

Thesis title:

The printed word in troubled times:

A historical survey of the Irish provincial press, 1914-1921

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Abstract

Title of thesis:

The printed word in troubled times: a historical survey of the Irish provincial press, 1914-1921

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The years between 1914 and 1921 were arguably the most tumultuous in modern Irish history. The period began with the evolving Home Rule crisis and was followed by the outbreak of World War I, the Easter Rising of 1916, the rise of the Sinn Féin party, the War of Independence, and finally the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921. This thesis charts the history of the Irish provincial press during these turbulent years. In doing so it poses four primary research questions. The first of these research questions seeks to establish the nature of the relationship between the provincial press and broader Irish society. The second research question aims to determine the characteristics of those newspaper owners and editors that comprised the senior ranks of the Irish provincial press. The third research question seeks to determine how the relationship between provincial newspapers and the British authorities manifested itself. The fourth and final research question aims to identify the essence of the editorial response to the numerous critical developments that took place in Ireland between 1914 and 1921.

In chronicling the history of the Irish provincial press during these years this study provides a comprehensive overview of the existing local newspapers in each county of the four Irish provinces. However, this thesis primarily consists of seventeen case studies of individual newspapers spread evenly across the four provinces. This geographical balance is complemented by a political balance as the papers analysed are comprised of those regarded as not only nationalist, but also unionist and independent organs. Each case study details the broader history of the individual title and also profiles individual owners and editors. Finally, the editorial comment of each individual newspaper during the entirety of this period is analysed in detail so as to provide an accurate depiction of how this critical period of Irish history was portrayed within the provincial print media. This thesis concludes that the history of the Irish provincial press during this time was hallmarked by a number of distinguishing features such as the presence of many long-serving proprietors and editors who held a deep religious faith, and is also highly notable for long periods of unbroken family ownership of newspapers. It is also revealed that despite enduring a somewhat stormy relationship with the British authorities, the Irish provincial press emerged as a rather conservative force in the Irish Free State.

Introduction

Ireland 1914-1921: a historical overview

At the start of 1914 Irish nationalism appeared to be on the verge of an achievement that had seemed almost unthinkable barely fifty years previously. The imminent passage of the Home Rule bill through the British parliament would grant Ireland its own legislative assembly for the first time in over a century. This was a sea-change from the mid-nineteenth century when the death of Daniel O’Connell, the abject failure of the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848, and the horror of the Great Famine (1845-48) appeared to deal blows to Irish nationalist aspirations from which it would be extremely difficult to recover. However, new life was breathed into the spirit of Irish nationalism with the formation of the Land League in 1879 and the emergence of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the 1880s under the leadership of Charles Stewart Parnell.

The Irish Parliamentary Party developed into a considerable force at Westminster and managed to survive and regroup following the split in the party that resulted from the disclosure of Parnell’s affair with Katherine O’Shea, and his untimely death in 1892. Home Rule became a central issue in British politics to such an extent that Home Rule bills were introduced to parliament in 1886 and 1893. The earlier bill was defeated in the House of Commons while the latter bill was narrowly passed in the same chamber but was subsequently rejected by the House of Lords. The veto held by the unionist-dominated House of Lords appeared to ensure that any Home Rule legislation would be blocked. This changed, however, when the 1909 budget was rejected by the House of Lords. This led to the removal of the veto of the upper house by the Parliament Act of 1911 which meant that it could only delay rather than reject legislation outright. Accordingly, the ‘last parliamentary bulwark’ that blocked the passing of Home Rule for Ireland had now been cleared.¹ Two general elections during 1910 left the Irish Parliamentary Party holding the balance of power in the House of Commons and the third Home Rule bill was introduced to parliament in April 1912.² Rejection by the House of Lords meant that it was not due to take effect until

¹ J.J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p.1

² Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998: politics and war* (Oxford, 1999), p. 152; Dorothy Macardle, *The Irish Republic: a documented chronicle of the Anglo-Irish conflict and the partitioning of Ireland, with a detailed account of the period 1916-1923* (Dublin, 1999), p.81; Jackson describes the Irish Parliamentary Party as

1914. By this time, however, the opposition of unionists in Ulster to the measure had manifested itself in no uncertain terms.

With the safety net of the House of Lords veto now removed unionists in Ulster adopted a more militant strategy. In January 1913 the Ulster Volunteer Force was formed with the specific intention of resisting any attempts to implement Home Rule. The new organisation, whose numbers quickly reached 100,000, drilled openly and was armed following the Larne gun-running of April 1914. Nationalists responded in kind with the formation of the Irish Volunteers in November 1913. This movement also carried out drilling operations and its membership soon exceeded that of the Ulster Volunteers. However, attempts to obtain arms during the Howth gun-running of July 1914 did not prove as successful as the Larne gun-running three months earlier. Thus 'the explosive year of 1914', as it was described by F.S.L. Lyons, was marked by the existence of substantial 'volunteer' armies in the north and south of the country that had been sparked by the Ulster unionist's rejection of the 1912 Home Rule bill.³ The bill became law in September 1914 but with a provision for the temporary exclusion of Ulster. Nevertheless, the outbreak of war a few weeks previously resulted in the bill being suspended until the cessation of hostilities.

The Ulster Volunteers responded enthusiastically to the call by Sir Edward Carson, leader of the Ulster Unionist Party, to enlist in the British Army in defence of the British Empire.⁴ A similar call by John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, was answered positively by the majority of the Irish Volunteers who thereafter became known as the National Volunteers. This left approximately 10,000 members in the now reduced Irish Volunteers and this organisation was to play a central role in the Easter Rising of 1916 and the ensuing War of Independence between 1919 and 1921. Three of the most senior positions in the re-formed organisation were held by Patrick Pearse, Joseph Plunkett, and Thomas MacDonagh. All three men were also members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and were executed for their role as leaders of the Easter Rising of 1916. The rising was primarily planned and

having reached its apogee following these two elections while Macardle considered the position the party was in at this time as 'strategically superb'.

