shooting.[210]

While solicitors debated precedent and punishment, Casement prepared his defence. He had been informed by George Bernard Shaw that a conventional defence would no doubt procure conviction. Casement was instead advised to argue that he was a prisoner of war, and as such morally entitled to fight for Ireland's independence.[211] Casement drew parallels with the 'treason' of Garibaldi – a figure revered by the British – and the numerous examples of nationalist minorities being formed into brigades on the side of the allies.[212] He cynically asked to be shown any reference in the English press to the Polish or Czech legions, the Alsatian Corps, 'or any other of the numerous bodies of "traitors" and "renegades" being "seduced from their allegiance" on behalf of the immortal Allies'.[213]

Despite the counsel of Shaw and George Gavan Duffy, Casement failed to sway the court. His treason was found to be compounded by the fact that he had at one time been a revered representative of imperial authority. Put simply, Casement had been one of their own. He cemented culpability in the admission that his nationalist sympathies were not recent, but in fact long-held, and had matured during his time in the Foreign Office. As Angus Mitchell has commented: 'The Imperial authorities were faced by a man who had deliberately used his official powers for his emerging revolutionary purposes.'[214]

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[209] Casement to Richard Morten, 28 July 1916 (N.L.I., Roger McHugh papers, MS 31,728). For an editorial view of the statute of 1351 see *Times*, 15 May 1916.
[210] Legal opinion of F.E. Smith, 29 May 1916 (T.N.A., HO 144/1636/311643/52). Further discussion took place as to whether the execution should take place in public. The Crown was concerned with making not only an example of Casement, but a public example. See 'Executions for high treason', opinion of A.J., 25 May 1916 (T.N.A., HO 144/1636/311643/52).
[211] George Bernard Shaw to Julius Klein, 19 Dec. 1934 in Sawyer, *Flawed hero*, pp 158-9.
[212] Inglis, *Casement*, p. 328.
[213] Casement to 'Mrs. G' [Alice Stopford Green], 26 June 1916, in William J. Mallony, *Traitor patriots*, preface. Subsequent scholars have drawn parallel between Casement and Czech nationalist Thomas Masayrk and Briton John Amery.
[214] Mitchell, *Casement*, p. 144.

In his speech from the dock, Casement defended treason as justified in the pursuit of national independence. If it were to be dubbed 'treason', he classified it as one of 'ruthless sincerity' – action transformed from sentiment.[215] This sentiment, he explained, had grown from the basic love of his country. For all his complexities, Casement's view of loyalty and its application was quite clear, and devoid of his usual ambiguous nationalist philosophy:

> If true religion rests on love, it is equally true that loyalty rests on love. The law I am charged under has no parentage in love and claims the allegiance of today on the ignorance and blindness of the past. I am being tried, in truth, not by my peers of the live present, but by the peers of the dead past; not by the civilisation of the twentieth century, but by the brutality of the fourteenth; not even by a statute framed in the language of an enemy land – so antiquated is the law that must be sought today to slay an Irishman, whose offence is that he puts Ireland first. Loyalty is a sentiment, not a law. It rests on love, not on restraint. The Government of Ireland by England rests on restraint and not on law; and since it demands no love it can evoke no loyalty.[216]

A furious campaign for reprieve failed to persuade the Government.[217] Following conviction, Casement formalised what had been in his heart throughout his life, and converted to Catholicism. In the tradition of revolutionary martyrs, he forgave his enemies, and exclaimed 'all are my brethren now.'[218]

Casement's regal demeanour and empathy with the oppressed allowed him to tread the fine line between love and hate. The variety of influences which had shaped his character – cultural, national and geographical – allowed both Britain and Ireland to claim him as their own. It is a testament to Casement's liminal nature that he was able to detest institutions of oppression without allowing emotion to erode his kindness. A letter to Superintendent Saundercock, head of Brixton prison, illustrates Casement's wit and

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[215] Ibid.
[216] Casement's speech from the dock, Inglis, *Roger Casement*, pp 403-11.
[217] See, for example, reprieve requests from the Gaelic League of London, Arnold Rowntree, John Masefield, F.B. Meyer, Joseph Rowntree, Benjamin Hobson, Mary Hobson, and E. Beatrice Flynn to H.H. Asquith, n.d.; James O'Doherty, D.L. Donegal, William Doherty, N. Donegal, Charles McHugh, Charles O'Neill, John Boyne and several others [indecipherable] to H.H. Asquith, 24 July 1916 (T.N.A., HO 144/1636/311643/75). *The New Statesman* argued against execution on the grounds that 'No life has been lost for which he must pay', and to prevent Casement's martyrdom. *The New Statesman*, 29 July 1916.
[218] Mitchell, *Casement*, p. 151; T.N.A., HO 144/1636/311643/32A.

compassion – elements of his character which endured to the end and provided the foundation for his reputation:

> From the time you took me in custody at Euston on Easter Sunday and again took me to the Tower on Easter Tuesday you showed me the best side of an Englishman's character – his native good heart. Whatever you may think of my attitude towards your Government and the Realm I would only ask you to keep one thing in that good heart of yours – and that is that a man may fight a Country and its policy and yet not hate any individual of that Country.[219]

Casement's motivations and legacy are secure in both nationalist lore and academic historiography. What of the men of the Irish Brigade? What was their reward for loyalty to Casement following the war? Many returned to Britain and Ireland, but to what end?

Throughout 1919 the Government seriously considered pursuing charges of treason against known members of the Irish Brigade. Discussions on the subject between the Secretary of State and the Attorney General took place over many months. Several obstacles, however, prevented legal proceedings en masse. One was the nature of offences committed by the Irish Brigade. The charge of treason was not in doubt, but prosecution by civil power or court martial remained an issue. It was determined that court martial could only be employed if the charge of desertion was applied. As Brigade men were already prisoners when approached by Casement, this course was abandoned.

A second consideration was prosecuting specific treasonous actions of men once they had joined the Irish Brigade, for which little evidence existed.[220] As a result recruiting sergeants, and others that solicited fellow-prisoners from their allegiance to the Crown, were of greater legal value than others who may have joined the Brigade to avail of material comforts. This was clearly illustrated in the opinion of the law officers of the Crown:

> [I]t is highly improbable that a jury would convict anybody of this offence against whom it could only be said that he had joined the Irish Brigade. It would be open to any such a person to say, and to say without the possibility of contradiction, that

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[219] Casement to Saundercock, 17 May 1916 (N.A.I., accessions 1961-1988, E.F.P. 999/200).
[220] Correspondence regarding the legal proceedings against the Irish Brigade, 2, 6, 18 27 Feb. 1919 (T.N.A., WO 141/36/3,4,9).

his reason for joining was not disloyalty to the Crown, but a desire to get a favourable opportunity for escape, or more lenient treatment from the Germans.[221]

In this regard, the War Office became solely concerned with consequence, not intent, and focused its attention on accomplices to events of April 1916.[222] In the end, however, it was decided ill-advised that large-scale proceedings for treason should be launched against repatriated Brigade men. Only three men were ever tried. The rest were officially discharged from the British Army for misconduct, and forfeited any customary gratuities. In the words of Robert Childs, it was 'a sad (not to say ignominious as far as we are concerned) ending to a disgraceful incident.'[223]

The Crown was unwilling to pursue upwards of fifty cases of high treason, though three men in particular were prosecuted. Maurice Meade and Patrick O'Neill managed to survive capture by the British during the allied occupation of Berlin following the war. They were transferred to the Tower, hastily tried for high treason and sentenced to death. Both were granted the King's pardon, though neither claims to have actually petitioned for release. O'Neill returned to Dublin and Meade to Limerick where he was accosted by the R.I.C. near Knocklong and held at the local barracks. He managed to escape and was soon after contacted by Donncadh O'Hannigan, who had organised a flying column in the area. Meade joined the I.R.A. and participated in several attacks on British forces, including assaults on Ballylanders and Kilmallock R.I.C. barracks, and ambushes at Grange and Drumkeen. He killed a Black and Tan who had surrendered during the Drumkeen ambush, and justified his action by commenting that he considered the man to be 'treacherous'. A court martial was set upon the spot to determine the fate of three remaining Tans. After sentence of death had been passed, Meade shot one man execution-style. He served with the column until the Truce, after which time he joined the Free State army. He retired from military service in 1924 with the rank of second lieutenant.[224]

Several other Brigade men led colourful lives during the Irish Revolution. Julian Beverley, alias Daniel Bailey, the first to be repatriated via his manipulation of Monteith and Casement, was quickly reinstated in the British army and deployed to Mesopotamia in

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[221] 'Repatriated members of the German Irish Brigade, opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown and Mr G.A.H. Branson', c. May 1919 (T.N.A., WO 141/36/17).
[222] Correspondence regarding the legal proceedings against the Irish Brigade, 10, 18 Mar. 1919 (T.N.A., WO 141/36/12;14).
[223] Robert Child to Secretary of State, 18 Apr. 1919; 'Repatriated members of the German Irish Brigade, opinion of the Law Officers of the Crown (Gordon Hewart, E.M. Pollack) and Mr G.A.H. Branson', c. May 1919 (T.N.A., WO 141/36/17).
[224] Maurice Meade (N.A.I., WS 891); *Irish Times*, 4 Oct. 1924.

1916. Though denied by nationalists, Childs stated that Bailey 'practically turned King's Evidence' upon his capture. Continued service with the British Army allows weight to be given to this version of the story.[225]

Timothy Quinlisk returned to Ireland and acted as a double-agent, though for who is uncertain. Kehoe stated that Quinlisk acted as a decoy in the I.R.B., under the unoriginal pseudonym 'Quin', and for months led authorities in Dublin Castle in false directions. Inglis claims that Quinlisk was actually working for the British, and was ingenuous to the Irish movement. In either case he was shot and killed, apparently on the orders of Michael Collins.[226] Another Brigade man to meet a violent end was Jeremiah O'Callaghan, who was 'mysteriously killed in Mallow barracks' in August 1922.[227]

Michael Kehoe, a man who left abundant if at times contradictory evidence of the Irish Brigade, remained in Germany for the better part of his life. Correspondence with Sinn Féin executives following the Truce illustrates that Kehoe had failed to gain the confidence of those he considered compatriots. From his experience in dealing with other members of the Irish Brigade, Michael Collins felt that it would be better if Kehoe were left alone. Kehoe returned to Ireland briefly to sell some of Casement's letters and shortly thereafter returned to Germany.[228] He considered it a consolation that he was not 'called on to stain my rifle against my fellow-countrymen in 1922-23' during the Irish Civil War. He claimed to have had only once fired at another living thing – a rabbit in order to win a marksman bet. Writing to a friend in 1933, Kehoe confessed that he considered himself an 'Exile of Erin'.[229]

Michael O'Toole also remained in Germany. He moved to Coblenz and was arrested by American forces in June 1921 for spreading anti-British propaganda. The War Office telegraphed allied authorities in Germany and stated that O'Toole's presence in the United Kingdom was 'undesirable'.[230] He was released and slowly drifted into destitution. Following the establishment of the Irish Free State, O'Toole applied for repatriation. The Minister for Home Affairs, Kevin O'Higgins, stated that the Provisional Government were

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[225] Kehoe to Kuno Meyer, 28 Aug. 1919 (N.A.I., DE 2/172); 'Case of Dowling (Prisoner) July 1918, notes from Court Martial', Maurice Moore, n.d. (MA, CD 45/15/2); Robert Child to Attorney General, 2 Feb. 1919 (T.N.A., WO 141/36).

[226] Inglis, *Casement*, p. 395; McKeogh, 'Casement, Germany and the World War', pp 732-3; Padraic O'Farrell, *Who's who in the Irish War of Indepdence and Civil War 1916-1923*(Dublin, 1997), pp 88-9.

[227] Ibid.

[228] Erskine Childers and Arthur Griffith bought several of Casement's letters on behalf of the Irish movement. Collins to Diarmuid O'Hegarty, 29 July 1921; Diarmuid O'Hegarty to the manager, *Young Ireland*, 9 Aug. 1921 (N.A.I., DE 2/172).

[229] Kehoe to Frank Robbins, 20 Dec. 1933 (N.L.I., MS 22,250).

[230] 'Memorandum regarding Michael O'Toole', 2 Mar. 1922 (N.A.I., CSORP 1922, box 6199, R 65).

not in a position to facilitate O'Toole's repatriation. His wife, who had remained in Dublin with their two children, was unable to pay his fare. O'Toole's siblings refused to pay his fare, though it was estimated that they were certainly in a financial position to do so.[231]

Apart from Casement, the most publicised member of the Irish Brigade was Joseph Dowling, who had washed ashore in Clare in 1918 and spurred the 'German Plot' arrests. Dowling was the third member of the Brigade tried for treason. He refused to make any statement at his trial and was convicted of treason on 9 September 1918. His death sentence was commuted to penal servitude for life as the War Office believed he held vital intelligence.[232] He was aged thirty-two at the time. Dowling's imprisonment garnered little attention throughout the Irish War of Independence; his crime perhaps lacked the same political weight as those committed by Irish Volunteers. Dowling made little protest regarding his imprisonment, and petitioned only to be held in Ireland so that he could be visited by friends and family he had not seen since 1914.[233] His request was never granted.

Dowling was all but forgotten until debate surrounding amnesty following the establishment of the Free State came to pass, and pre-Treaty political offences were absolved. In support of his case, parallels were drawn between the treason of Dowling and that of the certain members of the Connaught Rangers, who had mutinied in India in 1920.[234] Free State ministers pressed for the release of the Rangers to ensure that their own version of amnesty, the Indemnity Bill, would pass the Dáil and Seanad. W.T. Cosgrave did not, however, regard the release of Dowling 'as of such importance as the release of the Connaught Rangers.'[235]

The release of the Rangers throughout 1923, while Dowling remained in Parkhurst, again illuminates the stigma of treason in the British mind. The Rangers fell under the clause of amnesty as their actions had been politically motivated – the fashionable claim of Irish patriots throughout the revolution. Furthermore, while India had certainly been in a state of unrest, the mutiny occurred in the summer of 1920, not during the Great War or with the intent of aiding the enemy. Minutes of a debate in the House of Commons outline the difference:

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[231] Ibid., 18, 30 Apr. 1922 (N.A.I., CSORP 1922, box 6199, R 65).
[232] Although the Colonial Office saw no use in retaining Dowling, the War Office still considered his detention warranted. *Daily Mail,* 11 Feb. 1924.
[233] Prisoner's petition, Dowling to Secretary of State, 4 Sept. 1919 (T.N.A., HO 144/3444).
[234] Lionel Curtis to Herbert Creedy, 6 May 1922; J.A. Anderson to Loughnane, 27 Dec. 1922 (T.N.A., WO 141/67).
[235] Meeting of Sir James Masterson Smith, the Governor General, Cosgrave, Duggan and Desmond Fitzgerald, 29 Dec. 1922 (T.N.A., HO 144/3724).

Lieut Commander Kenworthy: Is the Honourable and gallant gentleman aware that, while no one wishes to minimise the extent of these crimes, many people who have done much worse things in Ireland – murdered British officers in their beds and so on – have been liberated?

Lieut Colonel Guinness: None of the crimes to which the Honourable and gallant gentleman refers took place on active service, and I do not think any of these peace-time crimes can compare in gravity with that of a man who deliberately goes over to the enemy and tries to seduce other prisoners of war from their allegiance.[236]

It was through the renewed efforts of the Free State Senator Maurice Moore (Dowling's old commanding officer and former Inspector General of the Irish National Volunteers), and a general wish by the British to place the entire 1916 episode in the past, that Dowling was eventually released on 6 February 1924. For ten years he had been a prisoner in one form or another. Though he had family in Queen's county, Dowling quietly moved to London where he married his second cousin, a retired school-teacher, followed his trade of carpentry, and lived an uneventful life.[237] Dowling was returned to Ireland following his death in 1932, and given a military funeral with full republican honours.[238] He was buried in Glasnevin, and described in the *Times* as 'A traitor in England, but a hero in Ireland'.[239]

Conclusion

Roger Casement's character and compassion had been forged in Antrim; his psyche developed from conflicting religious influence and his own complicated family history. He had carried Ireland with him throughout the world in pursuit of human justice. Despite his education and worldly demeanour, Casement possessed the same divided loyalty evident in many men and women of the period – one which required cultural and political nationalism to coexist with British hegemony.

Assessment of treason requires, among other things, an examination of motivation. It is here that Casement and the men of the Irish Brigade stand apart. While he had taken

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[236] *The parliamentary debates*, fifth series, *House of Commons*, 167 (23 July-2 Aug. 1923), p. 14; minutes of debate, 23 July 1923 (T.N.A., HO 144/344).
[237] *News of the World,* 7 Aug. 1932.
[238] *Times*, 6 Aug. 1932
[239] *Times*, 6 Aug. 1932; *News of the world*, 7 Aug. 1932.

steps to distance himself professionally from the Foreign Office, Casement remained in their view a colonial advocate, one of their own who had been honoured by the Crown for service to the empire.[240] His treason was premeditated, and pursued in a manner which required false names and international intrigue. Conversely, the men of the Irish Brigade never planned to commit treason. Under the duress of war and the uncertainty of imprisonment, men chose to sacrifice their loyalty at the altar of survival. While factors such as age, family and social background go some length in explaining men's motivations, they do not act as a counterweight toward the anxiety of wartime imprisonment. In this sense, joining the Irish Brigade was for many an alternative to starvation and death, and not necessarily an intentional act of treason or an expression of Irish loyalty.

The differences in severity of treason come into greater focus when examined concurrent to the war's progress. Casement was captured at the height of the war. His execution, similar to the leaders of the Easter Rising, was carried out amidst the possibility of German victory. The same applies to the prolonged imprisonment of Joseph Dowling. Pursuit of Brigade men, however, yielded in 1919 following an allied victory. The delicate political and military situation in Ireland following the war forced a redirection of efforts. It was thought best not to renew prosecutions connected with the 1916 episode, and thus allow Sinn Féin additional propaganda.

Finally, while Casement's legacy would have been secure had he not organised an Irish Brigade, his execution copper-fastened his name to Irish nationalist history. Separated from the Rising's leaders by more than distance, historiography nevertheless places Casement within the inner circle of rebellion. Commemorative souvenir collages of the Easter martyrs reveal this inseparability. The same cannot be said of the Irish Brigade. With the exception of Dowling who, like Casement, suffered for his participation, the names and legacies of men of the Brigade are largely neglected and forgotten. The reward for devotion to Ireland during the revolution was often punishment. In fact, men and women often revelled in their chastisement for declaring their loyalty to the Irish Republic. That so few Brigade men were involved in the Irish movement after their repatriation only validates observations that joining the Irish Brigade was not a true expression of loyalty to Ireland or the separatist ideal, but a decision taken with a view toward self-preservation.

The Irish Brigade escapes traditional classification within the history of the Great War and Irish Revolution as its members were neither loyal British soldiers nor effectual

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[240] Leon Ó Broin, *Dublin Castle and the 1916 rising: the story of Sir Matthew Nathan* (Dublin, 1966), p. 168.

Irish patriots. Members fought with the B.E.F. in France but, after capture, defected to become 'guests of the Kaiser'. They declared themselves for Irish freedom, yet avoided the subsequent independence struggle at home. As a result, they reaped neither the spoils of war, nor the gratitude of their peers. They observed both allied victory parades and Irish commemoration ceremonies from the crowd; their lapels bore neither poppy nor lily during the many years that followed their brief imprisonment in Germany.

CHAPTER FIVE

VIOLENCE, LOYALTY AND CULTURE IN IRISH PRISONS, 1919-21

In June 1920 Edward Shewell, governor of Belfast prison, responded to a questionnaire issued by the General Prisons Board, Dublin Castle, regarding the extent to which warders and officers had physically and mentally suffered under the stress of guarding political prisoners. Shewell, who had been employed in the prison service for ten years and was a veteran of the British Army, painted a sombre picture:

> During the last three years, an entirely new element has been introduced into the Irish Prisons Service by the committal of a large number of men who (in furtherance of their desire to establish an independent Irish Republic) are acting on a concerted plan to make His Majesty's Government in Ireland impossible. Having been committed to prison the only public officials against whom their efforts can be directed become the Governors and Staff of H.M. Prisons.[1]

What Shewell, his fellow prison governors, warders and medical officers experienced between 1919 and 1921 was the apex of disorder that had grown over the previous years. It was much more than the protest for political status and treatment ostensibly claimed by prisoners in 1917 – it was war declared against the Irish prison system as a symbol of British rule. Republican prisoners believed their offences were not ordinary crimes, but politically-motivated initiatives toward Irish independence.[2] As the net woven by Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) legislation and Defence of the Realm Regulations (D.R.R.) was cast ever wider, thousands of Irishmen were detained, at times without conviction, of such banal crimes as unlawful assembly, disturbing the peace and soliciting funds. Denied the status and privileges of prisoners of war or, as they equally preferred, political prisoners, disobedience and violence against the prison flourished, and camaraderie and loyalty between prisoners grew amidst individual adversity and collective hardship.

The experience of imprisonment during the Anglo-Irish War varied greatly from that of the Great War. The behaviour of Irish political prisoners was truly unprecedented

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[1] Edward Shewell to H.J. Chippendall, 5 June 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7224).

[2] For an account of the outlook of political prisoners from 1917 onwards, see 'Detailed statement about Padraic J. Fleming's activities before imprisonment and during it', author unknown, c. 1917 (N.L.I., MS 5,816). For an overview of prison administration between 1918 and 1921, see appendix Table 5.1: Personnel of the General Prisons Board and major prisons of Ireland, 1918-21.

in a period which had witnessed widespread interment and imprisonment throughout Europe. During the Great War, prisoners of national armies were subject to division, discipline and hardship, but on a much larger scale. Red Cross and diplomatic envoys inspected the prison camps of both Allied and Central powers to ensure humane treatment. With few exceptions, prisoners of war accepted their captivity without struggle. Parcels of food, clothes and tobacco, sent by family, religious organisations and aid societies, helped to curb depression or hopelessness. Furthermore, having surrendered or been captured in the field as part of a recognised national army, soldiers maintained their collective identity.[3] This soldierly camaraderie, maintained through mass imprisonment, helped to lessen the harsh psychological effects of confinement and, at the very least, established a base upon which they could endure mutual suffering.

Concurrent to the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers, electoral success of Sinn Féin and the escalation of guerrilla activity throughout Ireland, Irish prisons were transformed into war zones or, as Seán McConville has labelled them, 'theatres of war'.[4] Labelling and classification of prisoners, segregation and the imposition of prison discipline proved complex and difficult for prison staff. Furthermore, the methodical routine implanted by the General Prisons Board provided ample opportunity for prisoners to congregate undetected, pass notes of news or instruction and spread gossip. While many on the outside used the establishment of Dáil Éireann and the declaration of independence to morally justify violence against police and British military establishment, prisoners had resorted to violence independently prior to 1919 in an effort to assert their authority.[5] Warders struggled to prevent the association of prisoners in the yard and cell blocks – interactions which preceded coordinated disruptions and organised 'outbreaks', 'smash-ups' or, to use the contemporary parlance of the General Prisons Board, *émeutes*, or riots.[6] As a result, traditional procedures for maintaining prison discipline were incrementally abandoned in favour of more radical measures.

Irish imprisonment is enjoying a resurgence of scholarly attention. Gabriel Doherty is conducting a history of the General Prisons Board in Dublin, highlighting its finances,

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[3] This of course does not acknowledge that many national minorities fought within larger national armies; for example, the Irish, Scots and Welsh in the British Army, and Poles in the Austrian, German and Russian armies.

[4] Seán McConville, *Irish political prisoners, 1848-1922: theatres of war* (London, 2003).

[5] Tom Barry explained and justified violence in such terms: 'Without Dáil Éireann there would, most likely, have been no sustained fight, with moral force behind it'. Tom Barry, *Guerrilla days in Ireland* (Dublin, 1962 edn), p. 11.

[6] In this chapter the term 'outbreak' will embody its contemporary definition: disruption within the prison or the destruction of its property. Episodes of breakouts, or escapes, will be highlighted separately.

standards of discipline and difficulties during the revolutionary period.[7] Seán McConville has established himself as a pre-eminent historian of prisons and imprisonment. His volume on Irish imprisonment in Britain, though intensely focused upon legal issues and procedure, nevertheless reveals that group solidarity and violent behaviour during the Irish Revolution was not reserved for prisons within Ireland. McConville's second volume on Irish imprisonment, set in Ireland and beginning in 1920, is forthcoming. William Murphy has conducted studies on both prisoners' reflective writings and their main tool of resistance – the hunger strike.[8] Murphy notes how, in the nineteenth century, imprisonment was not only a common experience for advanced nationalists, but a rite of passage capped by the penning of a prison memoir. Contemporary writings on imprisonment, such as the two *Chronicles of jails* written by Darrell Figgis in 1917 and 1919 respectively and Michael Collins's brief prison journal, provide evidence of this tradition, and also help inform arguments on the effects of imprisonment on the individual and group interaction.[9]

Distinct from urban warfare or rural ambush, prisons were places which, as Piaras Béaslaí described, evoked in the individual 'deeper emotions than a thrilling narrative of dangerous exploits of war.'[10] It was the type of warfare that required determination, resourcefulness and persistence on an entirely different scale than that of active service work. It was, described 'An Irish Priest [Rev. Fr. Swayne]' in 1919, 'a branch of warfare not usually taught in drill-halls but none the less necessary to our soldiers of freedom.'[11] As a result, the experience of political imprisonment during the Anglo-Irish War created a unique sense of loyalty between prisoners and toward the national cause. This was established, in part, through the wide-spread belief that prisoners remained soldiers and the prison and its warders tools of the enemy. Prisoners observed military discipline and exhibited an unselfish interdependency with fellow-prisoners.

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[7] Gabriel Doherty has observed that between 1885-1914 Irish prisons experienced a gradual alignment with their English counterparts, as well as a general refinement of prison rules and discipline. Doherty has also noted that between 1914-1922, despite a declining prison population, expenditure rose dramatically, and following the death of Thomas Ashe Irish prisons became battlefields. Gabriel Doherty, 'The General Prisons Board for Ireland, 1877-1928' at Imprisonment and the Irish conference, Mater Dei Institute, Dublin, 5 September 2009.