³ F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland since the famine* (London, 1971), p.306; R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p.461

⁴ Charles Townshend, *Ireland: the 20th century* (London, 2005), p.58; Carson's election as party leader in 1910 'set the seal on preparations for political mobilisation'. Prior to that the party had been a relatively inconsequential political force.

organised by the IRB and even though it was a complete military failure and garnered minimal popular support, it brought about a radical transformation in Irish nationalist politics.⁵

The principal beneficiary was Sinn Féin, a political party established in 1905 by Arthur Griffith that advocated a more separatist form of nationalism and also opposed Irish support for the war effort. Although the party played no part in the Easter Rising many of its members were arrested and imprisoned in its aftermath. As a consequence Sinn Féin became the vehicle for a more assertive form of nationalism that began to emerge in the aftermath of Easter 1916. The party won a series of by-elections during 1917 and 1918 and in the general election of December 1918 it secured 73 seats which effectively marked the end of the Irish Parliamentary Party as a political force.⁶ Sinn Féin pursued a policy of abstention from Westminster and accordingly Dáil Éireann was established in January 1919. This was an assembly set up in defiance of the British Government that elected a Sinn Féin cabinet which declared itself the true government of Ireland. Sinn Féin had hoped to obtain a hearing at the Paris peace conference that was convened at the end of World War I but this proved fruitless. By this stage the principal demand articulated by the Sinn Féin leadership was for an Irish republic. Failure to achieve any progress in this regard by political means led to a far more militarised situation.

The organisation that had come to be known as the Irish Republican Army (IRA) fought a two year long guerrilla conflict with Britain that was eventually ended by a truce called in July 1921. Protracted negotiations in London resulted in the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921. The agreement granted Ireland a far greater degree of autonomy than what was contained in the Home Rule bill of 1912 though six Ulster counties were to remain outside the terms of the Treaty. However, as an Irish republic was not achieved and an oath of allegiance to the British Crown was required by the Treaty, it was vehemently opposed by many Sinn Féin members, most notably Eamon de Valera. Although Dáil Éireann ultimately approved the Treaty by 64 votes to 57 the strength of the opposition to the agreement led to Civil War in the country.

⁵ Tim Pat Coogan, *Ireland since the rising* (Westport, Conn., 1976), p.1; According to Coogan the Easter Rising 'was the most unpopular event in Dublin since the arrival of Oliver Cromwell'.

⁶ Arthur Mitchell, *Revolutionary government in Ireland: Dáil Éireann, 1919-22* (Dublin, 1995), p.5; Sinn Féin considered their victory as being sufficiently comprehensive to conclude that 'no one could seriously challenge the party's right to speak for the country'.

Irish journalistic historiography 1914-1921

The liberal citation of contemporary newspapers has almost become a standard convention in the documented history of many countries. Irish history differs little in this regard, where there has similarly been a strong propensity to cite a wide variety of newspapers and periodicals. Such a convention is normally deployed in an attempt to portray the general mood of the populace at any given time. Although not an unreasonable device, quoting in isolation from a variety of newspapers can generate a suspicion that some historians could be selectively citing certain publications in order to support their particular interpretation of events. This is not to suggest that historians have been remiss, or overly selective, when citing the print media in their work. What it does highlight, however, is the absence of a journalistic historiography against which the citation of newspapers can be measured.

This is a point raised by Maurice Walsh who notes the recognition by historians of the part played by journalists in influencing the outcome of the period under consideration in this study, from the height of the Home Rule crisis in 1914 to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. This recognition, Walsh continues, is accompanied by an 'evident reluctance' by the same historians 'to take an interest in the work of journalists'. This reluctance, he states, 'is puzzling, since historians of modern Ireland enthusiastically use the press as a source', a source that is 'often cited but rarely analysed'.⁷ His contribution to rectifying this situation, *The news from Ireland: foreign correspondents and the Irish Revolution*, documents and analyses in detail, the coverage of the Anglo-Irish War in the foreign press. Ian Kenneally further contributes to the rectification process with *The paper wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland 1919-1921*. This work assesses the role played by the four main Irish newspapers of the day, namely the *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, *Freeman's Journal*, and *Cork Examiner* as well as *The Times* of London while also analysing the reporting of the conflict in these publications.

Although few in number there are further published texts documenting the role played by journalists and the broader print media during this period of Irish history. Virginia E. Glandon's, *Arthur Griffith and the advanced-nationalist press, Ireland 1900-1922*, is a study not only of the numerous periodicals and newspapers in which Arthur Griffith played a central role, but also the organs of several other movements during the years specified in the title. These include the publications of militant nationalist organisations, the labour movement, the campaign for women's suffrage, as well as a number of

⁷ Maurice Walsh, *The news from Ireland: foreign correspondents and the Irish Revolution* (London, 2008), pp 3-6

institutions of cultural nationalism. One chapter is devoted to the three year period from 1919 to 1921, and in it she specifically examines the origins and development of the *Irish Bulletin*, the newssheet of Dáil Éireann that commenced publication in November 1919, edited initially by Desmond Fitzgerald and subsequently by Erskine Childers. The *Irish Bulletin* was principally aimed at the foreign press and consequently also features extensively in Walsh's book.

Ben Novick's *Conceiving revolution: Irish nationalist propaganda during the First World War* and Karen Steele's *Women, press, and politics during the Irish revival* document, in greater detail, some of the journalistic terrain covered by Glandon and similarly focus on titles aiming at a national readership. The opening chapters of *Periodicals and journalism in twentieth century Ireland: writing against the grain* (eds. Mark O' Brien and Felix M. Larkin) further contribute to the journalistic historiography of this period. Included in this collection are essays by Regina Uí Chollatáin, Patrick Maume, Sonja Tiernan, James Curry and Ian Kenneally that examine the role of publications of both nationalist and cultural organisations as well as the trade union movement. Aside from these published works by authors such as Walsh, Kenneally, Glandon, Novick, and Steele there are a number of shorter texts examining the role of propaganda and the attendant relationship between the broader print media and the movement for Irish independence. These include essays also by Ben Novick and by Keiko Inoue, the work of the latter further examining the evolution and impact of the *Irish Bulletin*. Apart from these essays all that remains are a number of brief studies by historians such as Brian P. Murphy and Francis Costello that discuss the broader issue of the use of propaganda during the Anglo-Irish War.⁸

This dearth of attention to newspapers and propaganda is somewhat perplexing given the prominence attached to these publicity outlets during these years. This lack of attention is all the more difficult to understand in light of the fact that the Sinn Féin party saw fit to establish its own propaganda department in 1918 while Dáil Éireann, following its inaugural session in January 1919, set up its own Department of Publicity (under whose auspices the *Irish Bulletin* was launched). This department considered newspapers to be 'the principal conveyance for propaganda'.⁹ They may not have been the sole outlet for propagating the ideology of the Irish independence movement but in an era devoid of radio and television they were the principal forum for the promotion of Irish republican ideals. The success of Sinn Féin in this venture is acknowledged by Diarmaid Ferriter who refers to the propaganda

⁸ The texts by Walsh, Kenneally, Glandon, Novick, Steele, Inoue, Murphy, and Costello plus a limited number of other publications relating to the journalistic history of this period are listed in Appendix A.