[8] William Murphy, 'Narratives of confinement: Fenians, prisons and writing, 1867-1916' in Fearghal McGarry and James McConnell (eds), *The black hand of republicanism: Fenianism in modern Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 160-76; Murphy, 'The tower of hunger: political imprisonment and the Irish, 1910-1921', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (U.C.D., 2006).

[9] Darrell Figgis, *A chronicle of Irish jails*; *a second chronicle of Irish jails* (Dublin, 1917; 1919); Íosold Ó Derig, '"Oh! The unrest of the soul": the jail journal of Michael Collins' in *Studia Hibernica*, no. 28 (1994), pp 7-34.

[10] An Irish Priest [Rev. Fr. Swayne], *In Maryboro' and Mountjoy: the prison experiences and prison-breaking of an Irish Volunteer (Padraic Fleming)* (n.p., 1919), forward.

[11] Ibid.

Many political prisoners forged their loyalty and reinforced their camaraderie based on this violence, which in the majority of cases required cooperation and interdependency.[12] This acted to strengthen prisoner resolve in the face of efforts to curb dissident behaviour. For instance, reflecting on his prison experience throughout 1917-18, Padraic Fleming described how repression fuelled camaraderie and national conscience:

> [I]ndividuals may have believed themselves to be submitted, but even in these individuals their sub-conscious remained ever loyal to the national idea, a fact of which to their own amazement they sometimes grew fiercely conscious, under the emotional shock of some very choice acts of barbarity or coercion perpetrated by the garrison administration.[13]

Limited in their capacity to inflict large-scale physical damage on the enemy, prisoners waged material and psychological war on prison staff and governing officials; destroying cells whenever feasible, disturbing the peace at regulated intervals, and practicing hunger strikes as a means to pressure for concessions or release. This chapter will explore and analyse various forms of violence and their frequency within Irish prisons throughout 1919-21. It argues that political imprisonment, coupled with violence, were key in the development and strengthening of loyalty during the Irish Revolution. Furthermore, this chapter will briefly introduce the distinct culture which emerged from Irish political imprisonment, and how this too acted to broaden and strengthen the convictions of Ireland's captive patriots.

I. Violence and loyalty

Precedents of disorder

The location of a prison played a significant part in determining the nature, severity and duration of prison violence. It is with little surprise that Belfast, Cork and Dublin prisons exhibited the most frequent and violent disturbances. Regions that were politically and religiously divided, and under the pressure of martial law or heavy government surveillance – even those predominantly nationalist – were most active. Violent episodes

[12] Joanna Bourke has commented on the 'love for one's comrades' as a strong incentive toward violent behaviour. Joanna Bourke, *An intimate history of killing: face-to-face killing in the twentieth-century* (Great Britain, 1999), pp 129-30.
[13] An Irish Priest, *In Maryboro' and Mountjoy*, p. 4.

in Irish prisons were sporadic prior to 1919, but still served to expand and strengthen prisoner solidarity.

Several examples illustrate the unrest that existed in Irish prisons prior to 1919, and the circumstances of their occurrence. General agitation for political classification and treatment persisted throughout 1917. Its pinnacle was reached during the autumn, when a series of disruptions at Mountjoy resulted in an organised outbreak on 20 September. Prisoners, whose recently committed crimes fell under several sections of the Defence of the Realm Regulations,[14] broke up their cells and remained disruptive for several days.[15] This was followed by a prolonged hunger strike, which required the forcible feeding of forty prisoners. Prisoners gave up hunger strike after being granted certain concessions,[16] but not before inexperience and subsequent panic by the medical staff claimed the life of Thomas Ashe.[17]

The published inquiry into Ashe's death left a profound impression on Irish nationalists, and cemented their suspicion of barbarism within Irish prisons. A letter intercepted at Mountjoy shortly after Ashe's death reveals both amazement at prisoners' ability to withstand such treatment, and an increasingly resentful attitude toward prison authority:

> Don't think me insane Phil when I ask you this question. 'Are you all human beings?' If not in how much do you differ from us? Having read Thomas Ashes's inquiry I am forced to the conclusion that there are Huns more Hunnish and barbarians at home than we are led to believe live across the Rhine. Are these men that perpetrated those atrocities human? Emphatically NO! They must be and are criminals.[18]

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[14] For a detailed account of these men, their ages, crimes and sentences, see 'Nominal list of Defence of the Realm Act prisoners in Mountjoy Prison on 2 Oct. 1917' (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1917-20, box 1).

[15] Extract from report of Governor Mountjoy Prison for the year 1917; evening guard report, Warder D. Finucane, 22 Sept. 1917; special night report, Warder R. Donohue, HM Prison, Mountjoy, 22 Sept. 1917 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 1).

[16] The hunger strike was abandoned after securing special recognition of their political status. However, when the special diet afforded to prisoners in order to aid their recuperation was withdrawn, they immediately went on hunger strike and were transferred to Dundalk. 'Extract from report of Governor Mountjoy Prison for the year 1917' (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 1); Michael to Donagh O'Conor, 10 Oct. 1917 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1917/4084).

[17] Several contemporary accounts detail the imprisonment and forced-feeding of Thomas Ashe. See R.G. McDowell papers, N.L.I., MS 31,773, Finian Lynch papers, N.L.I., MS 33,008, 'Austin Stack's account of the forced-feeding of Thomas Ashe', N.L.I., MS 44,612, and *The Irish Nation*, 6 Oct. 1917.

[18] J. Burke to Philip MacMahery, 31 Oct. 1917 (NAI, DORA 1917-20, box 7).

Ashe's death established a base set of rights and privileges for political prisoners in Ireland – demands which had motivated his protest.[19] In addition to affixing Ashe to the list of Irish martyrs, the mismanagement of hunger strike prisoners in Mountjoy in 1917 reintroduced the 'Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-health) Act, 1913', more commonly referred to as the 'cat and mouse act'.[20] Originally created to manage hunger-striking suffragettes, under this legislation prisoners voluntarily abstaining from food were allowed to do so until death seemed eminent. They were then released into the care of family or friends, allowed to recuperate, and re-arrested to serve out the remainder of their sentences. Several prominent prison organisers had been released and re-arrested under the cat and mouse act in 1917, including Austin Stack, who emerged as a dominant personality in Belfast prison.[21]

Prison populations swelled in 1918 as Defence of the Realm Regulation 9AA – which prohibited the wearing of military-style uniforms, drilling and unlawful assembly – took increasing effect.[22] 'There are men here doing twelve months for answering their name in Irish' protested B. Rudden from Belfast prison in late October.[23] Further imprisonment of those demonstrating against the extension of conscription to Ireland moulded additional advocates for republicanism. Many entered prison mild dissidents, only to be transformed following congregation with separatists. '[L]ocking up Irishmen from every 'O' in Ireland', continued Rudden to his friend Brady, 'gives everyone who happens to be a victim to the English claw an opportunity of making friends and comrades as well as giving those who had no opportunity of learning the Irish language ... to enable the youth of Ireland to promote Irish Ireland ideas.'[24] The frequent shuffling of prison leaders between Belfast, Cork and Dublin meant lectures on Irish history, political separatism and physical violence reached a wide audience. The 'university of revolution', established at Frongoch in 1916, had by 1918 expanded to incorporate several regional colleges.

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[19] Cited within 'Belfast prison: ill-treatment of republican prisoners, 1918', c. July 1918 (NAI, DE 2/519). See also, 'Ameliorations of prison treatment granted under Rules of 29th September 1917 to prisoners sentenced for offences under DORA', 26 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1402); 'Rules for prisoners committed under the Defence of the Realm Act and Regulations', 8 Mar. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/10909);
[20] Prisoners (Temporary Discharge for Ill-health) Act, 1913, 3 Geo. V, c. 4 [U.K.] (25 Apr. 1913).
[21] Mrs. Austin Stack (B.M.H.,, W.S. 418).
[22] For a concise overview of the development of DORA legislation, see Colm Campbell, *Emergency law in Ireland, 1918-1925* (Oxford, 1994). Chapter two, 'Ireland 1918-1921 part I., legal developments in context', pp 8-38, is particularly useful.
[23] B. Rudden to P.J. Brady, 18 Oct. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7).
[24] Ibid.

Imprisonment in connection with the independence movement created a unique pride and nurtured camaraderie amongst inmates, and together promoted a spirit of resistance. Several confiscated letters help exemplify this phenomenon. Writing to his mother in August 1918, Kevin 'Higgins', the future Minister for Home Affairs who had yet to Gaelicise his surname, explained his position:

> Remember no sacrifice counts whether a man does his duty to his country – to be persecuted for doing so is the purest pleasure, for the past three months I have been absolutely content and will be so for the next two. If it were years instead of months it would be the same. ... The clan Ó h-Uigín takes its stand against the government![25]

James Duffy wrote in a similar vein to his friend John Coffey in Cavan:

> There is a good number of us rebels here, enjoying the hospitality of his Majesty the King. But no matter, our cause is sacred, it is well worth a great sacrifice even the extreme one. They may imprison our bodies, but thank God our spirits are beyond their grasp. So our fellow countrymen, outside prison walls, may rest assured that although our bodies are here, our spirits are with them on their fight for Freedom which is, according to the laws of God, of human nature, and of Nations, our first right, and please God we will soon enjoy.[26]

Finally, Francis Phillips's letter to his sister Becky further illustrates how resistance and pride in national service introduced circumstances which fostered camaraderie:

> I don't want you to think Becky I am sorry for coming to jail or that I regret losing my job. NO! Because I know thoroughly well, I have impressed upon the people's minds more indelibly now than ever before. I did enough in the National Movement to deserve arrest and honourably made a sacrifice for those principles I hold and we all hold dear. I am ready to do the same any time and in years to come please Lord I shall be proud of those principles and the little sacrifice we made. ...

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[25] O'Higgins wrote in praise of his father, who had participated in a public demonstration against conscription. Kevin O'Higgins to his mother, 21 Aug. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/5359). For further information on O'Higgins' arrest and imprisonment in 1918 see his prisoner record sheet, G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/6215.

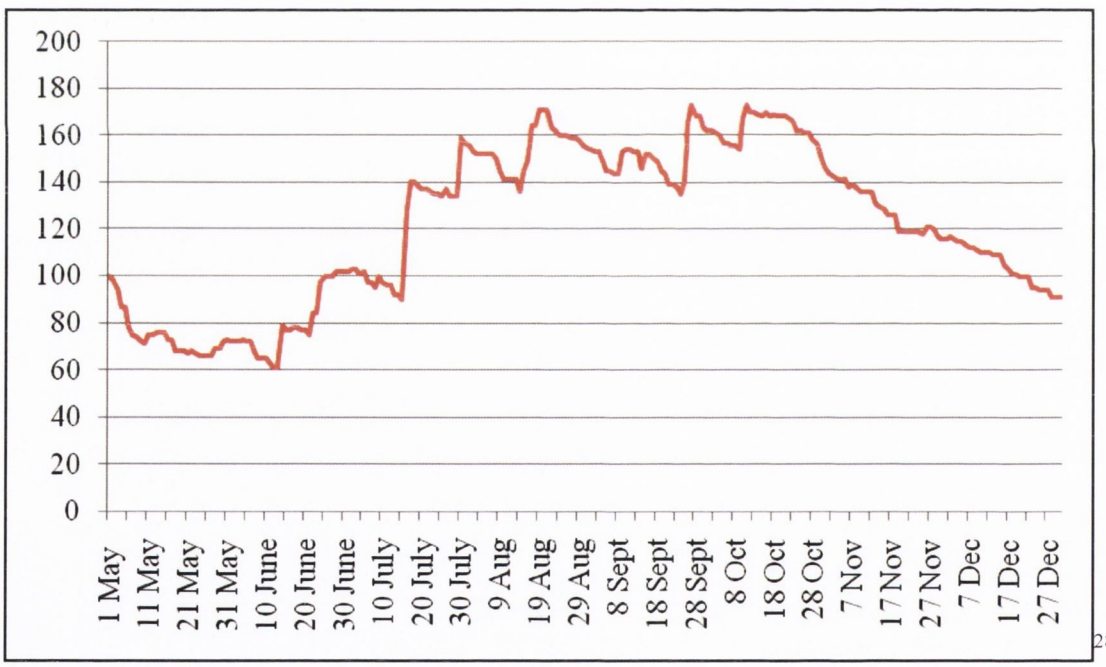
[26] James Duffy to John Coffey, c. 18 Oct. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/6508).

> We are through the iron bars watching everything, at night we gather into cells and smoke and talk sing and recite as we please until 11pm. ... We are a body to be reckoned with. Certain cells are known where fellows congregate. Mulcahy Lyon's cell is called Mulcahy's Public House. It is a great resort for the boys at night[.][27]

While congregation, singing patriotic songs and writing in defence of republican ideals provided an outlet for national sentiment and helped maintain spirits, loyalty toward fellow-inmates and ideals of Irish independence was also displayed through violent and defiant acts. And the most enduring and violent outbreaks prior to 1919 occurred at Belfast jail.

As detailed in chart 5.1 below, the population of political prisoners at Belfast increased sharply in mid-July 1918, and continued to rise until October after which periodic releases and deportations helped vent some of the pressure.

Chart 5.1: Political prisoners in Belfast jail, 1 May-31 December 1918



[28]

This influx was the result of arrests connected with the conscription crisis, carried out by the powers of detention outlined in the Defence of the Realm Act, which remained in place

[27] Francis Phillips to Becky, 22 Nov. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/7404). This notion of national service was apparent across the age spectrum. See Francis Phillips' prisoner record sheet [he was 46], G.P.B. 1918/7942).

[28] 'Return of the number of political prisoners in custody at lock-up on each day of the period of 12 months ended on 30 April 1919', submitted by Belfast Governor W. Barrows., 26 May 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3991).

while the Great War continued.[29] Men were also shifted from other prisons in an effort to consolidate the political population.[30] 'They are shifting the prisoners from every Prison in Ireland on to Belfast', observed James Talty, 'I believe it will be the only Political Prison in Ireland. That is some crowd.'[31] M. Cotton, a transfer from Waterford, noticed several differences in Belfast prison discipline, such as liberal smoking privileges and greater freedom of movement. '[W]e can nearly say that we have command of the place ourselves there is about 200 of us here at present and they are coming in every day'.[32]

A relaxed prison atmosphere, coupled with an unmanageable and suggestive political population, contributed to two violent outbreaks in 1918. The first occurred in late June, following a perceived reduction in the quality of food and efforts by the prison staff to affix windows to cells so as not to allow prisoners to shout to passersby on the adjacent Crumlin Road.[33] This was interpreted as a violation of privileges secured by the political class at Belfast.[34] Prisoners at exercise marched to their cells, removed the windows and smashed them in the prison yard in retaliation. Later that night prisoners were removed to basement cells as a result of their actions.[35] This again violated an informal agreement reached between prison leaders and the governor, as basement cells in A3 wing were greatly inferior to those on the upper-level. Men smashed the windows of their cells in protest, broke the spy hole of their cell doors to obtain a better view of removals, and destroyed dividing walls between cells and barricaded cells using whatever material and furniture was available. 'The men upstairs realising that war had broken out, were wrecking their cells', recounted O'Higgins. 'Altogether the din was considerable. ...

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[29] For individual evidence of transfers see 'Belfast prison: ill-treatment of republican prisoners, 1918', various statements (NAI, DE 2/519).

[30] For instance, ten men from Cork, one from Galway, four from Limerick and eight from Mountjoy were transferred on 9 September; seven men from Cork and ten men from Mountjoy due for transfer on 8 October; five men from Galway, one from Limerick, one from Cork, one from Sligo and one from Mountjoy were scheduled for transfer to Belfast on 14 October. The reason being was that they were of political class granted ameliorations and were soon due for release. 'Lists of prisoners awaiting removal to Belfast prison', 20 Sept.; 8 Oct.; 15 Oct. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/8339).

[31] James Talty to John Joe, c. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/4611).

[32] M. Cotton to Sally Whelan, 21 July 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/4687).

[33] Ernest Blythe reported that 'bad blood arose between the men who had been in Belfast before we arrived and the incoming Dundalk group', including Michael Brennan, commandant of the Dundalk prisoners. Ernest Blythe (B.M.H., W.S. 939). Debate over prison diet and accepting outside parcels was the cause of tension. Austin Stack felt it the Government's responsibility to feed its prisoners, while others were willing to live off the food parcels sent in from friends. A vote among prisoners produced a majority in favour of receiving parcels, though this was skewed by confusing orders from G.H.Q.. See correspondence between Michael Brennan and Austin Stack, 10; 11 Aug. 1918 (NAI, DE 2/519). For additional view of Belfast in mid-1918, see Michael Leahy (MA, B.M.H., W.S. 1421).

[34] Following the death of Thomas Ashe a base of ameliorative treatment was established for politically-classed prisoners. It was referred to as Rule of 29th September 1917. See appendix.

[35] Although over a dozen witnesses gave testimony to the events of 27 June 1918, the general outlining narrative has been adapted from the statement of Austin Stack. 'Belfast prison: ill-treatment of republican prisoners, 1918', statement of Austin Stack, n.d. (NAI, DE 2/519).

Actuated by rage and disgust at the treatment I had received, I was determined to do as much damage as possible.'[36]

Warders were supplemented by upwards of fifty policemen, who forcibly handcuffed and removed men to the basement cells. Several prisoners received blows to the head, had their neckties twisted around their necks,[37] or were dragged down the stairs.[38] Once removed, the prisoners remained handcuffed and in discomfort. Calls for the lavatory were ignored by warders. John McKenna only managed to relieve himself after a prolonged struggle with buttons and undergarments: 'I managed eventually however to tear down my pants, and then utilized a corner of my cell as a W.C. for the remainder of the night; and the cell, as a result, was in a pretty condition in the morning – quite a considerable lake being in one part of the floor.'[39] Urinating in one's cell was not uncommon, both for personal relief and as a sign of protest. Although this chapter focuses on Irish prisons during the Anglo-Irish War, it is important to note that this method was not exclusive to Ireland or the 1919-21 period. The memoir of H. Steele, an 'absolutist' conscientious objector during the Great War, describes the state of his cell at Wormwood Scrubs as he found it following the removal of Irish political prisoners in 1916:

> The block of cells into which I was put had immediately previously been occupied by Irish rounded up following the 1916 Rebellion (I was to understand). Some of these rebels had been uncooperative to the point of refusing to come out of their cells – for any purpose whatever. The bare floor of one corner of the cell I occupied had been used, obviously for some good time – as a lavatory, and the powers that be had failed completely to cause my Irish predecessor to do any cleaning-up before his departure. The result was indescribable.[40]

Handcuffs were later removed from the Belfast prisoners without any promises being given by the prisoners. They were re-applied for Mass, meals and general detention without exercise continued until 6 July.[41] This outbreak demonstrated the type of violent reaction which followed perceived infringement of what prisoners considered their rights

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[36] 'Belfast prison: ill-treatment of republican prisoners, 1918', statement of Kevin C. Higgins, 30 July 1918 (NAI, DE 2/519).
[37] Ibid., statement of John Gascoygne, n.d. (Ibid.).
[38] Ibid., statement of Patrick McCarthy regarding events of 27 June 1918, n.d. (Ibid.).
[39] 'Belfast prison: ill-treatment of republican prisoners, 1918', statement of John McKenna [Chairman, Kerry County Council] (NAI, DE 2/519).
[40] Memoir of H. Steele (I.W.M., 01/28/1).
[41] Austin Stack statement.

as members of the political class, and highlights the response of prisoners toward their comrades in peril.

The second outbreak of violence in Belfast prison was much more severe and, it could be argued, was months in the making. It illustrates both the General Prisons Board's inability to effectively govern these prisoners, and again exemplifies the loyalty of prisoners toward one another. Earlier disputes over prison diet in Belfast, and whether or not to accept outside parcels of food, resulted in fifty-five prisoners losing an average of fourteen pounds over a four to six week period.[42] Coupled with the threat of Spanish flu from July through December, prison officials ordered a relaxation of normal rules and discipline in order to aid recovery and prevent further infection. Cells were unlocked day and night, providing freedom of movement and association, and a special diet was provided.[43] Wings of the prison were transformed into virtual sick wards; open cells ensured proper ventilation and healthy prisoners cared and cooked for those unable to be removed to the Mater hospital.[44] Ernest Blythe recalled how, 'out of the two hundred men in the prison barely thirty were on their feet.'[45] The flu did not, however, prove fatal in any of the cases.

This unprecedented freedom of movement allowed for further prisoner organisation. In addition, the 1918 general election further justified the Irish prisoners' petition for political status and, for some, justified violence. For instance, J. McCree, imprisoned at Belfast in late 1918, estimated that victory in the election would result in political recognition and release. 'If they try to keep us any longer we will make it hot for them', he wrote to his parents.[46] Another Belfast prisoner, Timothy Brestone, also saw the election as pivotal: 'I think we are near the end of our holiday, and I dare say the beginning of our war'.[47] Eleven Sinn Féin candidates were returned unopposed prior to polling day and an additional sixty-two seats were won in the election. Of Sinn Féin's seventy-three seats secured, over half had been won by men in jail, deported or 'on the run'.[48]

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[42] Actual average loss was 14.78 lbs, see 'Decreases in weight', Padraig Ó Cirgeareaig, July 31-c. Sept. 1918 (NAI, DE 2/519).
[43] 'Existing conditions at Belfast prison', 31 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/46).
[44] J.W. Reid to unknown, 1 Nov. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/6972. For files circulated during the outbreak of influenza in Belfast jail see 'Outbreak of influenza October 1918, notation of papers received' (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/8338).
[45] Ernest Blythe (MA, B.M.H., W.S. 939).
[46] J. McCree to his mother and father, c. 28 Nov. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/7435).
[47] Timothy Brestone to Michael O'Donnell, 9 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7).
[48] *Irish Independent*, 30 Dec. 1918. Thirty-two Sinn Féin M.P.s in jail, one deported and ten on the run. For election results see *Weekly Irish Times*, 4 Jan. 1919.

Prisoners at Belfast, however, did not wait for the results of the 'coupon election' to assert themselves; this suggests that prisons operated independently of central organisation. Their second campaign of violence in 1918 began on the evening of 23 December, when prisoners barricaded the ends of three wards with bed planks and tables which had been removed from cells and doors and grating that had been wrenched from the walls. The prisoners had taken up defensive positions on the first and second floors for two purposes: first, to prevent the reinstatement of normal prison discipline as it had existed prior to the influenza outbreak,[49] and second, to protect their comrade John Doran who had been 'rescued' from the company of 'ordinary criminals' in the adjacent wing.[50] Doran retired to a crawl space between the roofing beams and slates in the upper echelons of B wing and was provided with food and blankets.[51] His comrades then took defensive positions to repel an expected attack for his recovery. 'They will not attack themselves', concluded Belfast jail governor, William Barrows, 'but will be glad if the authorities would take the initiative, and I am satisfied they are prepared to go to extremes.'[52]

At this stage damage to the prison was not considerable and could, according to Barrows, 'be put right in few hours by Trade Warders.'[53] The situation escalated, however, following an informal Christmas truce when between thirty and forty prisoners climbed atop the roof of the laundry building, stripped roofing slates and displayed a menacing attitude,[54] 'shouting, singing, speechmaking and waving a Sinn Féin flag.'[55] Austin Stack recalled how, just prior to the outbreak, a chaplain administered general absolution to the prisoners. 'Now, boys', Stack announced, 'we're ready'.[56] Stack was the acknowledged and admired leader of the prisoners, the central figure around whom the men rallied. In a suppressed letter, John Hassett observed, 'Stack is a very strong man and every one of us were fully prepared to die if necessary sooner than disobey his orders.'[57]

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[49] Max Green to Under-Secretary (J. MacMahon), 30 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1919/138).
[50] Barrows to Green, 24 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/8192); statement of H.J. Chippendall, 9 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/268). The Doran episode was essentially fought on the grounds that prisoner rights established after the deaths of Thomas Ashe and Richard Coleman in 1917 would be honoured. For additional insight, see N.L.I., MS 5,816.
[51] Ernest Blythe (B.M.H., W.S. 939). It so important to note that barricades were constructed from cell furniture, but also from doors and landings. Blythe recalled how Father McGreehan, the subsequent Bishop of Down and Connor, had delivered tools such as hacksaws to the Belfast prisoners prior to the general election for the construction of escape ladders. The escape did not come off as planned due to interference from Volunteer headquarters.
[52] Barrows to Green, 24 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/8192).
[53] Ibid.
[54] Extract from the Visiting Justices minute book of 29 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/8251).
[55] Telephone message, Barrows to Chairman, 27 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/8227).
[56] Mrs. Austin Stack quoting her husband's account (B.M.H., W.S. 418).
[57] John Hassett to unknown, 3 Jan. 1919 (NAI, DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1919/163).

The prisoners of B wing were opposed by a crowd which had gathered on the Crumlin Road, 'so dense as to impede the progress of Tramway cars', who waved Union Jacks.[58] One prisoner, Thomas Ketterich, later claimed that those on the roof were fired upon by civilians.[59] A week later, between twenty and forty nationalists, after having visited some of the DORA prisoners, stood outside the prison singing 'Wrap the green flag round me'. One passerby retaliated, 'Go on, you bloody Sinn Féin bastards'.[60]

In an effort to contain the prisoners, warders erected their own barricade, called soldiers for backup and cut the gas and water supply to B wing.[61] While it was later noted by officials that Governor Barrows had 'acted with studied moderation',[62] Horatio J. Chippendall, who had experience in Belfast prison, arrived on 31 December to take charge of the situation. Chippendall's notes of inspection detail the position and intentions of the prisoners as he found them:

> I saw at a glance that the blocking of passages, stripping of stairways and corridors of hand and protective rails had been very effectively carried out, that sections of corridor flooring had been knocked out, all these rendered approach to the prisoners impossible without serious injury and almost certain loss of life to what I will call the attacking party, as it had been ascertained that the barricaded prisoners had provided stores of missiles such as aerated water bottles, broken iron bars, bell handles, in fact anything from the wreckage that would in their opinion been useful in resisting attack.[63]

Chippendall feared the situation in Belfast might influence further disruption in other prisons throughout the country. The Lord Mayor of Dublin, Lawrence O'Neill, stated that should violence spread to the city the results would be 'too appalling to contemplate.'[64]

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[58] Telephone message, Barrows to Chairman, 27 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/8227). Prisoner John Hassett observed that 'The Orange crowd of Belfast are thoroughly sick of us. They even went so far as to beat one of our fellows on the streets yesterday after he was released.' John Hassett to unknown, 3 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20 box 7, G.P.B. 1919/163).
[59] Thomas Ketterich (MA, B.M.H., W.S. 872).
[60] 'Statement of occurrences in the prison recently', H.J. Chippendall, 4 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/164).
[61] Extract from the Visiting Justices minute book of 29 Dec. 1918, Robert Kennedy, Godfrey Ferguson, Charles Dunbar Buller (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/8251); Max Green to Under-Secretary, 30 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. DORA 1917-20, box 8, G.P.B. 1919/138).
[62] Extract from the Visiting Justices minute book of 29 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/8251).
[63] Statement of H.J. Chippendall, 9 Jan. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/268).
[64] Chippendall to Edward Shortt, 1 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/48).