⁹ Some notes on general principles of propaganda (N.L.I., Piaras Béaslaí papers, MS33,913/9)

battle that was 'emphatically won' by Irish republicans.¹⁰ Nonetheless, Ferriter is most likely referring to an overall historic perception to support this claim rather than a body of literature. This further underlines the necessity for further research into this aspect of Irish history during these years.

At least the work of Kenneally and Walsh go some distance in satisfying the need for further research in this respect. Their books, documenting the coverage of the conflict in both the national print media and in the foreign press, assist considerably in explaining why a noted historian such as Ferriter would make such an assertion. What is missing in this equation, however, and what this thesis aims to provide, is a critical examination of the other strand of the print media, namely the provincial press. Throughout the twentieth century the provincial press was a central component of Ireland's media landscape. Through its reportage of local events and provision of local information it fostered a sense of collective identity and played a key role in the lives of its readers and, by extension, in local and national politics.

The emergence of the provincial press

Provincial newspapers only began to emerge as a significant feature of the Irish print media from around 1880 onwards. Between 1880 and the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1922 a considerable number of (principally nationalist) titles were launched that outstripped any previous developments in this sector. However, emergence of the provincial press in Ireland came at a relatively late stage by comparison with some other countries. By this time in Britain the leading provincial newspapers had already come together to form the Press Association in 1868 in order to represent their interests. The relatively advanced state of development of the provincial press in Britain was illustrated by the fact that the Press Association proceeded to enter into an agreement with Reuters newsagency (which had set up an office in London in 1851) under which the latter organisation provided international news to the provincial press in exchange for domestic news.¹¹ Seventy-eight daily newspapers were established between 1855 and 1870 in British provincial cities, principally in Lancashire and Yorkshire. Amongst these titles were papers such as the *Birmingham Daily Post*, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, and the

¹⁰ Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2004), p.220

¹¹ Martin Conboy, *Journalism: a critical history* (London, 2004), pp 124-5; Donald Read, *The power of news: the history of Reuters* (2nd ed., Oxford, 1999), p. 48; Kevin Williams, *International journalism* (London, 2011), pp 52-4;

Liverpool Daily Post while other newspapers that had first appeared earlier in the century, such as the *Manchester Guardian*, *Glasgow Herald*, and the *Scotsman*, commenced publication on a daily basis.¹²

Despite such undoubted developments provincial newspapers in Britain still lagged behind their counterparts in the USA. This was partially due to the influence attained by U.S. regional newspapers that resulted from their sterling contributions to the coverage of the Civil War. However, one of the main reasons for the remarkable strength of the American regional press was that it benefitted significantly from being the earliest purveyor of news due to the vast distances to major cities. Wiener makes the point that in Britain provincial newspapers had at best a five hour advantage over the nationals in London in disseminating local news while in the USA such an advantage could be as much as 25 hours.¹³

Such geographical and time factors obviously did not apply to Ireland. Similarly the country's smaller population and significantly lesser number of major regional cities meant that the large amount of titles established in Britain was not mirrored in Ireland. Nonetheless, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the Irish provincial press developed to an extent that had not been witnessed theretofore. Such development was plainly evident during the 1914-21 period when 68 of the 135 provincial newspapers being published in Ireland during these years had been established between 1880 and 1914 (see Appendix C). Despite such noteworthy advances there has been only one published text specifically chronicling any period in the history of this section of the print media in Ireland. Marie-Louise Legg's *Newspapers and nationalism: the Irish provincial press, 1850-1892*, assesses the development of the provincial press in Ireland from the end of the Great Famine up to the demise of Charles Stewart Parnell. The burgeoning nationalism that had begun to manifest itself in the fifteen years or so up to the end of the period covered by Legg was marked by well-documented events such as the Land War and the emergence, in the form of the Irish Parliamentary Party under the leadership of Parnell, of a serious force in Irish constitutional nationalism. It was also a period that witnessed the establishment of a host of provincial titles, almost all strongly nationalist in sympathy. It was a trend that continued right up to the time that is the primary focus of this study.

¹² Joel H. Wiener, *The Americanization of the British press, 1830s-1914: speed in the age of transatlantic journalism* (New York, 2011), p. 103

¹³ *Ibid*, pp 103-4

Legg traces the genesis of this trend to 1876, a year that witnessed the first provincial titles identifying themselves as 'nationalist' being established. The titles in question were the *Western News* (Ballinasloe), *The Celt* (Waterford), and the *People's Advocate* (Monaghan).¹⁴ The decades that followed witnessed the establishment of substantial numbers of provincial titles whose longevity is illustrated by their continued existence right up to the second decade of the twenty-first century. The 1880s marked the appearance of nationalist titles such as the *Leinster Leader* (1880), *Midland Tribune* (1881), *Westmeath Examiner* (1882), the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* (sometimes referred to as the *Carlow Nationalist*) and *Western People* in 1883, *Drogheda Independent* (1884), and the *Limerick Leader* and *Enniscorthy Guardian* in 1889. The *Southern Star* in Skibbereen, the *Clonmel Nationalist*, and the *Leitrim Observer* were first published in 1890 while the last decade of the nineteenth century was also notable for the founding of the *Mayo News* (1892), *Kilkenny People* (1893), and the *Longford Leader* and *Meath Chronicle* in 1897. There was little indication of a decline in this process in the first decade of the twentieth century as the *Fermanagh Herald* and *Enniscorthy Echo* arrived on the scene in 1902 followed by the *Clare Champion* in 1903, the *Kerryman* in 1904, and the *Tipperary Star* and *Connacht Tribune* in 1909.

The *Dungarvan Observer* and *Donegal Democrat*, first published in 1912 and 1919 respectively, are the only extant provincial newspapers established between 1910 and the founding of the Irish Free State in 1922. Nonetheless, a number of other titles emerged during these years that remained in existence for considerable periods of time. These include the *East Galway Democrat* (1910-1949), *Strokestown Democrat* (1913-1948), and the *Weekly Observer* published in Newcastle West, County Limerick between 1915 and 1927. Indeed in the thirty years after 1880 many other titles also went to press for the first time, which, although no longer in existence, lasted for close on a half a century or more. Categorised in this grouping are the *Galway Observer* (1881-1966), *Wexford Free Press* (1888-1966), *Donegal Vindicator* (1889-1956), *Westmeath Nationalist* (1891-1939), and the *Frontier Sentinel*, another nationalist title, published in Newry between 1904 and 1972. Nonetheless, this thesis is not just a study of the emergent nationalist press of this period. Also coming under scrutiny are other newspapers, although similarly nationalist in their sympathies, which had their origins in an earlier era.

In this respect publications such as the *Tuam Herald* (launched in 1837), the *Anglo-Celt* (established in 1846), and the *Roscommon Herald* (founded in 1859) are the subject of intense analysis. Such scrutiny

¹⁴ Marie-Louise Legg, *Newspapers and nationalism: the Irish provincial press, 1850-1892* (Dublin, 1998), p.80

and analysis is not limited to openly nationalist titles. This is a study of the provincial press in all four provinces and consequently newspapers that can unambiguously be categorised as unionist in their sympathies are also considered. With such a consideration in mind the *Impartial Reporter* (established in 1825) of Enniskillen and the *Londonderry Sentinel* (established in 1829) come in for specific scrutiny. Another unionist title, the *Cork Constitution*, is also considered, in addition to the *Skibbereen Eagle* and the *Clonmel Chronicle*. The latter two papers were independent organs though the *Skibbereen Eagle* has sometimes been referred to as a unionist title. Detailed analysis and examination of such a broad range of newspapers ensures that as comprehensive a portrait as possible of the provincial press is provided. However, it is crucial to bear in mind that this is not merely an assessment of such titles, whether nationalist or unionist, as faceless entities. The manner in which they covered events between 1916 and 1921 will undoubtedly figure prominently but the people behind these papers are, for almost the first time, afforded historical recognition in their own right.

The cast of characters, be they reporters, editors, or proprietors, fully merit this recognition. The body of pressmen (for they were almost entirely men) that constituted the provincial press corps during these years included an array of individuals who between them reported on close on a century of Irish history. They were a cohort that collectively lived through the Land War, the Home Rule campaign, the 1916 Rising, the War of Independence and Civil War, two World Wars, and (in some cases) the advent of the Northern Ireland conflict in the 1960s and 1970s. They were a body of individuals who have, up to now, only received passing attention from historians. Amongst their number are figures such as William Copeland Trimble, editor-proprietor of the *Impartial Reporter* of Enniskillen. Trimble, though trenchantly unionist in his sympathies and only a reluctant supporter of the Land League, agitated strongly for land reform and the fairer treatment of tenant-farmers in his native County Fermanagh.¹⁵ On the other hand, William Doris, co-founder of the *Mayo News*, attended the first Land League meeting at Irishtown, County Mayo, in 1879, was one of the founding members of the first branch of the League in the county, and became an MP a number of years later.¹⁶ Michael A. Casey, who took over as editor of the *Drogheda Independent* at the request of William O'Brien MP, was also a friend and confidant of Charles Stewart Parnell and Michael Davitt.¹⁷ Jasper Tully, long-time editor of the *Roscommon Herald*, was MP for South Leitrim from 1892 to 1906 and was among those imprisoned along with Parnell in Kilmainham

¹⁵ *Impartial Reporter*, 27 Nov. 1941

¹⁶ *Connaught Telegraph*, 18 Sept. 1926

¹⁷ *Drogheda Independent*, 25 Mar. 1938

Gaol.¹⁸ John F. O’Hanlon, managing-director of Cavan’s *Anglo-Celt* newspaper for over sixty years, was a close ally of John Redmond. He contested the East Cavan by-election in 1918 as the Irish Parliamentary Party candidate in opposition to Arthur Griffith and though defeated on that occasion he was elected to Dáil Éireann as an independent representative ten years later.¹⁹

In the west of Ireland, Thomas J.W. Kenny, who co-founded the *Connacht Tribune*, was the first journalist to greet aviators Alcock and Brown when they landed in Connemara in 1919 following their first trans-Atlantic flight.²⁰ J.A. Power, a successor to Kenny as editor of the *Connacht Tribune* is credited with coining the phrase “Black and Tans” to describe the British force deployed in Ireland during the War of Independence.²¹ Patrick Quinn was best-known as political correspondent of the *Irish Independent* for over thirty-five years. However, prior to that he worked as a journalist with the *Clare Champion* and *Galway Observer* and was on the scene on Dublin’s Talbot Street within minutes of the shooting dead of Tipperary IRA leader, Seán Treacy. He was also one of the last civilians to see Michael Collins alive after speaking to him at Bandon Barracks the day before the latter’s death at Béal na Blath.²² Tommy O’Brien is best-remembered as a popular radio broadcaster, presenting an opera music programme on Raidió Teilifís Éireann for almost forty years right up to the late 1980s. Yet O’Brien was originally a journalist, as a cub reporter he ran dispatches for the IRA in South Tipperary and was a friend of Dan Breen and Seán Treacy. Working initially for the *Clonmel Chronicle* he later spent several years as editor of the *Clonmel Nationalist*.²³

This very small sample of individuals, who plied their trade as journalists in Ireland during these years, provide ample evidence of a substantial group of individuals who are more than worthy of detailed attention. This will become abundantly clear in subsequent sections of this study as additional figures such as Edward Thomas Keane, James Pike, and William Sears are the subject of close historical scrutiny for the first time. The establishment of Dáil Éireann in January 1919, in open defiance of the British Government, and its subsequent banning by the latter created in its own right a dilemma for editors such as Griffin, Nolan, Keane, Pike, and Sears and their respective newspapers. Any reporting of the

¹⁸ *Roscommon Herald*, 17 Sept. 1938

¹⁹ *Anglo-Celt*, 29 Dec. 1956

²⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 May 1940

²¹ *Connacht Sentinel*, 24 April 1951; Power is credited with coining the phrase while working as a sub-editor with the *Freeman’s Journal*, he became editor of the *Connacht Tribune* in 1940.