The Lord Mayor pushed for conciliation as complaints of food, refusal to work and demands for political status had erupted at Mountjoy on 30 December.[65]

In an effort to prevent bloodshed (estimated at the cost of twenty lives should the prisoners have to be physically dislodged), the Chief Secretary, Edward Shortt, in place of the absent Lord Lieutenant, Sir John French, acted on the recommendation of O'Neill, Charles Frederick D'Arcy, the Bishop of Dromore and Conor, and Chippendall to allow the Belfast prisoners the status and privileges they had enjoyed prior to the influenza outbreak.[66] Doran was returned to the prison authorities, and shortly thereafter granted political concessions, which were sanctioned by French 'as a purely exceptional measure'.[67] Initial surveys of minor damage to the prison were exceeded by a Clerk of Works estimate which stated that £3,000 would be required to repair the damage done to Belfast jail over Christmas.[68]

The prisoners had won continued ameliorations and political status for Doran by presenting a situation that would be as dear politically as it would physically. Shortt and French acted with the knowledge that negative publicity created by such an event would further weaken the facade of order and control, and perhaps inspire similar outbreaks. But while capitulating to the prisoners may have saved negative press, it only served to encourage further demands and inspire similar resistance. For instance, when requests for political treatment were ignored, at DORA prisoners at Mountjoy Timothy Lynch, Robert Slane, John Rogers, Patrick Magee and Thomas O'Rourke commenced wrecking their cells, barricading their doors, ripping their sheets and smashing their windows. 'The reasons given by some', reported General Prisons Board Chairman Max Green in January 1919, 'were that their comrades in the Republican Army were not getting political treatment, and that others were kept so long awaiting trial.'[69]

In early 1919 it became clear, from an administrative point of view, that ambiguity of prison rules, their regional enforcement, and an overall reluctance to discipline Irish political prisoners following the death of Thomas Ashe had weakened the Irish prison

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[65] Ibid.; Charles Munro to Chairman, G.P.B., 30 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/104); see also personal letters from Mountjoy prisoners requesting political status (N.A.I., G.P.B., 1919/104). The G.P.B. register records that newspapers relating to the Belfast outbreak were withheld from DORA prisoners at Mountjoy. N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/23.

[66] Statement of H.J. Chippendall, 9 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/268).

[67] J. MacMahon (Under-Secretary) to Lord Lieutenant (Sir John French), 13 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/382).

[68] Minute, J. MacMahon to French, 31 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919382); 'Outbreak of DORA prisoners', n.d. (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/115).

[69] Max Green to J. MacMahon, 16 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/489); N.A.I., G.P.B. correspondence register 1919/74; 98-104; 198-9. See also, G.P.B. 1919/104. 2 Jan. 1919. Timothy Lynch identified as a ringleader and backed up by Robert Slane. If Lynch were transferred the trouble would stop.

system. In fact, Chippendall and Green identified three problems menacing the General Prisons Board: the militant attitudes of political prisoners, the ineffectiveness of punishment and the inability of civil prisons to absorb and administer what were essentially military (if not military-minded) prisoners. Chippendall noted that political prisoners were organised and no longer simply accepted their internment. Those convicted under DORA were, with few exceptions, 'filled with a dangerous, sullen antagonistic disposition towards Crown Officials which may at any time be fired into open conflict without any provocation. ... [W]hat in June last [1918] appeared to be pronounced dislike has now developed into hatred which spreads to fresh committals.'[70] Green concurred: 'They claim to be soldiers of the Irish Republic taken prisoners of war and that they are illegally and unlawfully retained in a Civil Prison ... They look on this as a question of principle and are determined to fight for it.'[71] Indeed, traditional discipline and punishment, such as the loss of exercise, smoking privileges or other ameliorations, had proven futile throughout 1918, and only initiated confrontation – a scenario welcomed by the political class. 'Death fighting for Ireland's freedom as they put it, they court', concluded Chippendall; 'to die a martyr being apparently their ambition.'[72]

Methods of violence and structure of prison loyalty

Episodes of violence and destruction at Belfast throughout 1918, as well as Government reflection and reaction, provide a paradigm for the struggle for prison control throughout the Anglo-Irish War. Prisoners identified their captors as oppressors, and an extension of British dominance in Ireland. Their attitudes were primed by a common nationalist outlook, matured under the confinement and compulsion of prison life, and hardened in the belief that their crimes were patriotic and warranted special recognition. These outlooks

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[70] Chippendall to Green, 2, 4 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/133; 164).

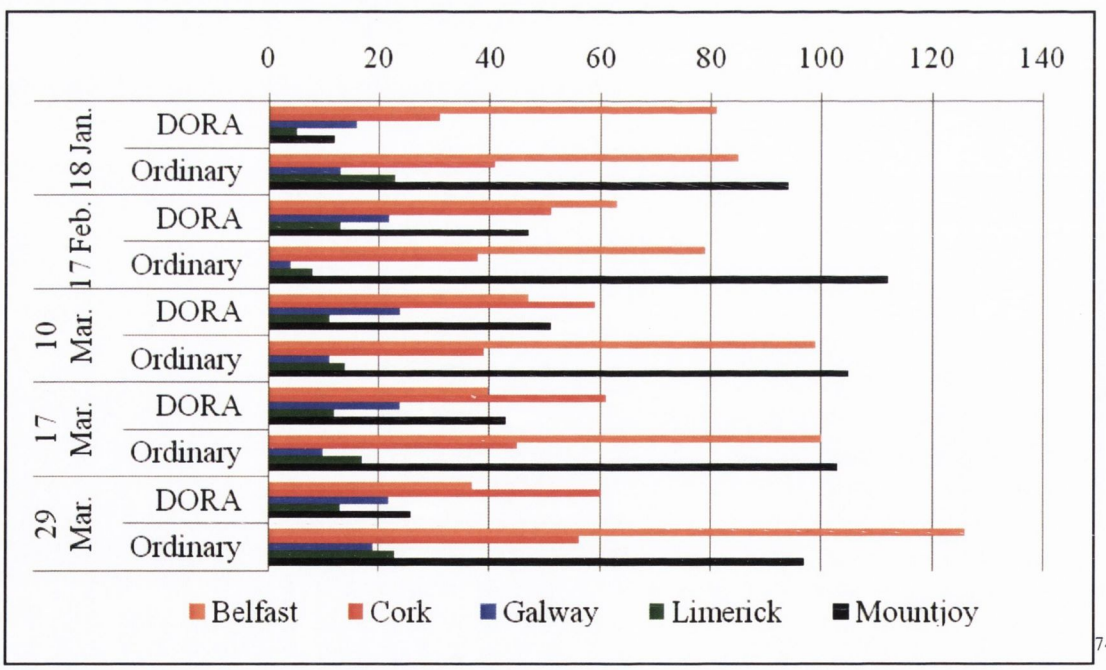
[71] Green to Under-Secretary, c. Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/115). Self-representation as soldiers of the Irish Republic would prove an enduring bond throughout the revolution. See Shewell to Green, 2 June 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/4618).

[72] Ibid. Perhaps the greatest difficulty facing the G.P.B., however, was the attempt to employ internment-style discipline within a civil prison, a feat Green confessed was impossible. Having exchanged views with Chippendall, Green informed the Under-Secretary that, failing to export prisoners to an internment camp, power to immediately withdraw ameliorations be granted to prison governors. 'Such a course', he concluded, 'will, no doubt, be strongly resented by the prisoners'. Green to MacMahon 18 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B./n.n. c. 8,000s); Green to MacMahon, c. Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/115). Green to MacMahon, 15 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/382); A resolution was subsequently passed on 1 Jan. 1919 which stated 'That the DORA Prisoners be removed from the Prison to some place in the nature of an internment camp, where the regulations provided for dealing with them can be carried out', and added 'That the maintenance of these regulations in a prison is entirely subversive to the proper maintenance of Prison discipline, and is likely to provoke serious disturbances in the City'. See 'Report for the year 1919, of the Committee of Visiting Justices of H.M. Belfast Prison', W.E. Montgomery, 7 Jan. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/296).

may have prompted camaraderie, but violence exercised in their defence produced a unique interdependence and loyalty. This section will examine prisoners' methods for organising violence, and determine whether loyalty toward fellow-prisoners was genuine or simply extracted through group pressure.

Disorder and violence reached an unprecedented ferocity and frequency throughout 1919. The success of Sinn Féin at the 1918 general election no doubt played a part in prisoners' defiance. On a more intimate level, 1918 had been a war of attrition between prisoners and prison staff, with the former establishing their dominance through persistence. In February 1919 Green reported that, 'Owing to the organised insubordinate action of this special class', and the perceived inability of warders to prevent and put down outbreaks, only a fraction of cells could be designated for political prisoners. In fact, it was estimated that only 153 political prisoners could be housed in prisons throughout Ireland despite the availability of 1,811 cells. And this could only be achieved, it was stated, if prisoners were in receipt of full ameliorations or, as the Governors of Dundalk and Mountjoy commented, the prisoners were not mutinous.[73] This of course was not the case. As illustrated below, by late March 1919 the political population in Irish prisons had exceeded what was determined to be manageable levels.

Chart 5.2: Number of prisoners in custody, January-March 1919



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[73] 'Accommodation for prisoners', Max Green to J. MacMahon, 26 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1402).
[74] Return of DORA and ordinary male prisoners in principle Irish jails on successive dates, 29 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/within file packet 6303). These statistics disregard the contributions of Londonderry, Maryboro, Sligo, and Waterford for the period in question.

Prisoners challenged their captivity through coordinated outbreaks and general disruption. The basis for such disorder was rooted in prisoners' ability to communicate with each other, and a growing sense of solidarity which bloomed from the resulting chaos. Ameliorated prisoners, those granted special concessions, passed instructions to one another and synchronised outbreaks. Those untried or not receiving ameliorations, often housed in separate wings of the prison, were informed of impending outbreaks by secret communiqué, or from ameliorated prisoners who simply violated the boundaries of the exercise yard.

The association of political prisoners proved an enduring concern for prison staff throughout the period. In mid-January 1919 the G.P.B. queried its governors as to the number of extra warders and police required to maintain order amongst the political class during exercise. Cork governor, J. King, requested an additional twelve warders to help oversee Sinn Féin prisoners at exercise, the officers he commanded being 'comparatively old men ... who would not be able to cope with prisoners of the DORA type of man.'[75] These, and additional police, were despatched to Cork in time to contain an outbreak five days later, when eighteen prisoners at exercise destroyed a lavatory and water closet.[76] Charles Munro, governor of Mountjoy, explained that the number of extra warders required depended on the number of DORA prisoners in custody and their conduct. He estimated that Mountjoy would require one additional warder for every ten political prisoners displaying good behaviour and conforming to prison rules. However, for those 'acting in open defiance' (as they had been continuously since 8 January), Munro required one warder for every two prisoners.[77]

Mountjoy faced further difficulties resulting from prisoner association throughout March 1919. On 14 March J.J. Walsh, Piaras Béaslaí and Robert Barton, all untried, all members of Dail Éireann and all housed in hospital cells, requested to have tea with their fellow T.D., prisoner William Sears. Barton reasoned that the men should be allowed to associate in a cell, just as they were allowed to associate in the yard. Munro allowed the men one half-hour of tea in Walsh's cell, explaining to the prison board that his refusal may have resulted in an uproar as Mountjoy contained an assortment of political prisoners

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[75] King to Green, 17 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/488). Thom's Directory does not list the first name of King.

[76] King to Green, 22 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/599). Coincidentally, the subject of free unrestricted association between political prisoners had been the subject of a government minute, which had grown from the concerns expressed by Chippendall following the outbreak in Belfast. See Government Minute of 17 Jan. 1919, enclosed in Green to MacMahon, 21 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/517); W. O'Connor to Green, 31 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1037).

[77] C.A. Munro to Green, 20 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/544).

of various classes (tried, untried or awaiting court martial), 'some of which are in sympathy with, and trying to get in touch with one another.'[78] Two days later Barton escaped. He had filed through the bars of his cell window, leaving a rug rolled within his bed to resemble his body. As he was Protestant, Barton was not roused for morning Mass, and was only discovered missing when Munro conducted morning rounds.

An inquiry into Barton's escape revealed both the naivety of warders charged with his guard – who had permitted Barton twenty-two private visits between his committal and his escape – and the contribution free association and communication with comrades had made to the escape.[79] Guards and night watchmen were exonerated from collusion, as it was determined that rather than being allowed through the front gate, Barton scaled the prison wall with the help of a ladder provided by an outside party. Barton later recalled the simplicity of his escape, and how he had acquired the tools for such a task:

> Dick Mulcahy pushed the tools towards me [during a visit] and I hid them in my riding breeches. I was not in prison garb. With the saw, I cut out the bar, the ladder came over the wall, I scaled it and dropped into a blanket. My rescuers were led by Rory O'Connor. Mick Collins was in a street nearby waiting to congratulate me.[80]

In a letter to Munro, left in his cell for the governor to discover, Barton praised the warders of Mountjoy thus removing them from suspicion of their complicity:

> Do not blame your warders. I have used great discretion in the use of my saw and unless they had their eyes at the spy hole of my door they could not have detected my intentions. They are damnably loyal to their duty and at the same time I must pay a tribute to the kind manner in which they have invariably treated me within your regulations. I hope that we may shortly turn your prison to a useful national purpose.[81]

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[78] Munro to Green, 14 Mar.; 15 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2173; 2174; 2211).
[79] For instance, Barton was granted a cell in the hospital as the Medical Officer found him to have some heart trouble. Barton then requested a cell on the ground floor so as to avoid contact with influenza patients on the top floor cell, to which he was originally assigned. The Under-Secretary identified this request pre-meditated in an effort to escape. Report on inquiry into escape of Robert Barton, J. MacMahon, 31 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/4677 [packet containing files G.P.B. 1919/2573]).
[80] Robert Barton (MA, B.M.H., W.S. 979).
[81] Barton to Munro, 16/17 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2573).

The following week DORA prisoners became loud and disruptive, singing and rattling their cells over several days. Many, including Walsh and Béaslaí, demanded to be let out for exercise, and to have exercise extended.[82] As governors had been advised to allow political prisoners to exercise in shifts, four different parties of prisoners were in the yard on the afternoon of 29 March. At around 3 p.m. a whistle from outside the prison signalled prisoners to attack their guards and escape over a rope ladder which had been thrown over the wall. Simultaneously, prisoners still in their cells commenced shouting and beating their cell doors in an effort to distract warders. One man, who was in the lavatory as the signal was given, burst out and rushed along the corridor of B wing shouting 'Up the Republic'! Whether the recently escaped Barton supplied information and schematics on Mountjoy prison in anticipation of this breakout is unclear. The fact remains that liaison between prisoners, and with their compatriots on the outside, allowed for the escape of twenty men from Mountjoy in roughly seven minutes.[83] Béaslaí and Walsh joined Barton on the outside, now able to take tea at their leisure without permission or restriction.

Demands for increased association continued well into 1921, and were often accompanied with threats of violence or a refusal to obey prison rules if denied.[84] Escape, however, was not always the avowed aim of political prisoners. The disruption of the prison system in Ireland, viewed as an extension of the enemy garrison, was the ever-present objective. Engaging the enemy within Irish prisons often required violence on an intimate level. It also incurred restraint and containment of a unique type. Handcuffs, solitary confinement, reduction in food and restriction of exercise – tools used to quell disruption – also produced camaraderie through communal suffering. Circumstances of this unique type of war established an exclusive solidarity amongst prisoners – a loyalty toward the perceived Irish republic and those who fought for its realisation.

Numerous episodes between 1919 and 1921 exemplify the cohesion, cooperation and camaraderie of political prisoners in agitating for political status and ameliorative

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[82] See requests of Benjamin Hickey, John Sharry, John Mahon and Mayer, Munro to Green, 24 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2420); and of J.J. Walsh and Piaras Béaslaí, 25 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2459; 2501).

[83] Munro to Green, 29, 30, 31 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2604 [within file G.P.B. 1919/6303]). Those who escaped on 29 March were Patrick Fleming, Patrick Cullen [McCullen], Thomas Malone, William Tannen, William Finnucan, Dermot O'Shea, John Robbins, Martin Fleming, Patrick Farrelly, John Irvine, Edward Lehane, John Forde, Stephen O'Connor, Henry Morgan, Patrick Magee, Benjamin Hickey, John Sharry, John Mahon, J.J. Walsh and Piaras Béaslaí.

[84] 21 Apr. 1919/3224; 29 Apr. 1919/3375; 22 Oct. 1919/7664; 23 Oct. 1919/7689. For similar coordination in an escape attempt from Belfast prison on 3 June 1921, see R.R. Hegarty, 1st D.I. for Commissioner to RIC IG, 3 June 1921; Gov. Belfast to Green, 4 June 1921; C.A. Walsh, A.I.G. to U.S., 4 June 1921; Shewell to Chairman, 6, 10 June 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/4618); *Belfast Telegraph*, 4 June 1921.

treatment and threatening and carrying out violence against their captors. In fact, only rarely did prisoners act alone.[85] While loyalty was expressed in many ways during the period, disorder and destruction was the preferred method. Such actions were an effort to secure political treatment for one's comrades, as the variety of political crime of the period did not uniformly result in ameliorative treatment and political status. Several examples throughout 1919 serve to illustrate both the camaraderie between political prisoners, and the lengths to which they would go in order to secure what they perceived to be the rights of prisoners of war in Ireland. In this the geography of the prison played a vital role.

Prolonged disturbances at Cork, Galway, Limerick and Mountjoy began nearly simultaneously in January 1919, terminating at various dates throughout the year. Whether these outbreaks were coordinated by the Volunteer executive has yet to be confirmed. A secret directive from Volunteer General Headquarters, however, sanctioned the destruction after it had begun – a further testament to both the decentralised organisation of prison leadership, and the overall policy of disruption that had been adopted by prisoners since 1917. Maryborough (Portlaois) prison's copy of the order, which was discovered within a loaf of bread left at the gates by a Miss Walsh,[86] read:

> Every Irish Volunteer at present in jail as the result of any activity connected with the movement is instructed to immediately demand and strike for treatment as a political prisoner. The strike should take the form of refusal to work, to wear the prison garb, to obey any prison regulation whatever, generally subvert prison discipline. It is to be noted that a hunger strike is debarred.[87]

That prisoners at Maryborough failed to orchestrate any significant disturbance until September 1919 was due more to the low population of non-ameliorated political prisoners than to not receiving the G.H.Q. directive.[88]

As suggested above, other prisons throughout Ireland were more proactive. A minor outbreak in Cork[89] on 1 January involving four court martial prisoners, John Sharry,

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[85] The most prominent and re-occurring example being that of Charles Hurly, who for over two weeks in February 1919 sat nude in his cell at Maryboro as a protest for political treatment. See G.P.B. 1919/211; 539; 1866; 1025; 1052; 1115; 1155; 1183; 1237-8; 1268; 1293; 1323; 1382; 1413.

[86] L.J. Blake to Chairman, 29 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/826).

[87] 'Oglach na h-Eireann, special general orders, G.H.Q., Dublin', 13 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2026).

[88] Records indicate that in fact only four men, Charles Hurley, Edward Corbett, John Gallagher and John Doyle – all court martial prisoners sentenced to five years penal servitude – were housed at Maryborough in 1919. G.P.B. 1919/682).

[89] Except where noted, the narrative of events at Cork between 1 January and 30 September 1919 has been constructed from General Prison Board correspondence entries, official memos and reports. In an effort to

Humphrey O'Sullivan, Thomas Reidy and Edward Moynihan, who had been convicted under section 9AA of the Defence of the Realm Regulations and denied ameliorations, invoked the sympathy and support of their comrades.[90] On 22 January, eighteen DORA prisoners of the political class destroyed their cells and caused a general uproar after being removed from the exercise yard. The men explained to the Cork governor that their behaviour was 'a protest against certain of their number whom they allege should not be treated as criminals'.[91] The next day the outbreak had grown to include thirty-four prisoners of both political and non-political class. As punishment for their support, ameliorations were suspended in all cases where they had been applied, attendance at Mass was denied in lieu of a written undertaking to behave, and men were confined to their cells. Despite corrective measures the outbreak continued to grow, and by 17 February forty-one prisoners had joined. Similar to the heated political atmosphere surrounding Belfast jail, demonstrators gathered outside Cork prison after word of the disturbance was leaked by the *Cork Examiner*. Warders entering and leaving the prison required police protection from the incensed crowd, who had been provided with continuous coverage of the situation by the *Irish Independent* since early February.[92]

By 20 February, Cork's Medical Officer, Dr. D.J. Flynn, observed that, though now permitted to attend Mass, prolonged inactivity, restraint, thrashing, shouting and a refusal to bathe had deteriorated the men's bodies similar to the effects of hunger strike.[93] Several men were subsequently removed to the prison hospital suffering from anacrina and cardiac debility. Though offered exercise, those on strike refused to take it, and considered that cooperation in any form would 'be looked upon by the authorities as a surrender of their

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prevent excessive disruption of the text, the following principle files and their corresponding dates were used throughout this case study: 1 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/35); 2-3 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/64; 109); 13 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/380); 23 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/630; 642); 25 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/707; 724); 27 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/731); 3 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/943; 949); 8 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1147); 13 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1285); 14 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1327); 17 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1411); 18 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1438; 1464); 19 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1478); 24 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1623); 26 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1677); 28 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1747); 19 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2321; 2335); 7 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2819); 17 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/3133); 14 May (G.P.B. 1919/3779; 3870); 16 May (G.P.B. 1919/3840); 26 May (G.P.B. 1919/4091); 27 May (G.P.B. 1919/4107); 25 Sept. (G.P.B. 1919/6825); 26 Sept. (G.P.B. 1919/6839); 29 Sept. (G.P.B. 1919/6889); 30 Sept. (G.P.B. 1919/6924).

[90] DORR 9AA was a fairly broad regulation, and was applied liberally throughout the period. It allowed the Competent Military Authority to restrict meetings, banned drilling and the wearing of a military-style uniform, and forbade the keeping of firearms. Colm Campbell, *Emergency law in Ireland, 1918-1925* (Oxford, 1994), p. 15.

[91] King to Green, 3 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1037).

[92] *Irish Independent*, 3, 6, 10, 14 Feb. 1919.

[93] Extract from M.O.'s journal, 17 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1464).

principles'. King was informed that the prisoners wished to 'see it out', and that men were 'prepared to meet death rather than submit.'[94]

The mutinous state of Cork prisoners continued to grow, and on 17 April totalled forty-six men. At this stage the prisoners' commandant, Thomas Sinnott,[95] approached King with a view to resolving the crisis. Sinnott sued for a restoration of ameliorations to those who had previously enjoyed them, and an extension of liberties to the original court martial prisoners in an effort, he explained, 'to prevent any occurrences here, which inflame the public mind ... and to prevent the fatal results to life'.[96] Refusing to adhere to prison discipline before receiving their concessions, prisoners remained unruly. Philip Lennon, another spokesman, stated that ameliorations must be granted *before* order could be restored.[97]

Following this deadlock an additional six ameliorated prisoners joined the revolt on 16 May, forfeiting their privileges for the cause of their comrades and bringing the number of disorderly men to approximately fifty-seven. This state of affairs pervaded Cork jail until September, when, despite instructions from Volunteer headquarters, twenty-six prisoners resorted to hunger strike including prominent I.R.A. officers Gearoid O'Sullivan and Maurice Crowe. An additional twenty prisoners joined the hunger strike shortly thereafter, causing great alarm in government circles. Unable to resolve the issue without resorting to violence or force-feeding, the initial twenty-six hunger strikers – all untried or court martial prisoners – were removed to Mountjoy; the remaining twenty took food shortly thereafter, and discipline returned to Cork on 30 September.[98]

Mountjoy had endured a series of outbreaks prior to the reception of the Cork prisoners in September.[99] Though rooted in similar demands for political treatment and

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[94] J. King to Green, 17 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B./1464).

[95] Thomas Sinnott was a court martial prisoner convicted under section 9AA of the DORA regulations in late 1918. He was sentenced to 6 months hard labour, granted ameliorations, and was due for release on 23 April 1919. 'Return of DORA prisoners in custody who have been sentenced by court martial', c. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/682).

[96] Thomas Sinnott to J. King, 17 Apr. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3133). Sinnott's motivations were called into question by King and the prison board as only six days remained on his sentence on the day he approached the governor. Length of time remaining on a sentence and prisoner behaviour is discussed below.

[97] Philip Lennon to King, 13 May 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3780).

[98] One telling aspect of the Cork episode is that practically all entries in the General Prison Board correspondence register end after 30 September 1919.

[99] Except where noted, the narrative of events at Mountjoy between 7 January and 9 April 1919 has been constructed from General Prison Board correspondence entries, official memos and reports. In an effort to prevent excessive disruption of the text, the following principle files and their corresponding dates were used throughout this case study: 7 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/198; 202); 8 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/199); 9 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/231); 13 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/357); 14 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/392); 15 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/418; 447); 16 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/448); 17 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/487); 18 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/519); 20 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/541); 21 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/579); 22 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/617); 24 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/686; 687); 25 Jan. (G.P.B.