²² *Irish Independent*, 25 Aug. 1964

²³ *Irish Times*, 25 Feb. 1988

proceedings of the fledgling assembly could conceivably be deemed as providing publicity for enemies of the Crown. This dilemma was compounded with the establishment of the Dáil Éireann Courts. These bodies, whose proceedings were frequently reported on by many newspapers, were set up around the country to administer justice in direct confrontation with the British legal system. Yet it was the Dáil Éireann loan, a fund set up to finance the movement for Irish independence, which truly brought many newspapers into conflict with the British authorities. Numerous provincial titles not only gave publicity to the Dáil Éireann loan but also carried advertisements for it. This, understandably, gave the impression that such titles were happy to partake in open defiance of British rule in Ireland. Yet the provincial press had attracted the attention of the British authorities well before the first session of Dáil Éireann and the opening shots of the War of Independence in January 1919.

Politics and the print media

As far back as the 1860s, as Legg observes, the British Government was already becoming concerned that Irish newspapers were exerting a subversive influence on ‘a population thought ignorant and easily led’.²⁴ The supercilious attitude of the British authorities notwithstanding, their fear was justified as to the influence of the print media. Michael Foley asserts that even as early as 1880 approximately ‘one third of the provincial press had declared themselves as nationalist’.²⁵ Allied to the aforementioned spate of provincial titles launched from 1880 onwards the claim that the provincial press ‘performed an essential role in the development of the idea of the nation’ seems wholly valid.²⁶ Nonetheless, the growing volume of provincial titles in conjunction with their increasingly nationalist tone was hardly surprising given the number of provincial editors and proprietors involved in active politics.

Several commentators have remarked on this participation in active politics (principally as members of the Irish Parliamentary Party) of newspaper owners and editors that began to manifest itself in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. Felix M. Larkin traces the connection between Irish nationalist politics and the print media back to *United Ireland* (established by Charles Stewart Parnell), the *Freeman’s Journal* (which had longstanding ties to the Irish Parliamentary Party), and in later years the *Irish Independent*.²⁷ Larkin actually identifies thirty-eight MPs with some form of journalistic

²⁴ Legg, op. cit., p.76

²⁵ Michael Foley, ‘How journalism became a profession’ in Kevin Rafter (ed.), *Irish journalism before independence: more a disease than a profession* (Manchester, 2011), p.25

²⁶ Legg, op. cit., p. 174

²⁷ Felix M. Larkin, ‘Parnell, politics and the press in Ireland 1875-1924’ in Pauric Travers and Donal McCartney

connection.²⁸ Mark O'Brien notes the central role played by the press in the development of the Land League and the campaign for land reform. This was a process, he states, aided 'by the fact that many newspaper proprietors and editors were senior Irish Parliamentary Party politicians'.²⁹ The involvement of press personnel in the broader nationalist movement is also noted by Foley who comments that 'the number of journalists engaged in politics was substantial'.³⁰ Such political engagement is quantified by Legg who confirms that 'between 1880 and 1910, fourteen proprietors/editors stood for parliament, all of them advocating varieties of nationalism'. All but two of the fourteen who went forward as candidates were elected.³¹

The journalistic dimension to Irish nationalist politics also draws comment from Patrick Maume who contends that newspapermen such as the aforementioned Jasper Tully of the *Roscommon Herald*, James P. (J.P.) Farrell of the *Longford Leader*, and the Doris brothers (William and P.J.) of the *Mayo News* 'became significant political figures in their own right'.³² Maume's contention could also apply to other MPs drawn from the ranks of the provincial press such as James Laurence (J.L) Carew, proprietor of the *Leinster Leader*, editor-proprietors John P. (J.P.) Hayden (*Westmeath Examiner*) and P.A. McHugh (*Sligo Champion*), D.D. Sheehan (editor of the *Southern Star* in Skibbereen prior to his election to Westminster), and Sir Thomas Esmonde, founding shareholder and one of the main financial backers of the *Enniscorthy Echo*. This substantial journalistic aspect to the movement for Irish self-rule gave rise to a situation in which the broader populace ceased being 'the passive, God-fearing, providence-accepting victims of the natural disaster of the Great Famine'. Instead they were 'now addressed by newspaper editors and other vociferous individuals ready and willing to create and lead political mobilisation'.³³

This burgeoning nationalist assertiveness was stoked not only by mainstream newspapers. In addition to the steady flow of newly established provincial titles, the closing decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of many 'advanced-

(eds.), *Parnell reconsidered* (Dublin, 2013), pp 76-9; Larkin comments on the reluctance of the *Irish Independent* to acknowledge Parnell as its founder. He details how the Parnellite *Irish Daily Independent* was launched in 1891 and was purchased by William Martin Murphy in 1900 and subsequently re-launched as the *Irish Independent* in 1905

²⁸ Felix M. Larkin, 'Double helix: two elites in politics and journalism in Ireland, 1870-1918' in Ciaran O'Neill (ed.), *Irish elites in the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2012), p.129

²⁹ Mark O'Brien, 'Journalism in Ireland: the evolution of a discipline' in Rafter (ed.), p.17

³⁰ Foley, op. cit., p. 31

³¹ Legg, op. cit., p.138

³² Patrick Maume, *The long gestation: Irish nationalist life, 1891-1928* (Dublin, 1999), p.7

³³ D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth century Ireland: the search for stability* (Revised ed., Dublin, 2005), p.178

nationalist' publications. Such publications stridently challenged the status quo in Ireland at the time and provide further evidence of the increasing journalistic presence in Irish society. They included organs not only of political organisations such as Sinn Féin but also of institutions of cultural nationalism (sometimes referred to as the 'Irish-Ireland' movement), labour and trade union organisations, the suffrage movement, and the more militant wings of Irish nationalism. Possibly the foremost among these were titles such as *An Claidheamh Soluis*, *The Leader*, *Irish Worker*, *Bean na hÉireann*, and the *Irish Volunteer*.³⁴

Professional and educational advances

Such advanced-nationalist publications mentioned represent only a small sample of the overall number of such titles that were founded in the period from 1890 to 1920. Their readership, circulation, and longevity varied widely from one organ to another. Nonetheless, their proliferation, allied to the number of newly-established provincial titles that appeared on the scene during the same period, provide ample evidence of the fast increasing popularity and prominence of the broader print media. It is a development not lost on Legg who notes in her study of the Irish provincial press that this was an era when 'the habit of reading a newspaper was entering its golden age'. It was an age when the ability to read 'was no longer just a skill to keep a man from drink' but 'an important passport to entry into the modern world'.³⁵ However, as with any such development, it did not happen purely by accident. The increasing engagement of the broader populace with the print media can be attributed to three distinct factors. The first of these was the considerable improvement in communication and distribution systems that began to take effect in the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The second related to developments within the journalistic profession itself. Thirdly and probably most importantly, was the significant increase in the levels of literacy throughout the country. All three factors have been commented upon by a variety of historians.