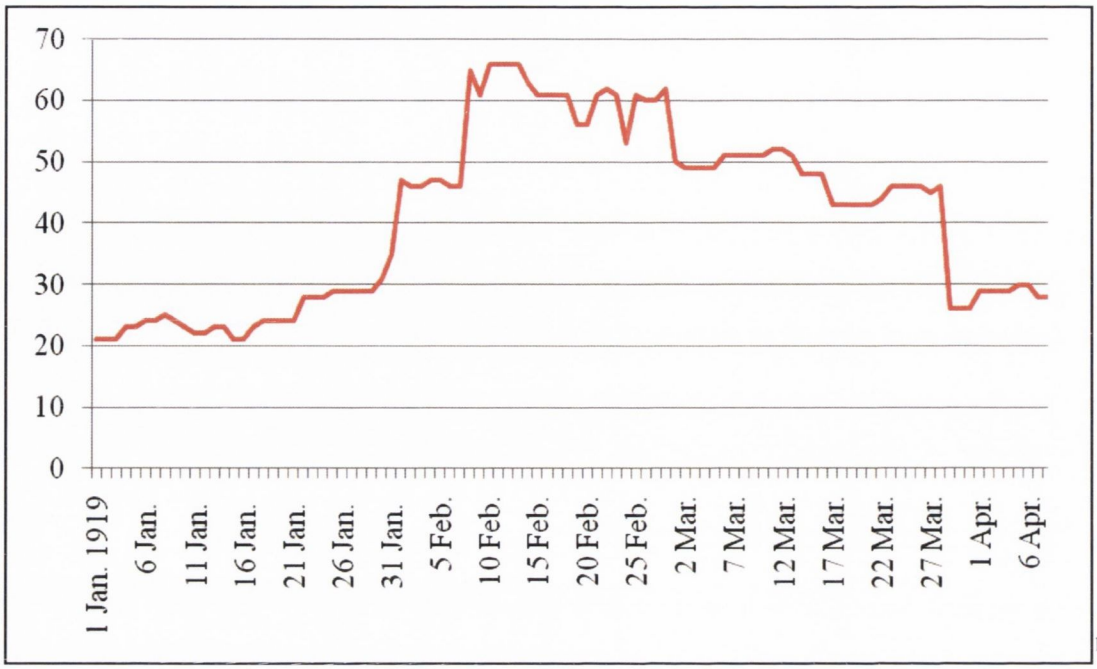
unconditional release, the case of Mountjoy exemplifies a sophisticated and persistent series of disruption, guided by tenacious and influential prison leadership. Agitation and demands similar to the experience at Cork began on 7 January, when Seán Brown, Thomas Ketterich and a man named Magee demanded political treatment. Cells were barricaded and destroyed following a refusal from Mountjoy governor, Charles Munro. Also similar to Cork, prisoners receiving ameliorations[100] demanded political treatment and concessions be extended to all those who claimed them, threatened to make prison discipline impossible, and were removed to their cells by force and stripped of their special treatment. The Chairman of the Visiting Committee, Sir John Irwin, after interviewing the disruptive prisoners on 15 January, reported that each was determined to continue to violently disrupt the prison 'until all the other prisoners convicted under DORA' were afforded the same privileges. This indeed proved the case: new entrants mimicked entrenched veterans, those preparing for release did as much damage as possible, and though ameliorations were granted to prisoners in C division on 9 February, a fresh outbreak of destruction occurred in the wing the following day.

Riotous behaviour at Mountjoy reached its climax throughout February, despite the release of notable agitators Timothy Lynch (14 February), J. Byrne (16 February), Molloy (17 February) and Seán Brown (20 February). This is explained, to some extent, by the influx of prisoners to Mountjoy during this period as illustrated below.

1919/722); 27 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/765); 28 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/797); 29 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/838-9); 31 Jan. (G.P.B. 1919/873-4); 1 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/906-7); 3 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/946; 948); 4 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/980); 5 Feb (G.P.B. 1919/1015); 6 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1055); 7 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1112); 9 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1146); 10 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1181); 11 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1219-21); 15 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1371; 3); 17 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1412); 18 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1436); 20 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1527; 1547); 21 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1558); 22 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1593); 25 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1647); 26 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1679); 27 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1702-3); 28 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1751); 1 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1768); 2 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1769); 3 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1805); 4 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1844); 5 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1892); 6 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1923); 7 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1953; 1965); 8 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1991); 11 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2029; 31); 14 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2173-4);17 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2187); 18 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2244); 19 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2290); 21 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2349); 22 Mar. 2397); 24 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2420); 25 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2459); 28 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2554); 31 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2607); 1 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2635); 2 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2683); 4 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2765); 9 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2897).

[100] Patrick Fleming, Richard Cotter, Thomas Malone, William Tannem, John Byrne Michael Davis, Joseph Molloy, James Barnes and Michael Walsh.

Chart 5.3: Population of Mountjoy, 1 January-9 April 1919



[101]

In an effort to redistribute leaders and agitators away from their home districts, prisoners were shuffled around Irish prisons throughout 1919. For instance, Henry Meaney, a 25-year-old sentenced to hard labour for illegal drilling, was transferred from Limerick to Mountjoy on 10 February. Meaney was a Limerick native, a local leader and spokesman for Irish Volunteer prisoners. Limerick governor A.J. Faulkner had requested to transfer Meaney following an outbreak as he considered the remaining DORA prisoners ancillary and docile.[102] Following the disturbance, Meaney went on hunger strike for better diet and in support of his comrades' demands, which included 'tea with enough milk and sugar to be palatable', and the refusal to promise 'future good behaviour to any English authority.' As a result his ameliorations were forfeited and he was transferred to Mountjoy where he maintained local connections, and would 'foment further disturbance if left in Limerick.'[103] Upon his arrival in Dublin, though still weak from hunger strike, Meaney demanded the restoration of his ameliorations, thus providing additional leverage for those already waging war for political status and concessions.[104]

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[101] 'Return of the number of political prisoners in custody', 29 May 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3991). The significant drop in political prisoners toward the end of March was due to the escape of 20 prisoners.

[102] Irwin to prison board, 7 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1094). Other significant transfers of the period include the removal of John Sharry and Benjamin Hickey from Cork to Derry Union Hospital, and then to Mountjoy in late February (G.P.B. 1919/380; 1702). William McNamara recalled how Faulkner was at times sympathetic with the political prisoners, specifically citing Faulkner's attitude during a hunger strike in April 1920. William McNamara (MA, B.M.H., W.S. 1135).

[103] Minute of J. Irwin, 7 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1265).

[104] For a full account of Henry Meaney at Limerick jail in early 1919, see N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/929; 930; 1022; 1042; 1072; 1075; 1077; 1080; 1093; 1094; 1097; 1118; 1140; 1141; 1142; 1143; 1179; 1265.

Despite the intercession of John Irwin and the Lord Mayor of Dublin, the Mountjoy prisoners, behind the leadership of Patrick Fleming, maintained their intransigence throughout February. Sympathetic strikes continued for and by those awaiting trial by court martial. William Halpin insisted on political treatment for himself and others following a visit from a man named O'Keefe, identified by Munro as 'an "organiser" in their part of the country'.[105] On 27 February several such prisoners destroyed their cells and barricaded their doors using bed planks. Patrick O'Hara and Richard Harte, the identified ringleaders, claimed they had done so as a protest against prisoners not receiving political treatment.[106] It was also reported that as warders worked to cuff and remove the unruly, Fleming was heard shouting to O'Hara not to give any undertaking to behave. The escape of Robert Barton and twenty additional political prisoners toward the end of March, as discussed above, temporarily suspended large-scale disturbances at Mountjoy. Police and military reserves were withdrawn from the prison, and ameliorations were restored to certain prisoners.

Inasmuch as prison population, association amongst the political class and influence from its leadership were identified as factors sabotaging prison discipline, loyalty within Irish prisons was not wholly uniform. Though examples of dissidence are few, they illustrate that there were limits to the physical and psychological endurance of political prisoners, regardless of their faith in the republic or support from comrades. For instance, just as the Cork *émeute* of February was reaching its climax, DORA prisoner Daniel Connell requested the restoration of his ameliorations, and promised to conform to prison rules.[107] John Conroy was broken over a month later, and apologised for his misconduct.[108] As Mountjoy reached the height of tumult in late February, M.J. Farrell confessed to the governor that he was not in favour of breaking up his cell, but had done so during the outbreak of 27 February as 'he had to fall-in with the others.'[109] In fact one man, J. Lennon, had refused to destroy his cell outright; Lennon's brother Thomas, along with Farrell, promised to behave and was released from restraint along with others in B wing.[110] Though referring specifically to hunger strike, Todd Andrews stated that: 'The

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[105] Munro to Green, 26 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1679).
[106] After interviewing the men O'Neill confirmed that they had broken up their cells out of sympathy with the five men in A wing, Slane, Mahon, Lynch, Magee and Roberts. 'Extract form book of magistrates other than Visiting Justices', 27 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1703).
[107] N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1747.
[108] Ibid., 1919/2819.
[109] Munro to Green, 28 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1751).
[110] 'Extract from Book of Magistrates other than Visiting Justices', 27 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1703); Munro to Green, 28 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1751).

moral pressure deriving from the wish and the need to show solidarity with one's comrades is so powerful as to amount to an order.'[111] Given this reality and the inescapability of communal pressure, it is impossible to know how many men participated in prison violence against their conscience.

Non-participation or passivity was not without consequence. For their irenic stance the Mountjoy men were jeered by their comrades from neighbouring cells, and called 'slackers' by prisoners in C division. Munro, having restored ameliorations to the men, tried to keep them from the other DORA prisoners and their influence. '[S]o long as they are under the same roof', he reported to Green, 'it is impossible in a Prison like this to prevent them when the place is quiet from hearing remarks shouted from one wing to another and if there are any "waverers" among them, there is always the possibility that they may give way, and start doing damage to fall in line with the mutinous ones.'[112] Ostracised from their comrades, none of the seven prisoners who had had their privileges restored were amongst the twenty escapees from Mountjoy in late March.

Though dissent amongst republican prisoners was minimal, it was not isolated. Two additional case studies of Limerick and Galway prisons provide evidence. Prisoner resistance in Limerick had been organised by Henry Meaney and Robert J. Byrne, and progressed toward destruction and violence in order to secure ameliorative treatment for Byrne and John Moran, both of whom were sentenced to hard labour. An outbreak on 5 February involved all fourteen of Limerick's political prisoners; Governor Faulkner reported that the men 'smashed windows, furniture, and broke through dividing walls of three cells. I had to break through some doors to get them out and to pursue them through the holes in the walls.'[113]

Destruction of cells, however, was inconsistent. Only five of the fourteen prisoners (Meaney, Byrne, James Kennedy, Michael Cullane and John Morrissey) caused substantial damage; they destroyed their cells and had to be physically restrained. Six prisoners (Thomas O'Toole, John Moran, Laurence Keefe, P. McMahon, Edward Hogan and Jeremiah Treacy) caused moderate damage; they were noisy and defiant, and in some cases barricaded their doors, but caused little or no damage and surrendered voluntarily. The remaining two prisoners, P. Donegan and M. McMahon, proved conciliatory. Donegan did

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[111] C.S. Andrews, *Dublin made me: an autobiography* (Dublin, 1979), p. 145.
[112] Munro to Green, 1 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1768, attached to file 1953).
[113] Faulkner to Chairman, 6 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1042). Abuse directed at dissidents was not a new phenomenon. In early 1918 prisoners who had accepted bail and were released incurred the wrath of fellow-inmates. One, Lawrence Redmond gave great abuse; his wife, during a visit, said the family of the bailed man would receive 'dog's treatment'. J.H. Dicey to Munro, 1 Mar. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/1640).

no damage to his cell, but barricaded his door; he later surrendered without a fight. Although McMahon broke the glass in his cell and barricaded his door, he confessed to Faulkner that he 'was against doing any violence but that he was compelled to act as he did by order of prisoner Henry Meany.'[114]

Dissent, in this case, may have been circumstantial. Destruction erupted periodically during the month following Meaney's removal, involving both the previously moderate and reluctant prisoners.[115] This requires exploration into factors which may have influenced violent behaviour. It has been established that camaraderie between prisoners was built upon a cooperative undertaking to disrupt prison discipline in furtherance of the republican cause. Demographic factors such as age and religion were only rarely divergent. Two factors which may help to shed further light on prisoners' decisions to resort to violence are the length of their sentence (days served and days remaining before release), and the nature of their crime.

Typical of the period, in March a collection of prisoners at Galway jail acted to secure political concessions for Michael O'Hehir and Joseph O'Kelly, sentenced to hard labour for carrying firearms and ammunition. Sixteen prisoners entered a hunger strike by refusing breakfast. Galway's governor, Edward Shewell, immediately transferred O'Hehir and O'Kelly to Mountjoy, and warned that should the strike continue the remaining fourteen prisoners would be stripped of their ameliorations. At 4.15 p.m. Shewell was informed that the DORA prisoners would take their suppers.[116]

Men were willing to engage in acts of violence with the knowledge that doing so would forfeit any political treatment. It is possible, therefore, that the severity of one's crime – determined by its classification under DORA or D.R.R. – the length of time served and, more importantly, the length of time remaining in a sentence, were significant factors which contributed to bonds of loyalty between prisoners, displayed through participation in outbreaks and destruction. It may also be the case that knowledge of one's sentence – particularly a prolonged sentence – contributed to violent behaviour.

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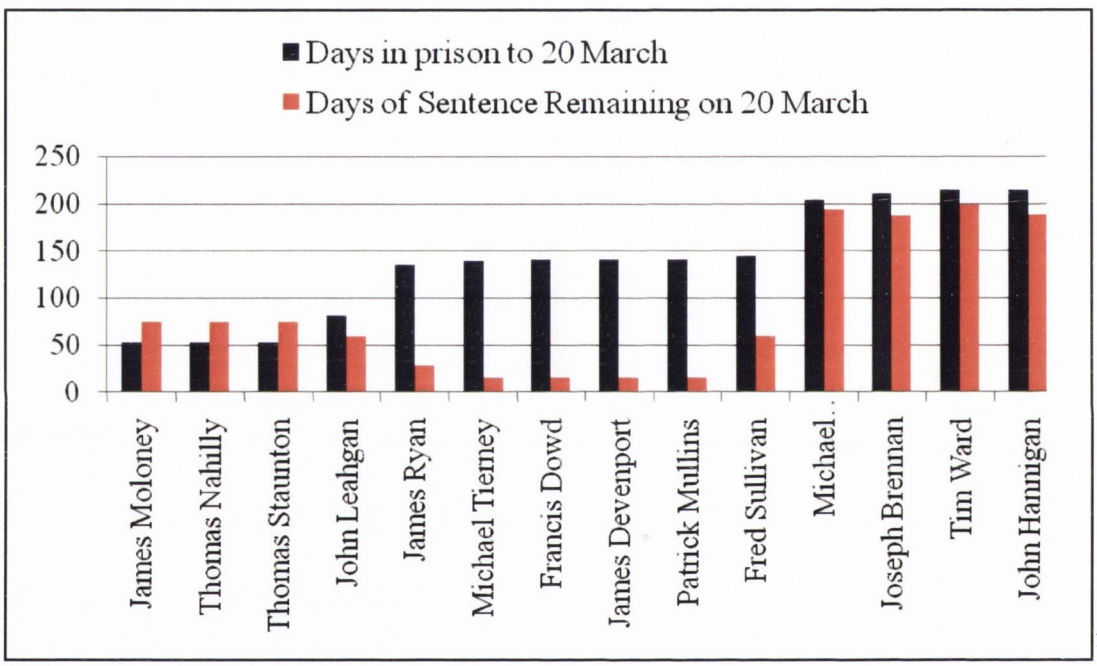
[114] Faulkner to Green, 6 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1076).

[115] From 13 February through 10 May, Moran, Keefe, Cullane, Byrne, McMahon, Morrissey, Hogan, and even Donegan, made demands for political treatment. In all cases save Donegan, glass broken in cells. On 10 May it was recommended that Cullane, McMahon, Horgan, Keefe and Morrissey have their ameliorations restored. See 10 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1178); 12 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1266-7); 13 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1298; 1384); 14 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1385); 27 Feb. (G.P.B. 1919/1708-9); 1 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/1779); 11 Mar. (G.P.B. 1919/2056-60); 5 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2775); 9 Apr. (G.P.B. 1919/2814); 3 May (G.P.B. 1919/3495); 10 May (G.P.B. 1919/3664-8).

[116] Shewell to Green, 20 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2312). O'Hehir and O'Kelly, who departed on on the 2.15 p.m. train from Galway, arrived at Mountjoy at 6.50, and continued to refuse food. Munro to Green, 20 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2326, attached to 2378).

With the exception of O'Hehir and O'Kelly, none of the crimes committed by the Galway prisoners were violent in nature. Most were charged with unlawful assembly, having possession of illegal documents, or attending a meeting contrary to law. In fact, only Fred Sullivan, who was charged with 'partaking in movements of a military nature', could be grouped with O'Hehir and O'Kelly. All were prison veterans of at least six weeks, yet none were on the immediate verge of release. As the chart below illustrates, only Michael Tierney, Patrick Mullins, James Davenport, Francis Dowd and James Ryan could expect release within the calendar month.

Chart 5.4: Length of time served by Galway prisoners involved in hunger strike, March 1919



[117]

Hunger strike, discussed below in greater detail, was a dangerous endeavour. While hunger strike would have certainly forced the hand of the Government, the removal of O'Hehir and O'Kelly – the objects of protest – also removed the necessity of a strike in the minds of the prisoners. Furthermore, the men were obviously not prepared to endure transfer to an unfamiliar prison; with the exception of James Ryan from Louth, those who remained were natives of Galway and surrounding counties. It appears, therefore, that in the case of Galway, familiarity with the region and the desire to receive visits from those living close to the prison, reluctance to enter into self-imposed starvation, and the absence of non-ameliorated comrades removed the impetus for action.

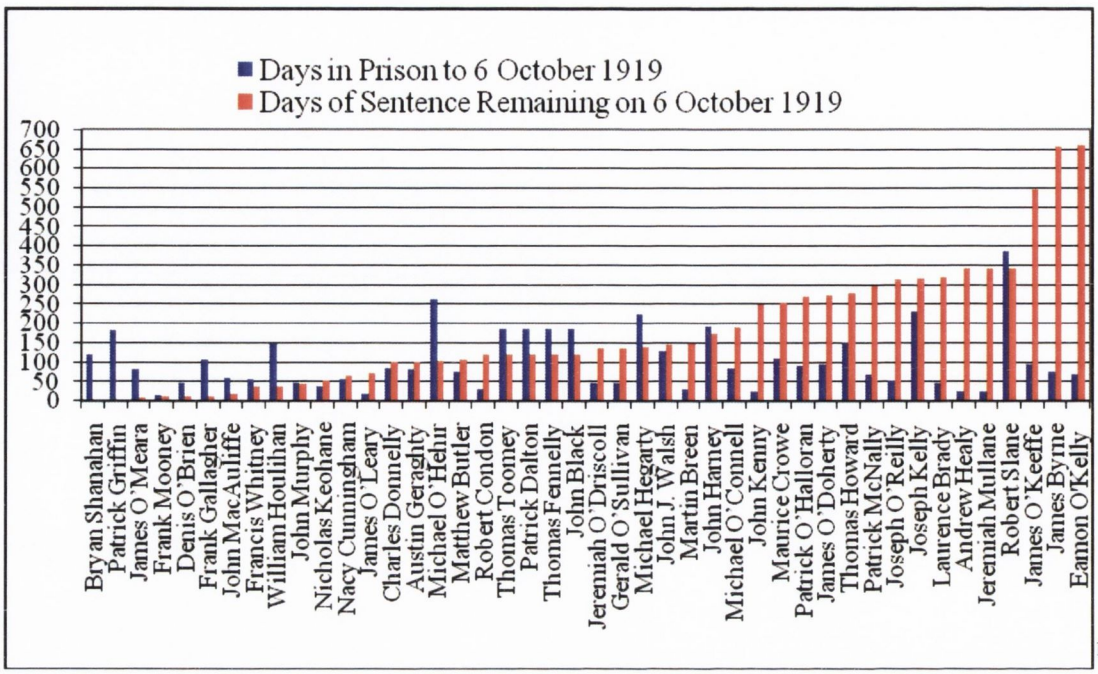
[117] Constructed from various prisoner record sheets, 'hunger strike of political prisoners', 20 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2312).

Perhaps a better instance of political crime and prison sentences factoring into collective violent action is an analysis of an outbreak which took place in Mountjoy in early October. Forty-four prisoners of various ages, sentences, backgrounds and counties took part in what was described by Munro as 'an evidently pre-concerted and organised outbreak of cell-wrecking'.[118] The outbreak was the result of a recent protest for political treatment; an influx of twenty-six prisoners from Cork who, as explained above, attempted to secure their political status through hunger strike, only intensified the situation.

Several factors prevalent at Mountjoy at the time perhaps demonstrate why those in Dublin were willing to act while, earlier in the year, those in Galway were not. First of all, Mountjoy housed a regionally diverse political population. The fear of being removed from one's native county, devoid of local support, was therefore not an inhibiting factor. Second, the violence at Mountjoy was directed outward at the prison and its warders; the prison suffered massive structural damage and nearly a dozen warders required medical attention. This is not to suggest that the nature of one's crime determined their behaviour in prison. The vast majority of political prisoners during the period were indeed convicted for non-violent crimes. Hunger strike, on the other hand, was violence directed toward oneself; self-immolation which required patience, solidarity and the gradual destruction of the body – a prisoner's only tool for protest. Finally, the political population at Mountjoy was over three times that of Galway during respective periods of unrest.[119] These factors in combination provided powerful incentive toward disruption at Mountjoy. So powerful, in fact, that remaining sentences appear to have escaped prisoners' consideration. The chart below illustrates this point.

[118] Munro to Green, 6 Oct. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7074).
[119] Munro to Green, 6; 7 Oct. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7074; 7111); 'Extract from Medical Officer's journal [W.A. Cooke]', 7 Oct. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7111).

Chart 5.5: Length of time served by Mountjoy prisoners involved in outbreak of October 1919



[120]

Those recently committed were as likely to support their comrades in violence as were more seasoned inmates. Furthermore, notions of reluctance to fight by those close to release can be dismissed, as several men with less than a month remaining on their sentences participated in the outbreak. Patrick Griffin and Bryan Shanahan were due for release on the morning of 6 October. They were released following the outbreak, and then immediately re-arrested, charged with malicious damage to prison property, and sentenced to eight days imprisonment.[121]

The final variable remains severity of sentence, and prisoners' predisposition toward continued violent action. Available records indicate that the majority of Mountjoy prisoners were non-ameliorated, and had been sentenced to hard labour. Their offences ran the gauntlet of political crime, including more minor offences such as soliciting funds for Dáil Éireann and being in possession of seditious documents. But in a great deal of cases men at Mountjoy had been imprisoned for crimes of a military nature – illegal drilling, 'endangering safety', and being in the possession of arms and ammunition.[122]

The correlation between activity in connection with the Irish independence movement on the outside, and violent and unruly behaviour in prison, may have been

[120] It is interesting to note that two of the participants in the outbreak were O'Hehir and O'Kelly, transferred from Galway earlier in the year. 'List of DORA prisoners concerned in the organised outbreak of cell-wrecking on nights of 5th-6th October, 1919' (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7139).
[121] Munro to Green, 6 Oct.1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7139).
[122] 'Prisoners released from July 1919 for ill-health', 24 Nov. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/8409).

determined by the severity of one's sentence, political classification, and the collection of those of similar situation in the same prison. This not only explains General Prisons Board policy in reshuffling political prisoners throughout 1919, but adds perspective to the contrasting studies of Galway and Mountjoy.

The various violent methods used to disrupt Irish prisons certainly provoked camaraderie of a unique type. To claim that this loyalty was completely uniform is to disregard the apathy experienced by many prisoners. Variables such as crime, sentence, ameliorations, punishment, ideology, politics, religion, and age prevent such unwavering assumptions. What has been established is that violence occurred often in Irish prisons and, in the vast majority of cases, was committed in defence of another prisoner's perceived rights. However, it must also be acknowledged that not all prisoners had developed such intricate hierarchies of interpersonal loyalty. It may also be the case that an 'us' against 'them' mentality existed amongst many Irish political prisoners. Exercised alongside others who maintained more developed or concentrated ideologies regarding collective identity, violence remained the end result. Regardless, it may be argued that, in the context of Irish prisons, loyalty, not merely toward an individual but toward the larger structure of resistance, did exist on some level. Defence of the individual, in addition to destruction of the prison and defiance of its system of discipline, were ultimately viewed as service to the cause of Irish independence.

Frequency of violence

The four case studies in prison loyalty, measured in the form of participation in outbreaks at Cork, Galway, Limerick and Mountjoy, provide a thorough analysis yet narrow example of prison violence and destruction in Ireland in 1919. In order to gain a sense of how the disruption of prison administration in Ireland aided the growth of loyalty in prisons, one must examine the prison experience as a wider continuum of revolt, specifically, the type and severity of destruction and violence in Irish prisons, its frequency and efficacy.

Four types of violence dominated Irish prisons from 1919-21: indirect disobedience, non-personal violence, personal violence and self-inflicted violence. For the purpose of this study they are defined as follows: indirect disobedience included disobeying orders, refusing to exercise or come in from exercise, refusing to rise from bed, refusing to wear prison clothes, shouting, singing, and being in possession of prohibited articles. Non-personal violence was most prevalent, and included the physical destruction of the prison and its fixtures and, for the sake of classification, escapes. Personal violence

was any outbreak in the prison that resulted in an attack on warders in any form; physical restraint of the prisoner usually followed. Finally, self-inflicted violence was the occurrence of hunger strike, which became more prevalent throughout 1920-1, and will be discussed further below.

The charts below illustrate the frequency distribution of violence in Irish prisons throughout the revolution proper, and the total number of disturbances in each prison between January 1919 and 11 July 1921.[123]

[123] Distribution of violence was established by plotting the type of violence between prisons on a daily basis, 1 Jan. – 11 July 1921, as recorded in the General Prisons Board register. The frequency of specific types of violence in Irish prisons was established by segregating the type of violence, and then applying the formula (% = (f/n)*100) where f = the number of violent occurrences at a specific prison, n = the total number of said occurrences in all prisons for the period, and % = the frequency of a type of violence.

Chart 5.6: Number of violent occurrences in Irish prisons, 1919

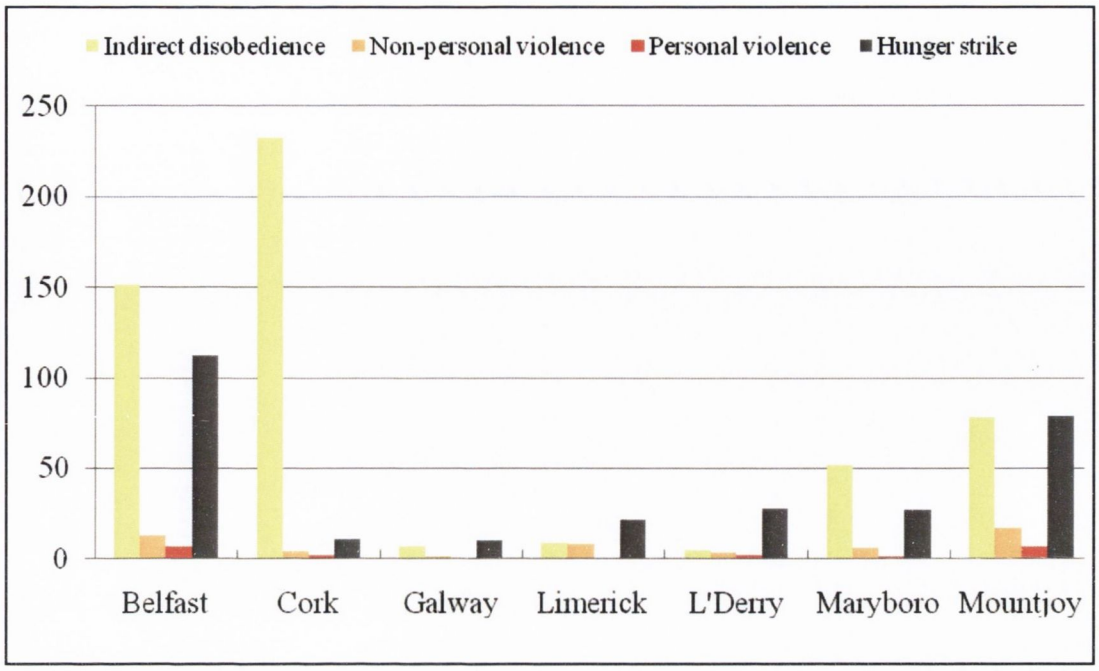


Chart 5.7: Frequency and distribution of violence in Irish prisons, 1919

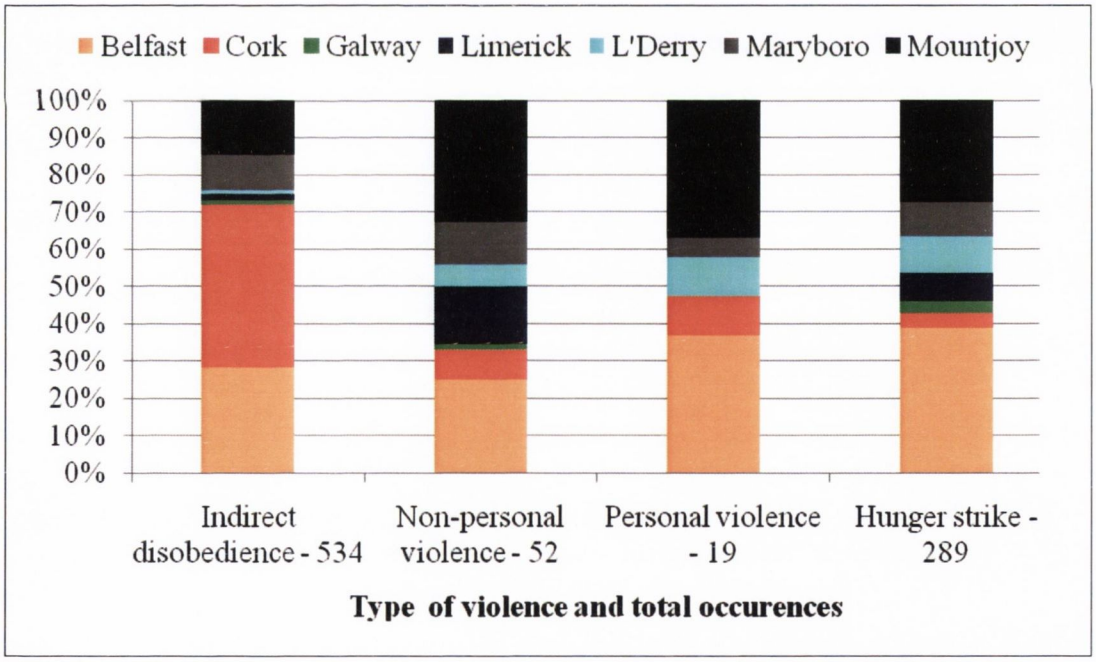


Chart 5.8: Number of violence occurrences in Irish prisons, 1920

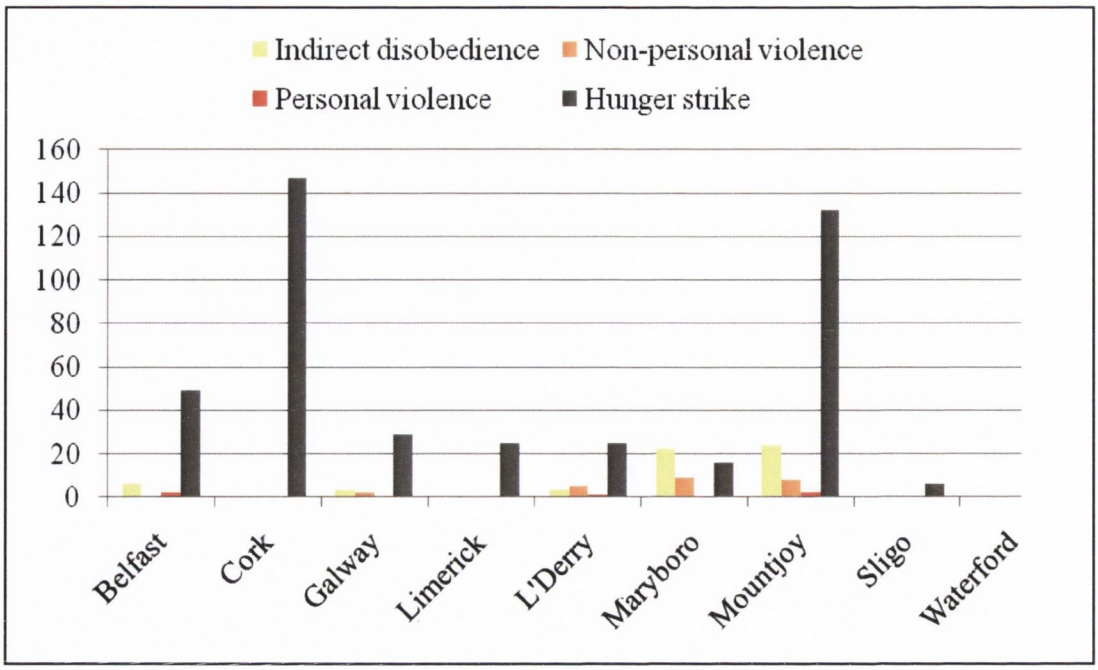


Chart 5.9: Frequency and distribution of violence in Irish prisons, 1920

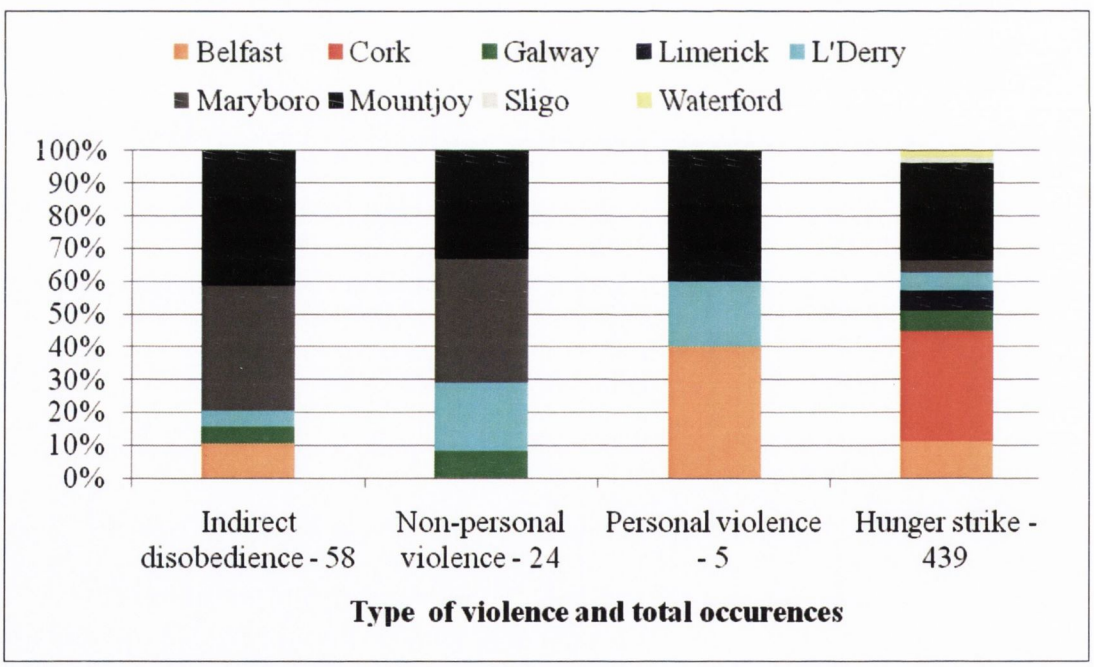


Chart 5.10: Number of violent occurrences in Irish prisons, 1 January-11 July 1921

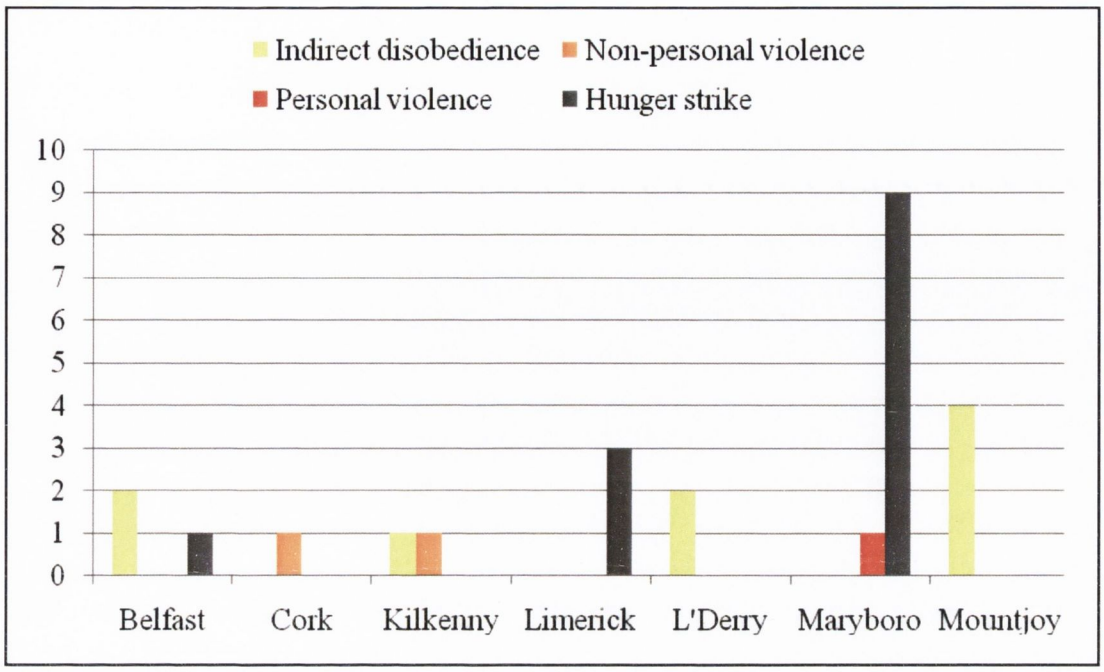
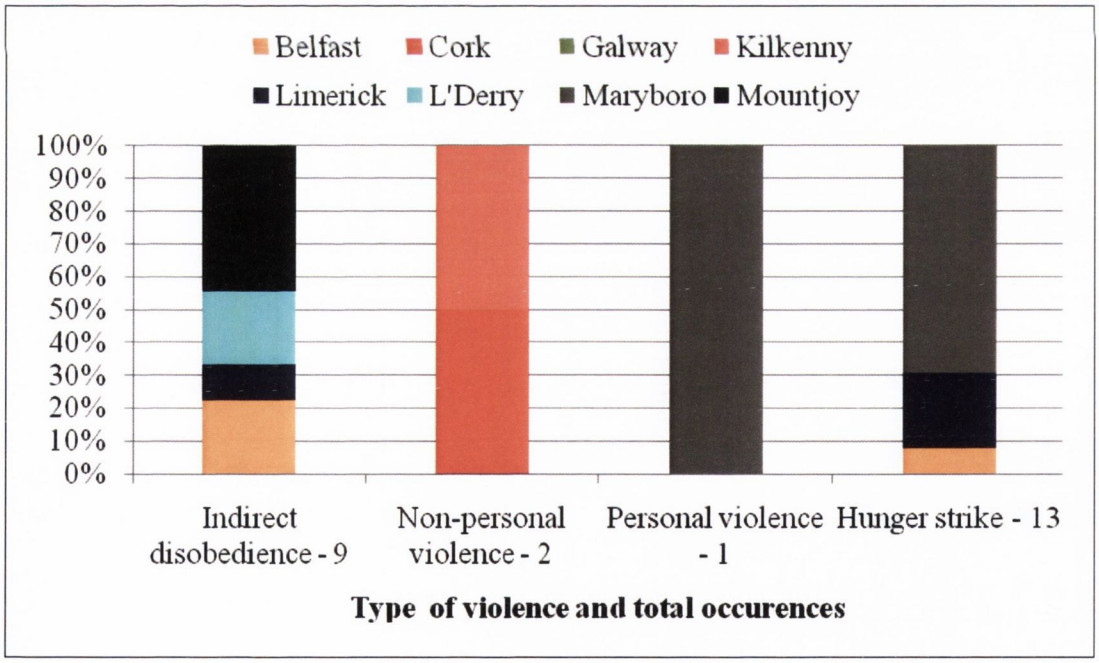


Chart 5.11: Frequency and distribution of violence in Irish prisons, 1 January-11 July 1921



Perhaps the most striking contrast concerning violence in Irish prisons between 1919 and 1921 is that the variety and diffusion of violence in 1919 was by 1920 directed almost solely toward hunger strike. By 1921 violence in all forms was confined to only a few prisons and significantly reduced overall due to massive deportations to prisons throughout Britain. Similar to the I.R.A. on the eve of the Truce, the ability of political

prisoners to wage war had become increasingly stifled. This is not to suggest that the bonds of loyalty established prior to 1921 had been weakened, only that the opportunity to act had been significantly reduced; prison discipline had also been significantly tightened. Before examining the methods used to check prison violence, it is important to explore this variety of violence in greater detail.

While all forms of disobedience, violent and non-violent, sought to disrupt the Irish prison system, only a select few methods succeeded. Non-violent destruction of prison property, the refusal to obey orders, and the intermittent chorus of shouting and singing of patriotic songs – by far the most frequent method of disruptive behaviour – did much to rally prisoners, maintain spirits and dismantle the physical structure of the prison. For example, following the outbreaks at Belfast in early 1919, 94 per cent of cells were reported as damaged to some extent, while only twenty-two remained fit for occupation.[124] Although costly to repair and irritating to staff and the immediate neighbourhood, disruptive and destructive acts could be endured by warders with greater ease as they seldom presented a direct physical threat. More violent acts, however, were still common, and resulted in both the psychological breakdown of prison staff and radical prison reform.

As illustrated in the graphs above and detailed in the preceding case studies, Belfast, Cork and Mountjoy boasted the greatest number of violent disturbances in 1919. Violence could occur at any place within the prison, at any time and under any circumstances. The outbreaks at Cork and Mountjoy in January 1919, for example, occurred in the exercise yard, and were undertaken by a number of prisoners who forcibly resisted warders.[125] In Belfast, Austin Stack, although in his late thirties and older than most of his fellow-inmates, established himself as chief agitator through a series of personal attacks on warders. He assaulted Warder R. McConnell during an outbreak in early February,[126] and in early April struck Warder C. Kennedy with 'two blows of his clenched fist in the face.' The episode emboldened other Sinn Féin prisoners who, according to the governor's report to the board, 'exhibit on all occasions a hostile attitude toward all prison officials'.[127]

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[124] Green to Under-Secretary, 26 Feb. 1919; 'Precis of reports by Governors as to number of special prisoners in receipt of the full list of ameliorations that could be accommodated without preventing the administration of the prison for ordinary prisoners', 17 Feb. 1919; 'Report on cell accommodation', H.J. Chippendall, 7 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1402).

[125] Details for the outbreak at Mountjoy, 13-14 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/350; 356-7); details for the outbreak at Cork, 22-3 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/599; 618; 630; 636).

[126] N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1209. Thomas Hayes was prevented from attacking Governor Barrows on the same date. He took his revenge on 1 April by throwing the contents of his chamber pot on R.I.C. Sergeant McKelfrey. Barrows to Green, 1 Apr. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1209).

[127] Barrows to Green, 1 Apr. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2647 [attached to G.P.B. 1919/3021]).

More synchronised outbreaks naturally resulted in greater injury. The chaotic outbreak at Mountjoy on 5-6 October 1919 not only destroyed a great deal of the prison, it resulted in injury for several warders charged with dismantling prisoners' barricades under a barrage of bricks and pieces of woodwork. Once cell defences were breeched, prisoners 'savagely attacked the warders'; in some cases the hose was turned on prisoners who had armed themselves with iron bars. Michael O'Hehir, an established prison veteran, armed himself with two bricks with which to defend his cell. When he was tackled by two warders and deprived of his weapons, he 'fought furiously with his fists' and barked that Governor Munro would 'suffer in ... turn like others.' Extracts from the medical officer's journal detail the extent of warders' injuries. Contusions to the head, arms and legs were most common; all warders suffered abrasions to their hands. Warder Perry suffered a broken tooth, and the unfortunate Clerk Warder Gannon received a debilitating blow to the testicles.[128]

Fighting 'dirty' went beyond the taboo targets of a man's body. For instance, Patrick Gaffney emptied the contents of his chamber pot over Warder Griffith at Belfast in early March. The volume of the pot was so great that it spilled over on to Warder Brophy. The target was not random: Gaffney had to push his way past a second warder to reach his goal.[129] Thomas Fitzpatrick imitated this act less than a month later, this time managing to cover two warders and two constables with what was delicately described in reports as 'nuisance'.[130]

While the frequency of violence in Irish prisons, prison population and political disposition are fundamental factors which helped construct the identity of political prisoners, the type and severity of violence undeniably contributed to the establishment and maintenance of interpersonal loyalty. Non-violent protests such as shouting or destroying one's cell, while effective in sustaining morale, did not possess the element of physical sacrifice admired by republicans. Other methods were employed in order to frustrate the prison system and strike a blow for republican publicity.

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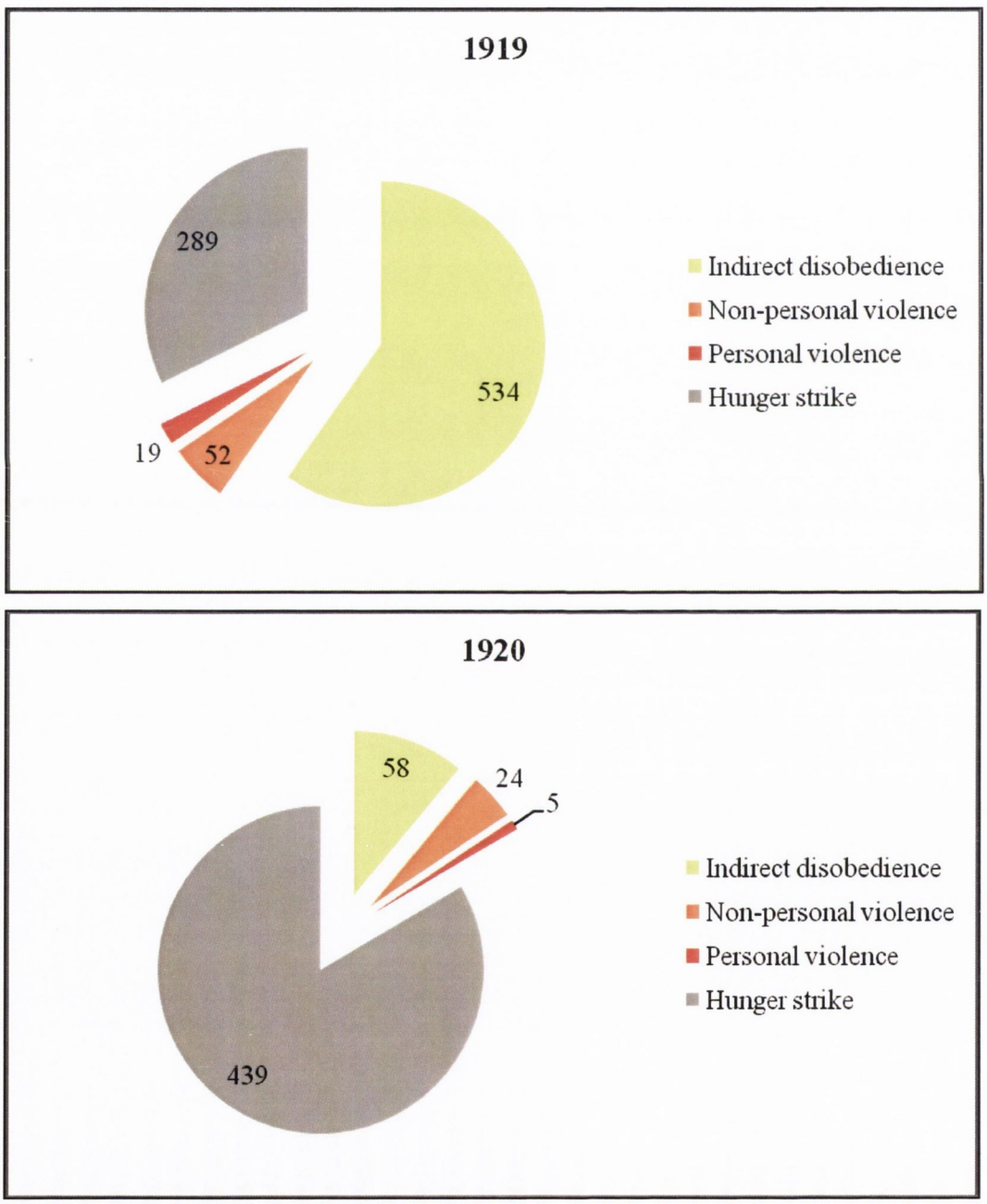
[128] Munro to Green, 6 Oct. 1919; 'Extract from Medical Officer's journal [W.A. Cooke]', 7 Oct. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7074).
[129] Barrows to Green, 7 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1961).
[130] Ibid., 31 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2611).

II. Self-directed violence

Hunger strike

If 1919 can be described as a year of violence directed against the prison and its staff, 1920 was a year of hunger strike, or self-directed violence. The proportion of violent acts, illustrated in the pie charts below, demonstrate the way hunger strike eclipsed other forms of violence in 1920.[131]

Chart 5.12: Number of violent acts committed in Irish prisons, 1919-20



[131] The administrative responsibility of the General Prisons Board was additionally staggering. The daily register of events for the year 1920, for example, totals over 11,000 entries.

Ironically, it was this self-directed violence amongst Irish political prisoners that achieved an unprecedented solidarity, strengthening loyalty between prisoners and toward the cause of Ireland. As a result, it continued to erode the patience of prison administration.

Hunger strike as an actual form of violence has been debated. Michael Biggs has suggested that since the vast numbers of hunger strikes during the Irish Revolution were brief and carried no threat of death it cannot be considered techniques of violence.[132] This approach, however, suggests removing the label of violence from any action which did not achieve the desired result. For instance, the actions of a prisoner who destroyed their cell and assaulted a warder in protest against his confinement would not be labelled violent under this classification if his actions did not secure release. Furthermore, Biggs's approach, which applies various sociological methods in a comparative context, examines hunger strike as an immediate social movement – a multi-move game whose 'players' include the prisoner and the government or authority who oversees detention. Four conceivable outcomes are attached to his model: absence of hunger strike, concession of government to the demands of hunger strikers, surrender of the hunger striker, and death. While Biggs and others have established that there was a definite purpose behind hunger striking – most commonly ameliorative treatment, trial, or release – this approach narrowly limits the outcome of hunger strike to its obvious effects on the relationship between its participants. While the success or failure of a hunger strike, most applicably measured by concession to the demands of the striker, helps identify trends in prison policy, or the effects of social pressure on government, a more intimate effect ultimately goes unnoticed – the establishment and growth of solidarity and loyalty between starving prisoners.

A survey of thirty-three hunger strikes that took place throughout 1920 reveals much about the reasons many went on strike as well as the number who did so. Further criteria, such as the geographical origin of prisoners, their crimes, political classification and the duration of their strike, all contribute to a more complete understanding of hunger strikers, the interdependency of those involved and the outcome of their protest.[133] This survey, by no means a full account of the period, provides a broad demographic and chronological sample with which to further explore loyalty in Irish prisons.

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[132] Michael Biggs, 'Hunger strikes by Irish republicans, 1916-1923', prepared for workshop on techniques of violence in civil war at the Centre for the study of civil war, Oslo, Aug. 2004, p. 2.

[133] This survey is by no means a complete account. Episodes were chosen based on the number of participants, length, demands, proximity to strikes occurring at other prisons, and continuous strikes undertaken by the same prisoner over the period. The thirty-three hunger strikes were analysed as individual events; many, however, comprise either a rolling hunger strike (a continuous protest involving numerous sets of prisoners striking at different times at the same prison), or hunger strikes begun simultaneously but ending at various dates. If labelled as group events the number is nineteen.