Legg contends that as far back as 1850 the development of the provincial press 'was stimulated by increased urbanisation, by fiscal reforms and by improved transport links'.³⁶ Her contention is supported by O'Brien who specifically cites 'the development of towns along the railway routes' as further aiding

³⁴ Many of these titles are examined in Mark O'Brien and Felix M. Larkin (eds.), *Periodicals and journalism in twentieth century Ireland: writing against the grain* (Dublin, 2014)

³⁵ Legg, op.cit., p.175

³⁶ Ibid p.29

the growth of the provincial press in the second half of the nineteenth century.³⁷ Nonetheless, the abolition of taxes on newspapers after 1855 can be regarded as the principle catalyst in the rise of the provincial press, not only in Ireland but also in Britain.³⁸ This was one of the main factors in the aforementioned surge in the number of British provincial titles after 1855 and the subsequent formation of the Press Association in 1868. Improvements in telegraph and telephone systems further enhanced this process while from the 1870s onwards press clubs were established ‘for the purposes of socialising and exchange of intelligence among journalists’. This led to the formation of the National Association of Journalists in 1884, an organisation that was later to become the Institute of Journalists.³⁹ Such journalistic solidarity proved more difficult to achieve in Ireland. The Association of Irish Journalists was established in 1887 but, as outlined by O’Brien, it was beset by divisions that were characteristic of ‘the partisanship of nineteenth century Irish journalism’. Ultimately this organisation was unsuccessful in its attempts ‘to unite journalists of strongly diverging political views’.⁴⁰ Nonetheless, the Telegraph Act of 1868, which granted newspapers concession rates for the transmission of their printed material, provided a considerable impetus to the newspaper trade in Ireland.⁴¹ This facilitated significant reductions in the price of newspapers that in turn created the incentive for the launch of many provincial titles in the late 1800s and early 1900s. The appearance of these newly-established titles, however, did not lead to any significant embrace of the ‘new journalism’ that had begun to manifest itself within the British print media.

The most famous proponent of the ‘new journalism’ (a phrase coined by Mathew Arnold in 1888) was W.T. Stead of the *Pall Mall Gazette*. Bingham and Conboy detail Stead’s contribution to this departure as including the introduction into the British market of ‘innovative American techniques in interviewing, cross-head layout, and aggressive self-promotion’. It also included the running of ‘sensational campaigns, most notoriously the ‘Maiden Tribute of Modern Babylon’ series of 1885 investigating child prostitution’ which ultimately resulted in Stead serving a prison sentence.⁴² There is scant evidence of

³⁷ O’Brien, op.cit., p.16

³⁸ Legg, op.cit., p.172

³⁹ Conboy, op. cit., p.126

⁴⁰ Mark O’Brien, ‘Journalism and emerging professionalism in Ireland’ in *Journalism practice* (published online 3 Feb. 2015), pp 1-13

⁴¹ Boyce 2005, op. cit., p.275

⁴² Adrian Bingham and Martin Conboy, *Tabloid century: the popular press in Britain, 1896 to the present* (Oxford, 2015), p.6; Bingham and Conboy identify Irish journalist T.P. O’Connor, founder and editor of the *Star* newspaper in Britain, as one of the other major exponents of the ‘new journalism’. O’Connor also served as an Irish nationalist MP for Liverpool.

any such dramatic departures within the Irish newspaper trade during this period though there were some instances of the 'new journalism'. The most notable of these, as detailed by Larkin, was the 'Christmas on the Galtees' series of 1878 in the *Freeman's Journal* dealing with the plight of tenants on an estate in County Tipperary.⁴³ However, it was not a departure that was embraced to any significant degree in Ireland. Indeed many Irish newspapers of this time, as Larkin also notes, 'tended to be unashamedly partisan' in their politics, leaving little likelihood of any major journalistic innovation.⁴⁴ Nonetheless, Irish journalism was not devoid of any certain element of progression during these years.

This was illustrated, as noted by Foley, in improvements in shorthand skills, an adherence to impartiality, and an awareness of new methods, such as the interview, an innovation that was becoming considerably popular as a tool of the trade.⁴⁵ Such relative advances were accompanied by a significant increase in the amount of people involved in journalism. Census figures indicate that the number of those earning their livelihood in the profession stood at 259 in 1861.⁴⁶ By 1901 this figure had increased dramatically to 909 and by 1911 there was a further increase to 1102.⁴⁷ Such developments, however, would be rendered far less significant without the substantial advances in literacy levels that were taking place almost simultaneously.

The advances in this regard from around 1850 onwards were quite marked. The literacy rate of those aged five and upwards rose from 47 per cent in 1841 to 75 per cent in 1881. This rise was greatly aided by 'the establishment of a network of Catholic secondary schools around the country'.⁴⁸ By 1901 the percentage of those without the ability to read or write had dropped to 14 per cent.⁴⁹ This had fallen to about 12 per cent by 1911 and this was principally confined to remote rural districts. The downward trend in illiteracy was further assisted by the increased number of teachers; even though the overall population was declining there was a rise in the number of teachers, from 8,000 in 1867 to 13,500 in

⁴³ Felix M. Larkin, 'Green shoots of the new journalism in the *Freeman's Journal*, 1877-1890' in Karen Steele and Michael de Nie (eds.), *Ireland and the New Journalism* (New York, 2014), p.39

⁴⁴ Felix M. Larkin, 'Keeping an eye on Youghal: The *Freeman's Journal* and the Plan of Campaign in East Cork 1886-1892' in *Irish Communications Review*, 13, p.27

⁴⁵ Foley, op.cit., p.30

⁴⁶ Boyce 2005, op. cit., p.275

⁴⁷ Census of Ireland 1901/1911 (The National Archives of Ireland at <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/>) The figures from 1901 and 1911 are estimated on the basis of those who described themselves as either newspaper proprietors, editors, reporters, journalists, authors, or generally employed in the newspaper business.

⁴⁸ O'Brien, op.cit., p.17

⁴⁹ Ciara Meehan, 'The prose of logic and of scorn': Arthur Griffith and *Sinn Féin*, 1906-1914' in Rafter (ed.), p.191

1914.⁵⁰ As a consequence provincial newspapers began to cater for an increasingly literate populace who had started to move away from predominantly labouring jobs towards employment requiring a degree of literacy such as serving in shops and clerking in offices.⁵¹

The combined effect of fiscal reforms, improved transport links, a relative increase in the level of professionalism within the newspaper business, and, perhaps most notably, the steadily rising rates of literacy meant that the print media now occupied a previously unknown position of prominence and influence. By the end of the second decade of the twentieth century these developments in technology, communications, and education had led to what Boyce describes as ‘a print-based world’.⁵² The relevance of such a societal change is fully recognised by Walsh who states that ‘the Irish Revolution coincided with the birth of mass democracy, in an age when the press was perceived to be a decisive factor in shaping the political world’.⁵³ At a provincial level such journalistic influence was recognised by the nascent Sinn Féin party at a very early stage. As early as 1907 it had spent £250 on the launch and publication of the *Leitrim Guardian* in Manorhamilton.⁵⁴ In the years before World War I, however, newspapers still had no experience of the censorship restrictions that came into effect during the 1914-1918 period under the Defence of the Realm Act.

Press-State relations in the early 1900s

Although the newspaper business had attained a position of considerable influence by the time of the outbreak of the Great War the succeeding four years saw its independence severely challenged as the British Government sought to exert control of the reporting of their military campaigns. The desire to exercise such control was evident during the Boer War (1899-1902) when several of the war correspondents of British newspapers in South Africa felt aggrieved at the manner in which censorship was applied.⁵⁵ By the end of World War I, however, there was a sense that newspapers had been overly acquiescent to the wishes of the British authorities. As a consequence a notion had taken hold ‘that the reputation of the press had been tarnished by collaboration with the Government’.⁵⁶ It was a notion that

⁵⁰ Boyce 2005, op. cit., p.275

⁵¹ Legg, op.cit., p.120

⁵² Boyce 2005, op.cit., p.275

⁵³ Walsh, op.cit., p.180

⁵⁴ Richard P. Davis, *Arthur Griffith and non-violent Sinn Féin* (Dublin, 1974), p.43

⁵⁵ Jacqueline Beaumont, ‘The British press and censorship during the South African War 1899-1902’ in *South African Historical Journal* 41, no.1 (November, 1999), pp 271-2

⁵⁶ Walsh, op.cit., p.181

almost all elements within the press were eager to dispel. As Walsh notes, 'no longer could all the correspondents be counted on to be simple imperialists'.⁵⁷ He is, of course, referring principally to British journalists who reported on the ensuing Irish conflict. Nonetheless, if these correspondents of British newspapers were determined to challenge British policy in Ireland where they saw fit then correspondents of the (predominantly nationalist) Irish provincial press were hardly likely to assume any less belligerent a position.

Thus the scene was set for, if not a showdown, then a serious clash of priorities between the British Government and the broader print media. In the decade prior to the commencement of the Irish War of Independence the British Government had displayed little hesitation in acting against publications that incurred its disapproval. Initially it was organs from the advanced-nationalist stable such as *Scissors and Paste* and *An Claidheamh Soluis* that attracted such attention but this extended to several provincial titles as their numbers increased and their tone grew more stridently nationalistic. Consequently, in the wake of the Easter Rising in 1916, several provincial newspapermen were arrested and interned by the British authorities despite having played no active part in the Rising. Unsurprisingly those imprisoned were from papers that were perceived as strong supporters of the Sinn Féin cause. Amongst their number were included P.J. Doris, co-founder and editor of the *Mayo News*, Maurice Griffin, one of the three co-founders of the *Kerryman*, and the founder and editor of the *Enniscorthy Echo*, William Sears.⁵⁸ With the success of Sinn Féin at the 1918 general election and the subsequent establishment of Dáil Éireann in 1919 the number of newspapers that came into conflict with the British authorities increased significantly.

Doris, Sears, and Griffin represented newspapers that were openly supportive of Sinn Féin policies well before the latter's electoral success in December 1918. However, as Ian Kenneally claims, the majority of the Irish press in 1918 was controlled by proprietors who were hostile to Sinn Féin.⁵⁹ Despite this, the intriguing situation existed that even within publications that were no friends of Sinn Féin, journalists whose political sympathies clearly lay with that party's brand of separatist nationalism were employed. Such a scenario existed in the case of the *Dundalk Democrat*. Journalist Frank Necy, whose limited involvement in the 1916 Rising led to his imprisonment, had worked with the County Louth paper since

⁵⁷ Ibid p.30

⁵⁸ *Mayo News*, 27 Feb. 1937; *Kerryman*, 7 April, 1928; *Enniscorthy Echo*, 30 Mar. 1929

⁵⁹ Ian Kenneally, 'Truce to Treaty: Irish journalists and the 1920-21 peace process' in Rafter (ed.), p.223

about 1905 and later edited it for almost twenty years.⁶⁰ Yet Necy's editor at the time was Thomas F. McGahon, a staunch supporter of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party who was deeply distrustful of the newly emergent political force in Ireland.⁶¹ This situation was mirrored at the *Anglo-Celt* in Cavan. The managing-director of the paper, the aforementioned John F. O'Hanlon, stood as the candidate of John Redmond's party in opposition to Arthur Griffith in the East Cavan by-election of 1918. However, on the editorial staff of the paper at the same time was Thomas K. Walsh, a strong Sinn Féin supporter who was involved in the foundation of the party in County Cavan.⁶² Even at newspapers supportive of Sinn Féin, such as those owned by Doris and Sears, similar anomalies existed.

P.J. Doris had founded the *Mayo News* with his older brother William in 1892. William Doris was one of the many newspaper proprietors who also became an MP. While William's loyalty remained solidly with his parliamentary colleagues the outlook of his younger brother grew irrevocably more militant. P.J. Doris befriended Arthur Griffith at an early stage and wholeheartedly espoused the separatist policies advocated by the Sinn Féin founder.⁶³ This led to an estrangement of the two brothers that was not resolved within their lifetimes.⁶⁴ When William Sears launched the *Enniscorthy Echo* in 1902 one of the main financial backers was Sir Thomas Esmonde MP. While Sears supported the Irish Parliamentary Party at the time of the paper's establishment his allegiance shifted to Sinn Féin very soon after that party's foundation in 1905.⁶⁵ Esmonde meanwhile appeared to follow the lead of Sears when he joined Sinn Féin in 1907 and withdrew from Westminster though he did not resign his seat. He returned to the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1909, however, as a 'gesture of national reconciliation' and distanced himself from the paper thereafter.⁶⁶

The conflicting loyalties within many newspapers were quite reflective of similar conflicts of loyalties that had evolved throughout the broader populace. The major players in the political conflict and the concurrent military conflict have received sufficient, perhaps even excessive, attention from historians. Those who reported the conflict have received scant attention. Hugh Oram, in his history of Irish newspapers from their origins in Cromwellian times up to the 1980s reasonably contends that from

⁶⁰ *Dundalk Democrat*, 7 Mar. 1970

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 25 Jan. 1941

⁶² *Anglo-Celt*, 15 April 1950

⁶³ *Mayo News*, 27 Feb. 1937

⁶⁴ Owen McGee, 'Doris, William' in James McGuire and James Quinn (eds.), *Dictionary of Irish biography* (Cambridge, 2009).