Similar to the case studies above which examined externally-directed violence, loyalty is predominantly measured through personal records and evidence of participation. However, because qualitative records of the period are scarce compared to reports on the number of prisoners and hunger strike participants, the number of prisoners joining in self-directed violence, and the length of their protest also help to support arguments that imprisonment and hunger strike bred solidarity and loyalty.

Variables such as the number of prisoners on strike, the length of the strike, and the achievement of the desired result were calculated to determine whether the strike was a success or failure. The table below is a results-based breakdown of the 33 hunger strikes examined for 1920.[134]

[134] Data compiled for this study came from a variety of sources including contemporary documents from the Irish Military Archives, departmental files from the National Archives of Ireland, newspapers and government publications. The vast majority of evidence, however, was derived from the General Prison Board index and files.

Table 5.2: Hunger strikes in Ireland, 1920: dates, duration and outcome

Prison	Date begun	Date ended	Number on Strike	Duration	Outcome
Cork	5 Jan.	10 Jan.	32	5 days	Failure
Sligo	20 Jan.	23 Jan.	6	3 days	Failure
Mountjoy	21 Feb.	28 Feb.	9	7 days	Failure
Belfast	23 Feb.	4 Mar.	2	3 & 7 days	Failure
Mountjoy	5 Apr.	7 June			
Rolling Strike	5 Apr.	17 Apr.	36-90	4-9 days	Success
	15 Apr.	21 Apr.	5-15	1-6 days	Success
	28 Apr.	8 May	11-13	5-10 days	Success
	11 May	26 May	1	16 days	Success
	20 May	27 May	1	7 days	Success
	29 May	7 June	1	10 days	Success
Mountjoy	20 June	30 June	4	2-11 days	Success and failure
Galway	13 Apr.	20 Apr.	4-8	3-5 days	Success
Belfast	27 Apr.	2 May			
Same Start Date, Various End Dates	27 Apr.	28 Apr.	55	1 day	Failure
	27 Apr.	29 Apr.	9	2 days	Success
	27 Apr.	30 Apr.	4	3 days	Success
	27 Apr.	1 May	34	4 days	Success
	27 Apr.	2 May	34	5 days	Success
Mountjoy	3 May	9 May			
Same Start Date, Various End Dates	3 May	5 May	2	2 days	Failure
	3 May	7 May	1	4 days	Success
	3 May	9 May	2	6 days	Success
Mountjoy	6 May	13 May			
Same Start Date, Various End Dates	6 May	11 May	9	6 days	Success
	6 May	12 May	3	7 days	Success
	6 May	13 May	3	8 days	Success
Cork	29 Apr.	17 May			
Rolling Strike	29 Apr.	7 May	8	4-9 days	Success
	10 May	17 May	4	4-7 days	Success
Cork	13 July	14 July	4	1 day	Failure
Belfast	19 July	-	17 threaten	-	Failure
Belfast	9 Aug.	10 Aug.	3	1 day	Failure
Belfast	16 Aug.	17 Aug.	5	1 day	Failure
Belfast	23 Aug.	24 Aug.	1	1 day	Failure
Limerick	23 Aug.	26 Aug.; 2 Sept.	16-19	1-3 days; 8 days	Failure
Mountjoy	25 Aug.	27 Aug.	7	2 days	Failure
Cork	11 Aug.	12 Nov.	11 – (abridged survey)	68 days, 76 days & 94 days	Failure

'Failure' resulted when stated demands by the prisoners were not granted, hunger strike was abandoned without concessions, or prisoners were deported. A successful hunger

strike resulted from government concessions to prisoners' demands, discharge, conditional parole (from which prisoners only rarely returned) or release. Although the terms 'success' and 'failure' appear to adhere to Biggs's outcome-based analysis, it is nevertheless important to observe the result of hunger strike based on its intended goal.

The trend of failed hunger strikes observed in early 1920 stemmed from interference from prison chaplains, unfocused purpose and lack of zeal amongst prisoners and, in some cases, minimal participation. The strike at Cork, which lasted from 5-10 January, exhibited many qualities of close cohesion typical of successful strikes.[135] The strike began to disintegrate, however, when J.J. Hogan was deported to England. The collapse accelerated when Edward Horgan, Peter Young and Dennis Manning took food on 8 January following a visit from the chaplain the previous day. The chaplain continued his rounds that afternoon, visiting each prisoner individually, and was later joined by the Lord Mayor of Cork who coaxed men to abandon the strike. By 10 January each prisoner had conceded unconditionally. Similar ecclesiastical pressure was applied in Sligo later that month, when the chaplain allegedly guaranteed concessions to six hunger-striking prisoners.[136]

Although lone prisoners were able to strike for release, a successful hunger strike was most commonly a collective effort; a *fasces* strengthened by the individual's metal. And similar to externally-directed violence, hunger strike was at times committed against one's conscience. Writing to Governor Munro following the Cork strike in January, convicted DORA prisoner Felix Connolly apologized for his behaviour:

> Well sir I apologise sincerely to His Majesty's Government for my conduct as I didn't understand it, and you may be sure if I went on strike it was completely against my will. ... and as I'm young in the world, if I was out of prison now I would be the most law-abiding citizen of His Majesty's Government.[137]

For many others, however, hunger strike was a further form of protest, and provided one with a place in the struggle and camaraderie with the like-minded. Shortly

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[135] It involved upwards of thirty-two men from the convicted political class and untried prisoners, presented coherent demands for contact with the untried comrades, and ameliorations for others. Nearly all prisoners were local, born in Cork or surrounding counties; all were relatively young and healthy, and convicted of crimes under D.R.R. with sentences averaging 135 days.

[136] *Irish Independent*, 24 Jan. 1920.

[137] Felix Connolly to Munro, 26 Jan. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/652 [attached to file 987]). Cornelius O'Mahony wrote in a similar tone. It may not be imprudent to suggest that these men apologized for recovery of their ameliorations which had been forfeited upon undertaking hunger strike.

after his deportation to Portland prison, Robert Barton wrote to his cousin, Erskine Childers, elaborating on his new-found position:

> When I learned I was to be a convict it seemed to me that I should be a more effective protest *living* in Portland than dead and buried in Derrylossary so I started eating again. ... As for the clothes, no bridegroom ever put on his wedding clothes with greater pride than [when] I donned the broad arrow.[138] [Emphasis added]

Participation was not exclusive to the incarcerated. Men such as Barton were admired for their sacrifice and courage, and received parcels from republican aid societies and letters from complete strangers. One such stranger, Maimie O'Keefe, wrote to Barton in Portland, and presented her letter as 'an appreciation of all you are suffering for Ireland and me'. 'I know that to a native such as yours', she wrote in September 1920, 'daily contact with the common criminals in a common gaol must be the refinement of torture, though it is only a means to a glorious end.'[139] Another such letter penned by 'Róisín Dubh', romanticised Barton's imprisonment as national sacrifice:

> Although not personally acquainted with you, I cannot refrain from sending these few lines, hoping they will be welcome, because they come from Éireann. ... If they do reach, and help to remind you 'That true hearts beat across the sea, and the hearts in dear old Ireland are the hearts that don't forget, especially the Felons of Our land' I will be amply repaid. ... During the month I shall pray much for you, and continue until the day when Erin will again clasp your hand and cry in greeting *Cead Mile Fáilte! Arcon mo choide*.[140]

It was this sympathy and heroic status which motivated many to remain on hunger strike despite imminent starvation. Perhaps the most forceful account of this mentality is recorded by Frank Gallagher in *Days of fear*, which chronicles the first successful mass hunger strike of 1920.[141] Gallagher's account, written eight years after the fact, articulates the struggle to rationalise self-starvation, and details the fear of being branded a traitor by

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[138] Barton to Childers, 24 Feb. 1920 (Military Archives, Cathal Brugha barracks, Dublin, Contemporary Documents 264/38/12).
[139] Maime O'Keefe to Barton, 2 Sept. 1920 (MA, CD 264/14/c).
[140] 'Roisín Dhu' to Barton, c. May 1920 (MA, CD 264/14/c).
[141] Gallagher and thirty-five others commenced hunger strike on 5 April; they were joined by others on successive days until their number totalled nearly ninety.

taking food and to endure the dual-torture of an empty stomach and a wandering mind. After approximately four days on strike, Gallagher toyed with the notion that death would be a welcomed change to the monotony which awaited him in civilian life: 'There are better things than living to be an old and valued member of half a dozen public councils'.[142] His death would be a great service to the Republic, he thought; 'By smashing their prison system we become free to continue the smashing in Ireland of their Empire. ... A few days' hunger in payment for such a blow is nothing. ... Even a few deaths from hunger is nothing.'[143]

On 11 April, however, the Medical Officer determined Gallagher had reached the 'danger point' – a state at which death was certain if nourishment was not taken. Confirmation of approaching mortality isolated Gallagher's patriotic motions, and his prime motivator is exposed as loyalty to the oath he and others had taken 'to the honour of Ireland and the lives of my comrades not to eat food'.[144] Gripped with dread, uncertainty and experiencing the 'double personality' common to those enduring hunger strike, Gallagher pondered, 'Why should I die?':

> I am young and I can go away and change my name. ... Nobody would know nobody. ... If they found out I would deny it. ... But I would know that I had eaten. ... Wherever I went that knowledge would be inside me ... the thought of it ... the feel of it ... making me an outcast to myself ... driving me mad. ... Everybody would see it, written flamingly all over me, that I had betrayed those who trusted me ... those who scorned to dodge death ... I would want to die then, and I could not.[145]

Gallagher's fear eventually passed, but not before physical weakness and self-doubt had consumed him. He was discharged on the tenth day of his protest; nearly all of his fellow-strikers were subsequently released or paroled. Their efforts were applauded by cleric and comrade alike. Father Albert (of Easter Week fame), though forbidden from visiting the hunger strike prisoners, sent them his support. 'My love and blessing to all the brave men who are fighting the cause of Ireland's freedom and independence in Mountjoy.' Two days later, a letter from Gearoid O'Sullivan reached Maurice Crowe from I.R.A. headquarters:

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[142] Frank Gallagher, *Days of fear* (London, 1928), p. 47. Ellipses are a staple of Gallagher's narrative. Little of the following quotes have actually been amended.
[143] Ibid., pp 54-5.
[144] Ibid., p. 15.
[145] Ibid., pp 147-8.

> Your fellow officers and men of the Republican Army hasten to offer you sincerest congratulations on your glorious victory. The fight which by tenacity and long suffering you have so brilliantly won will ever be remembered in the annals of the victories of our army.[146]

A commemorative photograph of 'The Mountjoy hunger strikers, 1920' was taken shortly afterwards to mark the occasion, ensuring notoriety of its participants and commemoration of their sacrifice.[147]

Photo 5.1: 'The Mountjoy hunger strikers, 1920'

As admiration and sympathy for Irish political prisoners on hunger strike spread throughout Ireland,[148] so too did camaraderie between prisoners. Regardless of crime, sentence or location, Irish political prisoners throughout 1920 struck in one-another's

[146] Fr. Albert to Maurice Crowe, 13 Apr. 1920; Gearoid O'Sullivan to Maurice Crowe, 15 Apr. 1920 (I.M.A., CD 208/2/9;10). O'Sullivan and Crowe had been on hunger strike together at Mountjoy in late 1919.
[147] 'The Mountjoy hunger strikers, 1920' (I.M.A., CD 208/2/8).
[148] See for example Resolution of Irish Women's Franchise League, c. Nov. 1917 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1917/4660); Resolution of Deloire R.D.C., 3 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1000); Resolution of Cork County Council, 5 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1092); Resolutions of Sligo Corporation, 1 Mar. 1919; 9 Feb. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1760; 1920/1002); Resolutions of Cork Corporation, 1 Feb.; 1 Aug. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/905; 5746); Resolution of Guardians of Listowel Union, 6 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2403); Resolution of Cloghen U. O. Of Sons, 21 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2344); Resolution of Castlebar U.D.C., 11 Jun. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/4484); Resolution of County Borough Co. of Limerick, 16 Jun. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/4672); Resolution of Mayo County Council, 25 Jun. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/4787); Resolution of Cork Board of Guardians, 25 Sept. 1919 (Dublin diocese archives, William Walsh papers, 1919/laity/386/8); Resolution of Tipperary Board of Guardians, 10 Apr. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3209); Resolution of Catholics resident in London, 18 Mar. 1921 (Dublin diocese Archives, William Walsh papers, 1921/laity/380/7).

defence or, in certain cases, exploited the fates of their fellow-prisoners toward their own ends.

A series of confiscated letters from Cathal O'Shannon, an established labour agitator convicted in January 1920 for unlawful assembly and disturbing the peace, lend credence to this occurrence. O'Shannon explained to the governor that he and ten prisoners, recently transferred from Cork, were striking for the unconditional release of prisoners who had been hastily convicted and scattered throughout Ireland from an overcrowded Cork prison. This included prisoners sent to Mountjoy and Belfast in Ireland, and Wormwood Scrubs, Brixton and Peterhead in England.[149] 'This protest', he concluded, 'will be kept up until all political prisoners, whether "convicted" by the usurping and militarist Occupation are still "untried" are released.'[150] Writing to Nell Twomey regarding his impending hunger strike (and reminding her to retrieve his washing from the prison gate and supply more cigarettes), O'Shannon rationalised his decision: 'Still I'll last a few days and even if I 'go over the top' well, 'greater love hath no man than that he lay down his life for his friends' and fellow prisoners, wrongfully imprisoned by militarism are well worth dying for.'[151] The following day O'Shannon was able to report on his condition following one day without food. 'So far I am doing pretty well and feeling no bad effects ... but Friday and Friday night will probably bring some suffering.'[152] O'Shannon was not alone in his protest. In addition to the ten Cork transfers on hunger strike, he was joined on 30 April by Patrick MacMahon, Frank O'Higgins, Lawrence McKenna, James McGann and Patrick Gilsean. They, too, announced their intention to strike 'in conjunction with our countrymen in Wormwood Scrubbs and Belfast Jails'.[153] Patrick MacMahon wrote to his mother with instructions and gave an explanation similar to O'Shannon's:

> As you will see by today's paper the uncharged prisoners are on hunger strike so please do not send any more food to me. ... I do not know whether we will be

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[149] Prison Board records indicate that Cork prison housed 63 untried Sinn Féin prisoners on 16 Apr. 1920, down from 78 the previous week. I. King to Chairman, 16 Apr. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3220); 'Political prisoners in custody in Irish prisons', parliamentary question no. 8 (Captain Wedgewood Benn), 19 Apr. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/2195); Cathal O'Shannon to King, 28 Apr. 1920 [paraphrased in a letter to Nell Twomey of 29 Apr. 1920] (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3839).

[150] Cathal O'Shannon to King, 28 Apr. 1920 [paraphrased in a letter to Nell Twomey] (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3839).

[151] O'Shannon to Twomey, 28 Apr. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3839).

[152] O'Shannon to Twomey, 29 Apr. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3864).

[153] Following an initial deportation of fifty-four prisoners from Belfast on 28 April, a series of hunger strikes resulted in parole and release.

allowed to write again or not; but in any case there was no other course open to us but this when our comrades in Wormwood Scrubs and Belfast were fighting to smash this system of keeping uncharged men in prison as long as they liked.[154]

Hunger strikes begun in late April 1920 throughout Ireland were successful despite the deportation of over fifty prisoners from Belfast to Wormwood Scrubs. O'Shannon and his comrades at Mountjoy – with the exceptions of James McGann and Owen Jackson who took food after three and eleven days respectively – were released to an outside hospital or paroled at various dates. Altogether eighty-one untried prisoners were discharged from Belfast prison following hunger strikes ranging from two to five days in length; eight untried prisoners at Cork were paroled following hunger strikes lasting from four to nine days. Several smaller hunger strikes at Galway and Mountjoy in April and May also resulted in release.

Early summer marked the last successful series of hunger strikes in Irish prisons in 1920. Convicted prisoners were thereafter left to starve, and untried prisoners were almost immediately deported.[155] Seventeen Belfast prisoners who merely threatened hunger strike for political treatment in mid-July were promptly removed to England. Those not deported either broke strike, or were again shuffled between Irish prisons.

Perhaps the most infamous occasion of failed hunger strike occurred in Cork between 11 August and 12 November. Eleven prisoners – one convicted of murder and ten untried – endured up to ninety-four days without food before capitulating. Despite the continuous care of *Bon Secours* nuns, Michael Fitzgerald and Joseph Murphy died following what the Medical Officers clinically described as the 'gradual cessation of vital functions due to prolonged abstention from all forms of nourishment.'[156] It is perhaps a testament to their commitment to hunger strike, and to their fallen comrades, that the nine prisoners who survived endured an additional twenty-six days on strike after the death of Fitzgerald.

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[154] Patrick MacMahon to his mother, 30 Apr. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/3865).

[155] For an exchange between military minds on prisoner of war status, hunger strike and general military intervention in hunger strike cases see the correspondence of Sir Henry Wilson and Sir Nevil Macready, 2 July-30 Aug. 1920 (I.W.M., Sir Henry Wilson papers (H.H.W. 2/2A/34, 43-4, 46).

[156] Medical Officers' report [Alan Pearson and E. Battiscombe], 18 Oct.[Fitzgerald], 26 Oct.[Murphy] (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/9001; 9378).

Influence

Camaraderie and the influence of loyalty, and subsequently the fear of betraying one's comrades or the cause, were vital factors in the origins and prolonging of violence in Irish prisons during the Irish revolution. Campaigns for prisoner concessions, ameliorations, association and release provided justification for misbehaviour and violence, but in the majority of instances collective effort and interdependency provided personal validation and group stability.

If participation in prison violence, both externally- and internally-directed, can be gauged as an extension of loyalty to an individual, group or ideal, outside influences which acted to discourage such violence must also be considered – particularly when they involved familial and religious pressure.

There are several instances in which parents and siblings wrote to or visited their sons and brothers in prison. Most often visits were paid to encourage resistance, or provide comfort during hunger strike.[157] In rare instances, however, letters and visits discouraged participation in prison disorder or violence. Those who gave up hunger strike or refused violence due to familial pressure were thus able to deflect blame away from themselves. Martin O'Connor was a seventeen year-old boy awaiting court martial at Galway prison in April 1919. His mother wrote to the prison, concerned about the type of men Martin had fallen in with, and the influence they wielded over her son:

> I am very anxious that he should be made to realise the gravity of his position, ... I believe he has correspondents here who write and are telling him to keep stiff and not recognise the court. If any such letters are sent to him I shall feel obliged if you withhold them from him.[158]

External influence encouraging confrontation, however, was most common. For instance, untried Mountjoy prisoner John Whelan was reprimanded by his brother Dick for

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[157] Christopher 'Todd' Andrews was visited in Mountjoy by his father during a hunger strike in April 1920. (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/2626). Similarly, Michael Joyce and John Furey were visited by their mothers in Galway the following month. (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/4076; 4101 [both attached to G.P.B. 1920/11827]). Thomas Reilly threatened Cork Medical Officer Alan Pearson in September 1920 following a visit to his enfeebled brother Michael, stating 'If my brother dies I hold you responsible, Doctor'. (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7431-3; 7439; 7441-2; 7486).

[158] Mrs O'Connor to Shewell, 10 Apr. 1919; J. Craig [Chief Warder, Galway] to Max Green, 12 Apr. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3013). Letters of intervention from Irish mothers were not uncommon. Kate McKeon wrote to Sir Henry Wilson in June 1921 in an appeal to save her son, John, from court martial. Kate McKeon to Sir Henry Wilson, 14 June 1921 (I.W.M., H.H.W., 2/2E/22).

attempting to engage a solicitor for court martial proceedings following his transfer from Cork in July 1920.

> My answer is that you and Larry Coleman are on no account to get a Solicitor or to recognise the Court. What is coming over you? Why are you showing the white feather now? I, for one, cannot understand it. ... Be sure to Prove yourself an Irishman when the trial comes off. Mary Kate and all at home are going on well, but they are feeling very cut up over your letter about the Solicitor.[159]

Letters of encouragement and familiarity were not only received by prisoners but sent out as well. While the majority of political prisoners during this period were young, single men, there were still a proportion whose imprisonment separated them from wives and children. A letter from an unidentified prisoner at Mountjoy in May 1919 provides evidence that encouragement was given to those on the outside as well:

> My dear son Dick, I received the parcel your mother sent in on Monday. ... You might send me in the Book of Recitations [and] if there is a book of old song send it to me[.] I asked Stevie to draw a few more pictures for me, I gave the ones he sent me to my comrades they liked them very much, but I had not enough to go round[.] I hope the copies of Willie's poems I asked for will be sent in. I and my comrades are keeping well and still following your sage advice [to keep] merry and bright ... at any rate they can't block the march of a nation to freedom and independence. God bless you, Dada.[160]

Periodic visits from civic leaders and clerical authority also helped to quell disorder in prisons; negotiations with prisoners by the Lord Mayors of Dublin and Belfast ended several outbreaks throughout this period.[161] Most often, however, prison governors and government authorities called on chaplains to exert moral pressure on prisoners to end disorder and stop hunger strike.[162] Only seldom did this prove successful. In one instance, however, when the medical officer at Cork, Dr D.J. Flynn, was unable to make headway

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[159] Dick Whelan to John Whelan, 23 July 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/6282).
[160] Unknown to 'Dick', 15 May 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/4431).
[161] The Doran episode at Belfast in December 1918/January 1919 was ultimately resolved by the intervention of the Lord Mayor and the Bishop of Down, see Chippendall to Green, 1 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/47).
[162] For requests of religious intervention, see John Irwin to Max Green, 15 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/447); J. Craig to Max Green, 6 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1060); I. MacCauley to MacDermot, 6 Apr. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3059); J. Craig to Max Green, 29 Apr. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/3384);

with hunger-striking prisoners in January 1920, he recommended that a 'priest should see them for moral treatment.'[163] Three prisoners took their food following visits from the chaplain.

On what grounds was religious influence exerted? In addition to concerns about a prisoner's physical health, clergymen feared for the men's souls as hunger strike was considered on a par with the mortal sin of suicide. The ecclesiastical debate over the im/morality of hunger strike was topical between 1918 and 1920. It was prompted by a series of articles within the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, in which the Very Rev. John Canon Waters, professor of theology at Clonliffe College, engaged the subject after allowing the resentment surrounding the deaths of Ashe and Coleman to cool. Waters's opening expression validated his delay: 'It is now possible to debate the question of the morality of the hunger strike without laying oneself open to the danger of wounding personal susceptibilities, or to the imputation of drawing theological conclusions to suit political prejudices.'[164] Waters did not claim to be an authority on the subject, but qualified his initiative based on his experience as Catholic chaplain serving at Mountjoy.[165]

In his article, which would provide a base of discussion for two years, Waters argued that death by an act, such as being killed on the battlefield, or when attempting to extinguish a fire, was not equal to death by omission, that is, death by abstaining from food. From a moral and contemporaneous standpoint, he argued that self-starvation was in fact worse than forced-feeding, and validated his position with the teachings of St. Thomas Aquinas, Cajetan and Lugo. Waters defended his position using extracts from the *Summa Theologica*, displaying that his arguments were unable to be disputed as 'teaching on the wickedness of suicide' had been established by Aquinas[166]: 'Suicide is always a mortal sin, the gravity of which surpasses that of fornication or adultery or murder, a sin which admits no more than they do, of justification or of being recommended as a means of furthering a political programme.'[167]

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[163] Cork prison, 6-7 Jan. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/139; 179).

[164] John Canon Waters, 'The morality of the hunger-strike' in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, fifth series, xii (Aug. 1918), pp 89-108.

[165] Two accounts give evidence of Waters' ministration. In February 1918 Waters was distraught to find that hunger strike prisoner Joseph McMahon was informed that he would not be artificially fed or released. 'I wish especially to send my protest ... to McMahon', Waters told Green; 'and to say that I think it unfair to him and in a sense cruel.' Waters to Green, 10 Feb. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/794). Todd Andrews described a visit from Waters while on hunger strike in 1920. 'He did not use the word "suicide" but that was what he meant. He was a miserably unpleasant personality. Thin lipped, thin faced, he was as narrow in mind as in looks.' Andrews, *Dublin made me*, p. 142.

[166] St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theological*, II. II, Q. lxiv, art. 5-6.

[167] Waters, 'The morality of hunger-strike', p. 92. For Todd Andrews experience with a priest during hunger strike in 1920, see C. S. Andrews, *Dublin made me* (Dublin, 1979), p. 142.

Waters' principal critic, Rev. Patrick Cleary, found several glaring inadequacies with these 'cavalier' observations and examples which, he claimed, raised more questions than provided answers.[168] Chief among them was the way in which prisoners viewed themselves and their actions. Waters provided his own impressions of prisoners who admitted that hunger strike was suicide but, under the circumstances of their imprisonment, was morally just:[169]

> Exposure of one's life to danger from outside is of very frequent occurrence, and not only soldiers but priests, doctors, nurses, and men in any occupation may be called on from time to time to expose their lives in the service of others, or perhaps in their own interest. Men who surrender what is so dear to everyone, as life is, we rightly regard as martyrs and heroes, and their example is a perpetual inspiration to the patriot and to the Christian. Such exposing of one's life to hazard is not suicide, for death is always the consequence of the action of others. ... Soldiers are not killed by themselves, but by the enemy.[170]

It was this very line of discourse which allowed Waters's overall argument to be so dissected; many prisoners continued to view themselves as soldiers despite incarceration, and thus diverse interpretation of Waters's argument prevented a universal moral judgement. Debate between Waters and Clear continued in subsequent issues of the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*,[171] and several editorials and letters to the editor were scattered within the pages of the *Irish Independent* throughout 1920, contributed by Rev. Dudley Fletcher (who supported Waters) and 'Junis', 'Sacerdos Lageniensis', 'Northern Priest' and 'Cato' who disagreed.[172]

Archbishop William Walsh was strangely silent on the issue of hunger strike. His papers are absent of any overt condemnation of the practice, or disapproval of those who

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[168] P. Cleary, 'Some questions regarding the morality of hunger-strikes' in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, fifth series, vol. xii (Oct. 1918), pp 265-73.
[169] Waters, 'The morality of hunger-strike', p. 90.
[170] Ibid., p. 95. Bourke introduces her work on the intimacy of killing in similar manner, claiming that moral integrity is often claimed by those whose actions are in defence of nation or higher establishment. Bourke, *An intimate history of killing*, p. xix.
[171] Waters, 'The morality of hunger-strike: a rejoinder' in the *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, fifth series, vol. xiii (January to June1919), pp 14-26; Cleary, 'Some further questions regarding the morality of hunger-strikes' in *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, fifth series, vol. xiii (January to June 1919), pp 219-229; Waters, 'The morality of hunger-strikes: a further rejoinder', ... pp 391-403. A separate debate occurred in the *Irish Theological Quarterly*, between Dr Fitzpatrick and Dr Kelleher.
[172] *Irish Independent*, 25 Nov. 1919; 26 Apr. 1920; 12-15, 17, 19, 21-2, 24 May 1920. International condemnation of the Government's hunger strike policy was voiced throughout Europe, particularly France, following the death of Terence MacSwiney. *Irish Independent*, 3 Sept. 1920.

supported it as a political tool. Instead, the bishops, priests and laity who wrote to Walsh on the issue of hunger strike preferred to identify the practice as a reaction to oppressive government, and pressed the archbishop for his support in publicly condemning, as one resolution put it, 'the brutal treatment of the Irish political prisoners'.[173] Walsh adopted this line of thought, though it may be said he held these views for some time. The archbishop was among the first to write to Laurence O'Neill, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, following the death of Thomas Ashe to request how he could 'take part in the public protest' that would find expression in the funeral.[174] Although Walsh, described by Dermot Keogh as 'the single most important Roman Catholic ecclesiastical leader in Ireland' during this period, and a man 'of considerable standing with specialist knowledge in the fields of theology, law, economics and the natural sciences', did not openly debate the morality of hunger strike, it was clear where his sympathies lay.[175] He cut a cheque for the Dáil loan in 1919, buttressed what he referred to as 'the national spirit of the people', and condemned martial law in parts of Ireland.[176]

The influence of those outside the immediate sphere of the prison, therefore, contributed very little into the decision to enter into, or endure the hardships of hunger strike. Although external influence – familial and perhaps military – certainly played upon men's minds, the camaraderie of those actually on strike determined the length and severity of their protest. 'I am bound to say that I had but a very limited success in inducing the strikers to adopt my views', conceded Waters. 'Their resolution was, as a rule invincible, being proof against argument and persuasion alike.'[177]

Strain on staff

The violent behaviour of political prisoners took its toll on prison staff and administration, and further dissolved the patience of the General Prisons Board and Irish Government. It was recognised early on that the philosophy of political prisoners – to defy authority at every opportunity and transform prisons into warzones – placed an unprecedented responsibility on warders and prison governors. H.J. Chippendall reflected on the situation following the Doran episode at Belfast in late 1918:

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[173] Tom Kelly to William Walsh, 2 Nov. 1918 (Dublin Archdiocesan Archives [D.A.A.], Walsh papers, 1918/laity/386/2). See also, 'Petition of appeal to Archbishop Walsh', c. 1920 (D.A.A., Walsh papers, 1920/bishops/380/1); 'Protest made by the Catholic chaplains, Mountjoy prison', 12 Apr. 1920 (DAA, Walsh papers, 1920/priests-religious/380/2).
[174] William Walsh to Laurence O'Neill, 29 Sept. 1917 (N.L.I., MS 35,294/1).
[175] Dermot Keogh, *The Vatican, the bishops and Irish politics 1919-39* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 8.
[176] Ibid., pp 36-9.
[177] Waters, 'The morality of hunger-strike', p. 89.

> I will place on record the fact that I consider the congregating of a number of prisoners of this class, all of whom claim to be soldiers of the Irish Republican Army, together at an ordinary prison, is involving very serious risk, and placing on the Governor of the Prison a responsibility which I respectfully submit was neither provided for or contemplated when Acts of Parliament governing prison administration were framed. ... The position in my humble opinion is ludicrous[.][178]

The physical and mental health of overexerted warders periodically broke down while attempting to hold political prisoners to the standards of prescribed discipline. Belfast's Chief Warder Moran went insane and was committed to Richmond Lunatic Asylum following the nearly incessant disruption at the prison from June-December 1918. Committal to a sanatorium was uncommon, but illustrates the extent to which warders were psychologically affected by their duties. Unremitting requests for sick leave by Belfast's warders over the same period were more common, but may not necessarily be a testament to overwork. The outbreak of Spanish flu that affected prisoners no doubt also infected prison staff.[179] Warders who had hitherto displayed authority became noticeably 'nervy': 'they have become mere machines and report events in place of acting on their own initiative.'[180]

In addition to the stress of duty, warders and governors were further unnerved by verbal and written threats, assaults and damage to their private property. For instance, J. Lyster was threatened by three separate DORA prisoners at Belfast in late March 1919. He reported,

> J. McMahon has threatened to assault me with an iron bar at first opportunity he can get. Prisoner McCarthy stated I was the means of putting on restrictions on them in their cells since I came here and that they would cut the bloody head off me. Prisoner Noonan threatened me by saying that if he could get out of his cell he would smash my big head that it was my fault for keeping them locked up.[181]

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[178] 'Statement of occurrences in the prison recently', H.J. Chippendall, 4 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/164).
[179] Green to Under-Secretary, 18 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/n.n.).
[180] Chippendall to Green, 2 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/133). Additional reports of anxiety and nervous breakdown were submitted throughout the period. See 'Extract from M.O.'s journal', 14 May 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/4410); Chippendall to Green, 29 Dec. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/9573).
[181] J. Lyster to Barrows, 26 Mar. 1919; Barrows to Chairman; 27, 31 Mar. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/2523; 2611).

Lyster was not physically harmed by these prisoners, but later in the week received the contents of a chamber pot courtesy of Thomas Fitzpatrick.[182]

Threatening letters reached prisons at various times, most frequently in connection with an outbreak which required restraint, or hunger strike. Similar to resolutions from city councils, these letters were commonly addressed to the prison itself, directing the author's grievance toward the faceless house of captivity. For instance, on 16 October 1919 Mountjoy prison received separate letters from the mothers of Gearoid O'Sullivan and James O'Driscole, both recently transferred from Cork, respectively stating that they were 'holding you responsible for consequences to my son'.[183] In other cases, letters were directed to specific warders, who became aware that they had been explicitly targeted. A letter received by Mountjoy Chief Warder Patrick Ryan read:

> Patrick J. Ryan. This is to give you notice that unless you resign from position as Warder of Mountjoy Prison within 14 days from this date your hour of judgement will have come. THIS IS FINAL. Failing your resignation, you will receive the just reward of your treatment of the Political Prisoners who were under your mercy. There will be no mercy for a dog like you – we shoot straight and sure! So clear out or prepare your soul. [signed] 'Vengence'.[184]

Medical officers attracted special attention from letter-writers, as their authority determined when a prisoner had reached the 'danger point' of hunger strike, or when he was fit for deportation or release under the 'cat and mouse' act. Those committed to their protest feared its interruption by forced-feeding, though this had been almost wholly abandoned in Ireland following the death of Thomas Ashe. In September 1920, amidst a lengthy and lethal hunger strike in Cork, the newly appointed medical officer, Dr Alan Pearson, received the following letter from the O.C., no.1 brigade, IRA:

> To Dr Pearson, Cork Male Prison. As your professional attendance upon the eleven hunger strikers in Cork Gaol gives a tinge of legality to the slow murder being perpetrated upon them, you are hereby ordered to leave the Gaol at once, and

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[182] Ibid.
[183] Mrs. O'Driscole to Munro; Mrs. O'Sullivan to Munro, 16 Oct. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/7480-1).
[184] 'Threatening letter received by Chief Warder Ryan', 25 Aug. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7075).

> the country within 24 hours of this date – 3 o'clock p.m. Sept. 6th 1920. Failure to comply with this order will incur drastic punishment.[185]

Pearson hypothesised that this threat had been generated by public misunderstanding that he had *not* recommended the release of the 11 hunger strikers, a notion he denied outright.[186] Another medical man called to attend the Cork hunger strikers, Dr. D.J. Flynn, refused his duty after receiving word of the I.R.A. threat to Pearson. In a letter to the governor he explained,

> Having been called by the Governor to see prisoners on hunger strike I attended at the Prison, but as my life would not be worth a day's purchase if I attempted to examine or visit these prisoners I consequently regret that under the present conditions I cannot see or prescribe for them.[187]

Although frustrated with the position in which he had been placed,[188] Pearson was not intimidated by the I.R.A.'s threat, though he did request that the Under-Secretary send a reassuring letter to his wife and mother.[189] Pearson remained at Cork prison until the end of the strike in early November; he then hurriedly returned home to England on 15 November citing 'urgent private matters'.[190]

Not all intimidation occurred within the prison; warders were increasingly intimidated and assaulted within their own communities. John Boland recalled how, as early as 1917, the misunderstood responsibility of prison duty was inescapable: 'When I went home to see father who was dangerously ill in 1917, the house was surrounded, horns

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[185] O/C, no. 1 brigade, I.R.A. to Alan Pearson, 6 Sept. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7486).
[186] 'I am informed that the idea is prevalent locally that I have not recommended the release of these prisoners according to SO No. 1. I have to request that this erroneous belief be contradicted as my recommendation was embodied in the 1st report which I sent after reporting for duty [1 Sept.].' Medical officer's report, 4 Sept. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7441). To help bring objectivity to the situation, Pearson requested that an independent physician, an 'alienist', examine the hunger strikers. M.O.'s report, 9 Sept. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7615). Pearson was assisted from mid-September by Dr E. Battiscombe. M.O.'s report, 16 Nov. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/10276).
[187] D.J. Flynn to J. King, 6 Sept. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7491).
[188] Pearson was requested to furnish numerous reports on the condition of the Cork hunger strikers to satisfy Government requirements. He claimed this was impossible as the prisoners refused to see him, and that the situation could only be rectified by the prisoners taking nourishment. M.O.'s report, 6 Sept. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7516).
[189] Max Green to Under-Secretary, 9 Sept. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7614).
[190] M.O.'s report, 16 Nov. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/10276).

were blown and people called me murderer. This was because I did my duty in the Ashe case while Acting Governor of Mountjoy.'[191]

The period in question also witnessed more violent confrontations. John Comerford reported that as he and fellow-warder Thomas Griffin were going off-duty in early October 1920, they were accosted by several men outside the prison gates. Griffin was abducted while Comerford was held at bay by two men with revolvers. 'During the evening', Comerford stated, 'my house was watched by three men who were parading up and down the footpath on the opposite side of the street. These three men wore fawn or grey trench coats and were each about 22 to 24 years of age ... and wore Trilby hats.'[192] In Dublin the following spring, Mountjoy medical officer B. Hackett reported that a mob of 'hooligans and guttersnipes' destroyed his garden, broke open his tool house, smashed pictures and china within his home, and 'stole and damaged every scrap of property that could be stolen or damaged.' Hackett confessed that the assault was the tenth instance in which his property had been destroyed.[193]

Discrimination within one's own community was experienced on a par with members of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Two ostracised Cork warders requested increased pay in the summer of 1920 to meet their rising costs of living. They were being refused service at local shops, and claimed they had to sometimes 'try a number of shops before they would be served and then having to pay high rates.'[194]

The Government acknowledged the hardships of their prison warders, governors and medical officers, both in prison and increasingly within their communities. In mid-1920 the General Prisons Board made recommendations to the Treasury to secure special recognition for the service of prison staff during the preceding years. Returns from various prisons throughout Ireland citing events from 1917-20, though too lengthy to reproduce here, exemplify the extent to which Irish prisons had indeed been transformed into warzones.[195] The prophetic words of Eoin MacNeill had been realised. In and out of Irish prisons the captors had become captives.[196]

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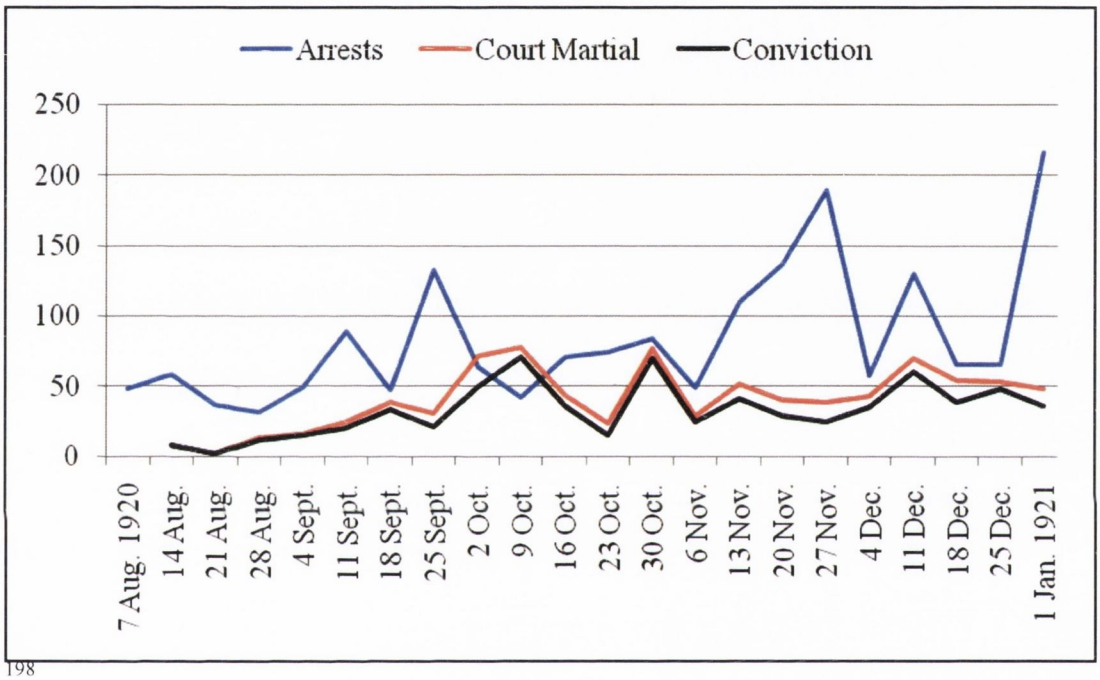
[191] Sworn statement of John Boland, 21 Nov. 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/9687).
[192] 'Warder Comerford's report', 11 Oct. 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/8709).
[193] B. Hackett to Munro, 15 Mar. 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/2303). Mountjoy governor Charles Munro also complained of vandalism, though not to the extent experienced by Hackett.
[194] 'Extract from Inspector's [Chippendall's] Report', 19 July 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/5979).
[195] Return of prison conditions, broken down health, deprivation of relaxation, and other relevant aspects of prison disorder, 1917-20, Chippendall to various governors, 21 May 1920 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1920/7224).
[196] MacNeill's insightful lament, which coincided with the deaths of Kevin Barry and Terence MacSwiney, read: 'In prison we are their jailers; On trial their judges, Persecuted their punishers, Dead their conquerors.' Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins: the man who made Ireland* (United Kingdom, 1990), p. 156.

1921

Coupled with the violent behaviour of prisoners, and the politically charged sentiment surrounding hunger strikes, attempts to discipline prisoners gradually gave way to frequent calls for removal, and deportation to British prisons.[197] This practice gained momentum between 1918 and 1920, and by 1921 had become the default solution to the overcrowded Irish prisons that resulted from consistently high arrest returns, detailed below.

Chart 5.13: Weekly summary of arrests, courts martial and convictions, 7 August 1920-1 January 1921



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Close tabs were kept on Irishmen deported to British prisons. Art O'Brien acted as an Irish ambassador in London throughout the Anglo-Irish War; his correspondence with members of Dáil Éireann kept the friends and family members of prisoners informed of their fates.[199]

Though less likely to be deported, by 1921 the number of women imprisoned for crimes committed in martial law areas, or contrary to the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act, was substantial. In response to a parliamentary question in late May, it was reported

[197] For a series of deportations in 1921, see 'List of 40 convicted prisoners recommended for removal to England from Mountjoy Prison', 27 Apr. 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/3386); 'Removal of prisoners to England', 10 May 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/3636); 'List of convicts for removal', 26 May 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/4078).

[198] 'Weekly summary of arrests, courts martial and convictions, 7 Aug. 1920 – 1 Jan. 1921' (I.M.A., Collins papers, A/0410, Group VIII).

[199] One large file in particular traces deportations, imprisonment and movements of hundreds of Irish prisoners from August 1920 through September 1921. The correspondence of Art O'Brien with both British and Irish officials, particularly Michael Collins, features prominently. See N.A.I., DE 2/453; DE 2/135. Naturally, the British kept extensive files of Irish internees as well. See T.N.A., HO 144/1496/362269.

that 402 women had been convicted and imprisoned, while an additional nine were being held without trial. Those convicted had been found guilty of a variety of crimes, ranging from the possession of seditious documents to 'communicating information to certain persons' and 'using a bicycle at 20.40 hours'.[200] By far the most recurring crime, however, was breaking curfew – no doubt committed in aid of military operations, such as passing information or running interference. That such a large proportion of women were imprisoned on the eve of the Truce is a testament to the essential role women placed during the Irish revolution.

The Truce of July 1921 failed to halt outbreaks and hunger strikes within Irish prisons.[201] On the contrary, the Truce served to further unite prisoners in the impression of imminent victory and national independence. Furthermore, the Truce emboldened prisoners who had been vindicated in their claims that they were indeed prisoners of war.[202] Continuous requests for concessions and special treatment were submitted to prison governors, framed within the 'spirit of the Truce'. Prison discipline relaxed in some cases, often with damning consequences. For instance, forty-four prisoners escaped from Kilkenny prison through a narrow tunnel on 22 November after weeks of unobserved preparation. Chairman Green concluded that the escape was the fault of the prison's governor, John Boland (mentioned above), whose failure, it was reported, had 'been largely due to his over anxiety to avoid conflict with the special class of prisoners ... who undoubtedly were most unruly and difficult to control during the period of the Truce.'[203] Despite a significant police and military presence throughout the summer and autumn of 1921, Irish prisons remained bastions of defiance.[204] Disorder and violence continued in spite the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, and was sustained despite the evacuation of the British forces from Ireland. Little conjecture was required by Free State warders and soldiers, many former prisoners themselves, as to the origins or motivation for violence that was exhibited in prisons and camps throughout the Irish Civil War.

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[200] 'Women imprisoned under Restoration of Order in Ireland Act or under Martial Law', 24 May 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/3924).
[201] See for example hunger strikes at Waterford prison (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/9824); Galway prison (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/9785); Mountjoy prison (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/9287); Limerick (G.P.B. 1921/3516; 3437).
[202] Governor, Waterford prison to Green, 9 Oct. 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/8119 [attached to G.P.B. 1921/8141]).
[203] 'Sworn inquiry into escapes at Kilkenny on 22 Nov. 1921', Green to Under-Secretary, 20 Dec. 1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/9687).
[204] 'Strength of police and military at various Irish prisons, 1921'(N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/3727).

III. PRISON CULTURE

One significant yet unexplored area of research surrounding prison scholarship is the establishment of a distinct Irish prison culture throughout the British Isles during the Irish Revolution. During periods of rest or association – when not plotting outbreaks or enduring hunger strike – political prisoners requested and read a great variety of books, continued university studies, prepared plays and skits, organised secret societies, penned satirical letters and published prison journals. Components of the overall experience of the political prisoner, these activities, though quite different from organised violence, were not exclusive from the construction of an overall loyalty.

Prisoners consumed dozens of Board-approved books from the prison library; warders' and officers' choices, however, differed greatly from prisoners'. For instance, Tom Kettle's *The ways of war*, was on offer to Londonderry's officers throughout 1920, while Bodkin's *Famous Irish trials* was available to prisoners; *Tom Sawyer* and *The adventures of Huckleberry Finn* were familiar to both officers and prisoners throughout Ireland. On the whole, general histories of Ireland and France, detective novels and Shakespeare were staples of prison libraries throughout the period.[205]

Books of specific interest were also periodically requested by prisoners. Hubert Hunt requested that Mitchel's *Jail journal* and *History of Ireland* be sent into him at Mountjoy in October 1917. They were granted during the relaxed period of prison discipline that followed the death of Thomas Ashe.[206] Similarly granted was George Plunkett's request for several books on Irish mythology, early modern Irish history, and methods of teaching Irish. They were sent to him at Londonderry in mid-1918.[207] Removed to hospital following hunger strike, Seán Brown requested a series of books connected with his interest in the Irish and German languages, including *Faust* and *Hoeren Geshicten*.[208] Books which served to educate rather than entertain were perhaps most numerous during the period. In many cases, however, their request was not made in order to simply pass time.[209] A small proportion of prisoners were university students, and imprisonment presented an unwelcomed interruption to their studies. Finian Lynch, for instance, was studying for an M.A. and requested a series of books required for his

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[205] 'Library books for officers and prisoners', c. 1919-1921 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/10912 [located in box N.A.I., G.P.B. 1921/10909]).
[206] Munro to Green, 16 Oct. 1917 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1917/4179).
[207] 'Books requested by George Plunkett', 22 May 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/3417).
[208] Brown to Green, 22 July 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/4681); Brown to Munro, 31 Dec. 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/10);
[209] For instance, Denis Johnson requested a complete set of educational books on the Irish language, pens and paper be sent into Sligo prison in 1917 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1917/4063);

course.[210] Garrett Scanlon, though only serving a one month sentence at Cork in mid-1918, requested books on anatomy, physiology and histology in order to prepare for his exams the following September.[211] Patrick Mullins, another medical student preparing for exams at Galway, was more practical. He requested dissecting tools, forceps, human bones and a preserved human brain be sent into Galway prison.[212] All students' requests were eventually granted.

The consumption of literary material was exceeded by the production of letters and journals, the organisation of prison societies and plays, and an array of amateur art. Letter-writing requires little mention here. As documented throughout this chapter, letters not only provided vital contact with those on the outside (if they in fact passed the censor), but they also provide an essential foundation towards further understanding the motivations, actions and reflections of Irish political prisoners throughout the revolution. Adorned with sarcastic artwork, such as those of John Morrow below, letters were often transformed to reflect a prisoner's humour and interpretation of his circumstances.

Photo 5.2: 'Mountjoy Loyal Hotel and Restaurant'

[213]

Group projects also helped to pass time, but more importantly contributed to solidarity. Putting on plays, for example, commonly occurred in Irish prisons, and was evident as early as 1918. Ernest Blythe recalled performing in a play entitled 'Let us spray' shortly after his arrival at Belfast.[214] L.J. Walsh produced 'The guileless Saxon', which was performed by the 'Ballykinlar Ulster Players' in early November 1921. The

[210] J. Boland to Green, 6 Sept. 1917 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1917/3451).
[211] Scanlon to Green, c. July 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1918/4761).
[212] Mullins to Green, 11 Feb. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1228).
[213] 'Letters from prisoner John Morrow – headings and adornments of letters objectionable'. Morrow to George Dockrill, T.C.D., 2 June 1919; Morrow to Mrs Jack Morrow, 4 June 1919; Morrow to 'James', 30 May 1918 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/4317).
[214] Ernest Blythe (B.M.H., W.S. 939).

variety of 'guileless Saxons' included an R.I.C. officer, an English journalist and a chimney sweep. Several prisoners were cast in these rolls. The choir was composed of 'Comrades in Arms', and 'The Soldier's Song' served as the finale.[215]

'Secret societies' were also organised in prisons, notably at Dundalk in 1918 and later in Belfast. Paddy Sweeney organised a society known as 'The Roughs and Toughs' at Dundalk. Members partook in an initiation ceremony, and used secret sign language and passwords. Another prisoner society, 'The Ku Klux Klan', was begun along the same lines; Dick McKee, Michael Brennan and Ernest Blythe were members. The purpose of these societies remains unclear as being a political prisoner was in its own right exclusive. From what little evidence exists it appears that 'secret societies' were simply vehicles for practical jokes. A 'No collar' society was formed in Belfast, where men went around the prison removing the tie and collar from anyone wearing them. 'Water throwing' was another practical joke, in which tins of water would be poured from upper levels on to unsuspecting prisoners below, perhaps inspiring the title 'Let us spray' mentioned above. Kevin O'Higgins was identified as a chief 'water thrower' – much to the annoyance of his fellow-inmates. Blythe recorded some of the future minister's antics: 'I have a picture of a man being held down on the ground by four others while Kevin poured a large bucket of water over him, beginning at his head and going slowly down to his toes.'[216]

Written journals were by far the most collaborative embodiment of political culture amongst prisoners during the period. They were constructed entirely within the prison, contained articles ranging from light-hearted sarcastic jabs at prison life to serious political commentary, and displayed unique artwork. Blythe determined that the popularity of his journal 'Glór na Corcrach', which was read every Sunday afternoon to prisoners who had crowded into the laundry, was responsible for his election as prison commandant at Belfast.[217] 'The Barbed Wire' was the product of Ballykinlar internment camp in August 1921. It contained advice columns, poetry, G.A.A. news, further performances of the Ballykinlar players,[218] and schedules of Irish classes held at the camp. Entertainment and satire, however, remained premium, as evidenced in the following excerpt:

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[215] 'The Guileless Saxon', L.J. Walsh c. Nov. 1921 (I.M,A,, Art O'Donnell, CD 261/1/5).
[216] Ernest Blythe (B.M.H., W.S. 939).
[217] Ibid.
[218] 'Of the many Camp activities there are few in which the hearty thanks of the men have been better won, than by the Ballkinlar Players in providing for our amusement.' Plays included, 'Hyacint Halvey', 'The Eloquent Dempsey', 'The suburban groove' and 'The Lord Mayor'.

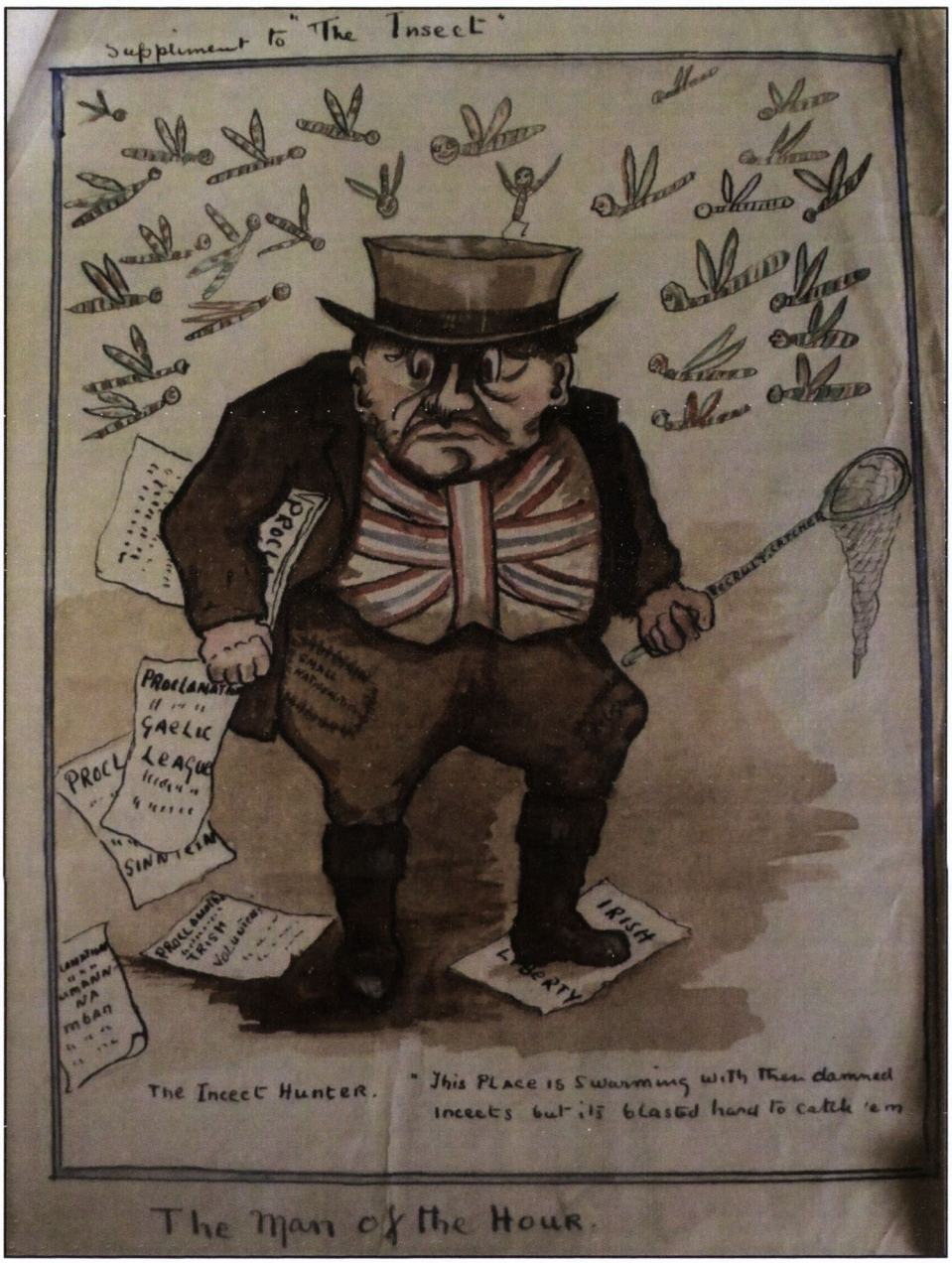
> Cranks and soreheads and carping critics blinded by their own folly many see imaginary flaws in this the first issue of our widely-circulated, and highly cultured periodical. They may even sneer at the figures, showing our enormous sales, which we intend to publish at the completion of the Twentieth Century ... but, without fear and unblushingly, we state that the circulation of 'The Barbed Wire' is four or five hundred times greater than that of any other magazine published in Ballkinlar.[219]

The production of prison journals were not hindered by geography or the Treaty. 'The Insect' journal was produced at Lincoln jail in September 1918.[220] It featured several watercolours made more impressive given the limitation of prison materials.

[219] 'The barbed wire', Ballykinlar camp, 19 Aug. 1921 (NAI, M 7129).

[220] 'The insect', Lincoln jail, 1 Sept. 1918 (N.L.I., Sean O'Mahony papers, MS 24,458); Margaret Brennan, North Dublin Union, c. May-July 1923 (MA, captured documents, lot 139 North Dublin Union). In reference to prisoners, the term 'insect' only appeared in one other instance, in a letter by J.W. Reid, a prisoner at Belfast. He stated 'But us healthy insects have only stir about the soup!!', commenting on the outbreak of influenza at the prison. J.W. Reid to unknown, 1 Nov. 1918 (NAI, DORA 1917-20, box 7, G.P.B. 1918/6972).

Photo 5.3: 'The man of the hour'



Margaret Brennan edited a journal written at the North Dublin Union in 1923, which featured poetry and articles defending the republic and lambasting the Free State, such as 'His Majesty's Free State Government', contributed from the fever hospital by Cait ni Fogluida:

Every day they sit in shame
Bartering her ancient name
For fear or flattery or gold
See what Irishmen have sold

Pearse's dreams; MacSwiney's pride
All the loyal dead who died
Now a meek thank offering
Laid before the English King
All the proud deeds of the Gael
All the dreams of Inisfail

The cultural material produced by Irishmen and women help to form a dyad opposite violence of the period. Violence, disorder and self-sacrifice dominate both the historiography of Irish political imprisonment as well as contemporary personal narratives. There remain to be examined, however, the introspective, literary and cultural aspects of imprisonment which are lost amidst more conventional concerns of political crime. The consumption and production of cultural material complement the study of loyalty as the analysis of relationships strengthened by imprisonment are incomplete if the daily and often banal existence of prisoners is neglected. Furthermore, cultural material lends further credence to contemporary arguments that Irish political prisoners were not political hooligans. As Alderman J.J. Kelly stated in an address to the Dublin Corporation in late January 1919, 'I state without fear of contradiction from anybody that view that each and everyone [political prisoner] is a refined, cultured, educated courageous Irishman.'[221]

Conclusion

It is difficult to determine the extent to which violence influenced the growth and sustention of loyalty in Irish prisons between 1919 and 1921 or, indeed, the extent to which loyalty prompted further violence. Loyalty itself is not tangible, and so we are forced to measure it by both contemporary expressions and participation. Both present problems. Prison diaries of the period are scarce and letters, though abundant, may have been written in patriotic tones intentionally to inspire the recipient, or present a heroic scenario for public consumption. Participation in prison violence may not be a true act of loyalty toward one's comrades, but simply, as Todd Andrews confessed, an act required of the circumstances.[222] Numerous individual variables, such as political outlook, ambition and willingness to commit violence shaped a prisoner's conduct, just as considerations of family, employment and health limited violent behaviour. While camaraderie and national

[221] Statment of J.J. Kelly, Dublin Corporation, 27 Jan. 1919 (N.A.I., G.P.B. 1919/1063).
[222] Andrews, *Dublin made me*, p. 145.

outlook may have transformed one's attitude (and aptitude) toward violence, it was not *fait accompli*. Conscientious objectors existed, acting either in opposition to the group, or participating as little as possible. This reality prohibits an all-encompassing theory of prison violence based on the actions of the majority of political prisoners. Conversely, it preserves and promotes loyalty as a branch of scholarship which requires both deep empirical research and broad comparative components in order to form conclusions. That a majority of Irish political prisoners committed acts of violence against Irish prisons and against themselves, and that these acts furthered a sense of camaraderie and loyalty, are evident in the tens of thousands of documents which record their activity between 1919 and 1921. If these men and women truly believed in the ideals and partnerships which motivated their violent behaviour may never be known.

Further questions arise from this particular focus on prison loyalty which may reveal more about the nature and continuity of Irish political imprisonment. Quantifying political crime and its punishment within military, political and legal perspective would no doubt lend insight toward government decisions surrounding ameliorations, release or deportation and the application of each throughout the period. Social contexts of prison loyalty also require exploration. The role republican prisoner aid societies and the wider community played in sustaining prisoners physically (with food, parcels and cigarettes) and morally (with petitions, resolutions and visits) add the dimension of family and community to an established platform of prison loyalty and mutual support. The experience of Irish political prisoners in Britain has not been explored here. Although their artistic output has been documented, mainly taking the form of prison autograph books,[223] a study examining violence, behaviour and camaraderie in a perhaps less-lenient prison atmosphere and removed from one's native county may reveal contrasting results. Finally, examining the continuity of prison behaviour – both violent and artistic – from the late nineteenth through the twentieth-century will bring the emphasis of prison loyalty as explored in this chapter to the fore, and provide a more complete understanding of imprisonment and its place in the Irish nationalist psyche.

Despite these shortcomings, prison loyalty, as well as the camaraderie and violence on which it was based, comprise a vital segment to the understanding of loyalty during the Irish revolution. Imprisonment tested both body and mind of all who endured it. Some escaped mentally and physically unscathed, and were able to carry on the fight in another

[223] See particularly, Lincoln prison autograph book, c. 1918 (N.A.I., E.F.P., 999-808) and the Seán O'Mahony papers (N.L.I., MS 24,458).

form outside. Others remained inside – silent, alone, contemplative. The intensity and frequency with which prisoners attacked warders and destroyed their cells during the Anglo-Irish War was replicated to a great extent during the Irish Civil War. The majority of prison violence during this period, however, took the form of hunger strike and at times included thousands of participants. The cohesion of earlier years, however, was lost within the social, political and military divide of the country. Grave religious pressure also exposed disunity and broke prisoners' resolve. Overall, enthusiasm and temperance became diluted, and resistance was eventually abandoned. Joseph Campbell, a prisoner at Tintown internment camp, represented the view of perhaps thousands when he conceded, 'The damned country is not worth all this suffering.'[224]

[224] Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin (ed), *'As I was among the captives': Joseph Campbell's prison diary, 1922-1923* (Cork, 2001), diary entry for Sunday 28 October 1923, p. 105.

CONCLUSION

Loyalty played an undeniable role in helping to form identities, negotiate relationships and enforce collective action during the Irish Revolution. The extent of loyalty's influence over individuals, groups and their behaviour, however, is debatable. As this thesis has demonstrated, one's declared loyalty did not always overlap with one's behaviour. Conversely, behaviour often ran contradictory to one's loyalties, in whichever way they were defined or prioritised. Examples of such inconsonance should not necessarily carry a brand of treason or betrayal, although this was at times the label affixed during the revolutionary period. Instead, they contribute to the complexity of the subject, and highlight the presence of multiple or conflicting loyalties in groups as well as individuals. In this regard, numerous external considerations, such as family, financial security and personal safety overlapped with one's national convictions. These considerations ultimately prevented individuals from acting solely upon what might be termed their immediate moral or patriotic principles. Furthermore, it may be argued that these multiple loyalties account for far more *in*activity during the revolutionary period than has previously been acknowledged. Any study that examines behaviour as part of an overall historical inquiry, therefore – particularly one which measures participation as a component of loyalty – must consider these deviations and be prepared to accommodate such incongruities.

The term 'loyalty' may, in and of itself, be equally inadequate when attempting to explain personal or collective mentalities and actions. Although historical loyalty was specifically defined in this thesis to mean the outlooks that resulted from compounding social, cultural and political influences, the terms 'camaraderie' or 'solidarity' might be applied in the same context. Far from being mere synonyms, they may offer a less-rigid and less theory-based approach to the topic. One which, instead of attempting to quantify behaviour, would simply describe the phenomena of men and women banding together in groups and associations as a result of shared histories and common outlooks.

The subjects and episodes presented here nevertheless help to answer some of the fundamental questions outlined at the beginning of this thesis. First, what was it to be loyal in Ireland during the revolutionary period, and how were these loyalties demonstrated? Definitions of what constituted loyalty certainly varied amongst the groups examined. Most often, as was the case with the Irish Volunteers, Irish National Volunteers and men of Casement's Irish Brigade, the definition of loyalty was initially vague, but

carried with it the basic premises of Irish nationalism prior to the Easter Rising. To champion Gaelic culture and to defend Irish freedom (in the case of the Irish Volunteers) or work to achieve Irish freedom (in the case of the Irish Brigade), were endeavours some believed exemplified loyalty to Ireland. As it was also noted, the Ulster Volunteers' stance in defence of the Union, or Irish enlistment in the British Army during the war was also viewed by its respective participants as loyal. In most cases, therefore, loyalty was believed to be demonstrated through participation.

Participation was also held as an expression of loyalty for both the Royal Irish Constabulary and Irish political prisoners, but its terms were defined differently. Irish constables were expected by the public to enlist for war service; the fraction of those who did so prior to Easter 1916 was set against the total number of policemen in Ireland in an attempt to portray members of the Force as shirkers. Their small number, although proportionally higher than Irish enlistment in general, was used by a portion of Irish society to justify complaints of over-policing and to question constables' loyalty to Ireland and the empire throughout the Great War. Many additional factors, however – particularly government restrictions on police enlistment – prevent such labels from being accepted. Conversely, the loyalty of Irish political prisoners was gauged not by the number incarcerated in connection with the independence movement, but by how many participated in the violent outbreaks. Similar to the case of the R.I.C., inactivity brought condemnation and isolation.

Definitions of loyalty, and the ways it could be demonstrated, prompt the question of authorship: who defined the terms of loyalty during this period and how did this change over time? In all cases the definition of loyalty and how it could be exemplified was external, that is, provided by either a leader or applied to the group in question by an outside source. For instance, chapters one and two showed how the purpose of the Irish Volunteers, initially outlined by Eoin MacNeill, evolved through successive changes in leadership. John Redmond, and later by Maurice Moore, significantly altered the ways in which the loyalty of the Volunteers could be demonstrated by more clearly defining the organisation's objectives. This is best demonstrated by Redmond who, at the outbreak of the Great War, cited home defence and later enlistment as examples of duty and loyalty to Ireland. As stated above, the loyalty to which the R.I.C. was to conform was entirely external. Public and government outcry for police enlistment established a template for wartime loyalty that extended far beyond police ranks. In addition to declaring membership in the Irish Brigade as an expression of loyalty to Ireland, Roger Casement

privately acknowledged such actions were treasonous – a view Brigade men would also come to realise. Finally, although prison violence was most often decided upon by prison commandants, such as Austin Stack and Ernest Blythe, collective participation was viewed by the individual as an expression of loyalty. Furthermore, there is evidence to suggest that G.H.Q. issued directives during the Anglo-Irish War toward violent action in Irish prisons, thus adding external expectations to the internal pressure to conform. Although conceptions of personal loyalty were formed throughout their lives, externally-defined outlets for loyalty go some way to explaining both individual and group behaviour during this period.

The greatest change in how loyalty was defined during the Irish Revolution, however, came in what was described by Peter Hart as the 'new certainties' that emerged following the Easter Rising.[1] These occurred in political, military and social realms between 1917 and 1921, transformed communal relationships – particularly in religiously diverse communities – and helped to radicalise individuals. While these trends have not been exclusively dealt with in this thesis, the methodological foundation of historical loyalty laid here provides a possible framework for future study.

Two additional points have been explored in this thesis that requires mention here: conflicting loyalties and the concept that loyalty may at times be circumstantial. It was suggested throughout this thesis that factors which curtailed participation in groups or movements were often personal and therefore not immediately observable. It was also often the case that established loyalties conflicted with the evolving definitions of Irish loyalty that surfaced during the revolutionary period. This was most obvious in the case of the R.I.C., some of whom resigned throughout 1918 instead of forcing conscription on their fellow-countrymen. To a lesser degree, many Irish National Volunteers dropped out of the movement throughout 1915 rather than appear efficient at drill and attract the attention of army recruiters. The evidence of Casement's internal conflict is abundant. His diaries and letters reveal a man obsessed with the treason he had committed, and concerned for the men he persuaded to join the Irish Brigade.

The Irish Brigade itself also provides evidence of circumstantial or extracted loyalty. As explored in chapter four, hunger, cold and the prospect of escape were subsequently cited by Brigade men as motivations for joining Casement. The loyalty of the men who comprised the Irish Brigade cannot, therefore, be assessed solely on their adherence to Casement or his definitions of loyalty. The uncertainty and harshness of life

[1] Hart, *The I.R.A. and its enemies*, p. 18.

in German P.O.W. camps must also be considered, as well as an individual's willingness to exchange dishonour among peers for food and warmth. Finally, chapter five illustrated that participation as evidence of loyalty may at times be extracted through communal pressure. Participation in hunger strikes, or apologies issued to prison governors for violent outbreaks in an effort to have ameliorations reinstated certainly provides evidence to this effect. This pressure was no doubt intensified by the intimacy inherent in prison life, the growing strength of Irish republicanism, and removal from family or partners who may otherwise have discouraged revolutionary activity.

The application of historical loyalty certainly complements scholarship of the Irish Revolution. It is particularly useful when examining episodes of social or political transition, such as the Great War, conscription crisis, 1918 general election or Anglo-Irish war. However, loyalty as a historical methodology cannot provide complete understanding for individual motivation or action during the Irish Revolution. Definitions of loyalty, and participation as a measurement of loyalty, are mutually exclusive elements and most often determined and justified by the individual. Conclusions regarding loyalty in Irish society during the revolutionary period, therefore, must consider the influence of external variables on personal actions, and recognise that social definitions of loyalty are most often manifestations of wider cultural, political and military traditions.

APPENDIX

Photo I.1: Kevin O'Higgins graffiti, Luke street, Dublin, October 2006

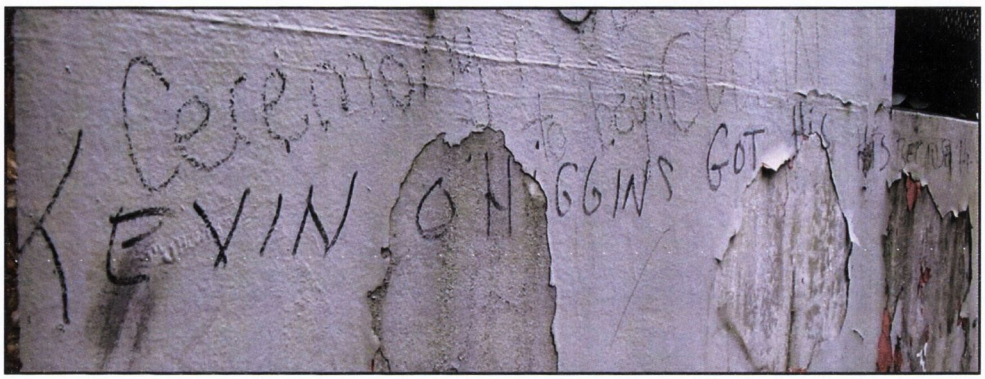


Photo I.2: Ibid.

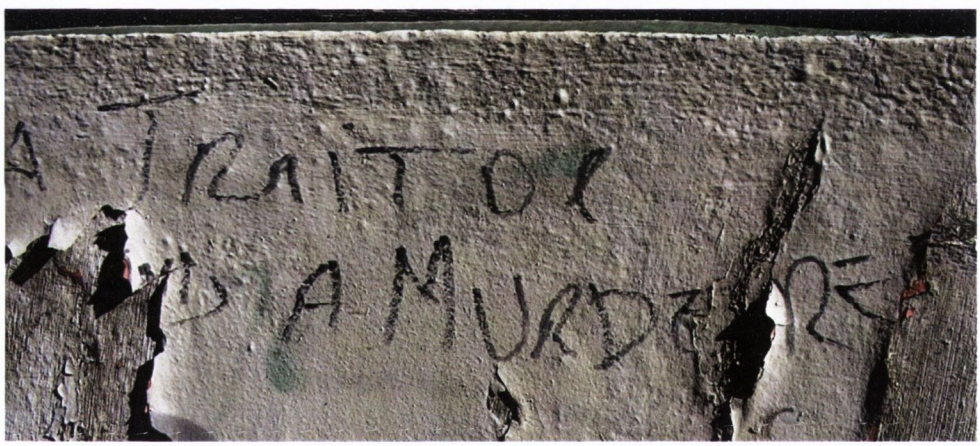


Table 3.1: Trades of men prior to enrolling in the Royal Irish Constabulary who subsequently enlisted in the British armed forces during the Great War.

TRADE	NUMBER	TRADE	NUMBER
Architect	1	Lawyer	2
Asylum Attd.	4	Mason	1
Baker	1	Mechanic	1
Barman	2	Mechanical dentist	1
Blacksmith	8	Mill hand	1
Boilermaker	1	Millwright	1
Book keeper	3	Miner	1
Boot and shoe maker	1	Monitor	1
Butler	1	Museum attd.	1
Butter worker	1	Musician	2
Car driver	1	None	114
Carder	1	Packer	1
Caretaker	1	Painter	1
Carpenter	5	Pawn broker asst.	1
Chairman of Ordinance Survey	1	Postman	8
Change hand grocery	1	Quarry man	1
Chemists asst.	1	Railway employee	4
Clerk	16	Rent collector	1
Coach Painter	1	Reservist	71
Coal merchant	1	Scholar	2
Colourman	1	Seaman	2
Compeixtor	1	Servant	2
Creamery manager	1	Ship plater's helper	1
Draper	1	Shop asst	18
Draper's Asst.	9	Solicitors asst	2
Ex-English Const.	1	Spirit trade	1
Farmer	282	Stableman	1
Fireman	1	Stoker	1
Fisherman	1	Student	1
Footman	1	Summons server	1
Gamekeeper	1	Tailor	1
Gardener	12	Teacher	8
Grocers asst	25	Telegraphist	1
Groom	2	Time keeper	1
Harness maker	1	Tram conductor	2
Herd	5	Van driver	1
Joiner	1	Waiter	2
Labourer	46	Well tinker	1
Lard butter	1	Yardman	1

Percentages comprising the major professions above:

Farmers: 39.7%

Labourers: 6.4%

None: 16%

Reservists: 10%

Various Assistants (Chemist, Draper, Grocer, Pawn Broker, Ship Plater, Shop, and Solicitor): 8%

Table 3.2: Regiments joined by Irish constables during the Great War

REGIMENT	NUMBER
Hussars	2
Lancers	1
Active Service Corps	4
Called to Colours or not listed	58
Connaught Rangers	19
Dragoon Guards	1
Royal Dublin Fusiliers	38
Royal Inniskillin Fusiliers	20
Inns of Court	2
Intelligence Corps	1
Irish Guards	378
Leinster Regiment	32
Royal Munster Fusiliers	20
Royal Navy	8
North Irish Horse	10
Royal Air Force	3
Royal Army Medical Corps	5
Royal Engineers	4
Royal Field Artillery	5
Royal Garrison Artillery	8
Royal Horse Guard	3
Royal Irish Artillery	2
Royal Irish Fusiliers	26
Royal Irish Regiment	22
Royal Irish Rifles	21

Table 5.A: Personnel of the General Prisons Board and major prisons of Ireland, 1918-21

Location	Position	Member, date of service
General Prisons Board	Chairman	Max Green (1918-21)
	Vice-Chairman	The MacDermot (1918-21)
	Medical Member	Charles MacCormack (1918-21)
	Secretary	S.H. Douglas (1918-20) Vacant (1921)
	Inspector	Major A.F. Owens Lewis (1918-19) Horatio J. Chippendall (1920-21)
Belfast	Governor	William Barrows (1918-1920) Edward Shewell (1921)
	Chief Warder	Henry Griffith (1918-19) T. Bowe (1920-21)
	Physician	P.E. O'Flaherty (1918-21)
Cork	Governor	Vacant (1918) J. King (1919-21)
	Chief Warder	Denis O'Donoghue (1918-21)
Galway	Governor	Edward Shewell (1918-1920) Patrick Harding (1921)
	Chief Warder	John Craig (1918-21)
	Surgeon	Richard John Kinkead (1918-21)
Limerick	Governor	A. Ffrench Falkiner (1918-21)
	Chief Warder	William Webb (1918-19) John Fitzgerald (1920) Vacant (1921)
	Physician	M.S. M'Grath
	Church of Ireland Chaplain	Rev. Canon Waller (1918-21)
	Roman Catholic Chaplain	S.J. Connolly (1918-21)
Londonderry	Governor	William Morton (1918-21)
	Chief Warder	J.J. Clare (1918-21)
	Medical Officer	Joseph Miller (1918-21)
Maryborough	Governor	Horatio J. Chippendall (1918-19) Lionel Blake (1920-21)
	Deputy Governor	Lionel Blake (1918-19) Vacant (1920) William Barrows (1921)
	Medical Officer	J.J. Kinsella
	Church of Ireland Chaplain	Rev. R.S. Tilson (1918-21)
	Roman Catholic Chaplain	M.J. Murphy (1918-21)
	Presbyterian Chaplain	William Smyth (1918-21)
Mountjoy	Governor	Charles A. Munro (1918-21)
	Deputy Governor	J. Boland (1918) Patrick Harding (1919-20) H.C. Burke (1921)
	Medical Officer	R.G. Dowdall (1918) B.J. Hackett (1918-21) W.A. Cooke (1920-21_
	Church of Ireland Chaplain	Rev. F.W. Greer (1918-21)
	Roman Catholic Chaplains	Rev. J. Waters (1918-21) Rev. M. MacMahon (1918-21)
	Presbyterian Chaplain	Rev. J.C. Johnston

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Dáil Éireann cabinet minutes

Records and correspondence of the General Prisons Board

Records of the Governor General's Office

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Records of the Home Office – Royal Irish Constabulary service records

Department of Justice files

Seán MacCaoilte papers

Provisional Government files

Department of An Taoiseach files

Mary Vigors correspondence

National Library of Ireland

Frederick J. Allen papers

Barton scrapbook

Piaras Béaslaí papers

George F.H. Berkeley papers

Joseph Brennan papers

Roger Casement papers

Ceannt and O'Brennan papers

Daniel Cohalan letters

John Devoy papers

Frank Gallagher papers

Augustine Henry diary

Alice Henry diary

Bulmer Hobson papers

Michael Kennedy diary

Diarmuid Lynch papers

Liam Lynch letters

Eoin MacNeill papers

Amy Manders papers

Mary Martin diary

Joseph McGarrity collection

Maurice Moore papers

Thomas King Moylan diary

Art Ó Bríain papers

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Florence O'Donoghue papers

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