⁶⁵ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 30 Mar. 1929

⁶⁶ Patrick Maume, 'Esmonde, Sir Thomas Henry Grattan' in McGuire et al (eds.)

Easter 1916 to the end of the Civil War 'the newspaper industry of Ireland endured the most hazardous and difficult period of its entire existence'.⁶⁷ Yet only a handful of historians have seen fit to investigate this chapter in the history of such an influential sector of Irish society and none have carried out any detailed study of the provincial press.

It is abundantly clear that the Irish print media has received minimal historical attention not just between 1916 and 1923 but down through the years. This could in part be explained by the understandable absence of an Irish equivalent of such dominant figures of the newspaper industry as Lord Northcliffe (even though he was Irish-born) and C.P. Scott. Yet the number of prominent political figures in Irish history who also plied their trade as journalists renders the near non-existence of any significant newspaper historiography rather difficult to comprehend. From the mid-nineteenth century and the days of the Young Ireland movement up to the foundation of the Irish Free State journalists were to the fore in the many differing strands of Irish nationalism. Thomas Davis, Charles Kickham, John Devoy, John Mitchel, and Michael Davitt were all journalists at various times as were James Connolly, Arthur Griffith, Piaras Béaslaí, Erskine Childers, Desmond Fitzgerald, and Ernest Blythe to name but a few.

Their counterparts in the provincial press may be less celebrated but fully merit recognition nonetheless. Technological and educational advances in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that provincial journalists, similar to their compatriots elsewhere in the print media, exerted an influence to an extent previously unknown. The British authorities acknowledged this influence and sought to dilute it or eliminate it by suppressing several newspapers and imprisoning their editors where and when they could. It was personalities such as P.J. Doris, E.T. Keane, Maurice Griffin, and William Sears who were in the front line in this confrontation between State and Fourth Estate. Their struggle not only deserves historical scrutiny, it demands it.

⁶⁷ Hugh Oram, *The newspaper book: a history of newspapers in Ireland, 1649-1983* (Dublin, 1983), p.123

Chapter 1 – Research questions, Sources, and Methodology

1.1 Research questions

This study represents the first attempt to document and chart the history of the Irish provincial press during the country's revolutionary period from 1914 to 1921. In its analysis it strives to answer four primary research questions.

The first of these research questions seeks to determine the nature of the relationship between the provincial press and society. In this respect this thesis investigates the extent of the involvement of the provincial press and its personnel in numerous aspects of social life. Such aspects embrace organisations and institutions such as the GAA, the Gaelic League, the Catholic Church, and indeed broader elements such as agriculture, trade, commerce, and politics. To this end this study also seeks to determine if there was a close-knit relationship between media personnel and these organisations and institutions or whether local newspapers remained as detached observers of local events and developments.

The second research question aims to establish the characteristics of the proprietors, editors, and reporters who constituted the senior ranks of the provincial print media. Accordingly the backgrounds of the people who owned, managed, edited, and wrote for the provincial press are examined. By extension this study further considers whether the provincial press was divided into two homogenous nationalist and unionist camps, or whether a wider spectrum of opinion existed, and if the political sympathies of owners or editors resulted in some papers assuming a more militant stance than others.

The third research question that is comprehensively addressed is how the relationship between provincial newspapers and the British authorities manifested itself. Tackling such a question requires an examination of the broader subject of wartime propaganda and it also demands close scrutiny of the imposition of censorship of Irish newspapers between 1914 and 1921. In addressing this research question this thesis also considers whether the application of such censorship produced a unified reaction from the provincial press or if it provoked a variety of responses depending on local conditions. Such censorship came into force at the start of World War I but became a far more relevant issue following the 1916 Rising and the ensuing rise of Sinn Féin.

The fourth and final research question seeks to determine how the provincial press responded to the many critical developments that took place in Ireland during the 1914-21 period and the effects they had on provincial newspapers and their personnel. This research question encompasses a number of attendant issues such as how the provincial press responded to World War I and the thorny question of Irish support for the British war effort, but more specifically recruitment to the British Army and ultimately conscription. It also appraises the response of the provincial press to the 1916 Rising and seeks to establish whether and to what extent it may have radicalised some nationalist titles. In a similar vein it also considers whether the unionist section of the provincial press considered the Rising an act of betrayal and consequently if it gave rise to a sense of revulsion. Also, in answering this research question, this thesis closely scrutinises how the provincial press and its personnel responded to the rise of Sinn Féin in the aftermath of Easter 1916 and determines whether there was any uniformity in that response. It further seeks to establish if the Irish electorate's rapid and dramatic transfer of allegiance to Sinn Féin was mirrored in the editorial columns of local newspapers or whether that shift was of a more gradual nature. Finally, this research question scrutinises the response of provincial newspapers to the War of Independence from 1919 to 1921 and the subsequent Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921. In this respect particular attention is devoted to determining how the political beliefs of editors and journalists, as well as the activities of the British authorities and Sinn Féin shaped the coverage of the conflict.

In addressing these research questions each chapter provides an overview of the various titles in each of the four Irish provinces. Additionally each chapter presents case studies of specific publications, both nationalist and unionist, and also independent, to map the characteristics of the provincial press, its personnel, and its coverage of events during the revolutionary period to shed light on this heretofore neglected aspect of Irish media history. In so doing this study concentrates predominantly on the editorial response of individual newspapers as this reflected the sympathies and affiliations, and possibly even the prejudices, of those in control of such newspapers. The editorial comment that is scrutinised and analysed predominantly relates to the key issues that dominated Irish politics during these years. Initially Home Rule was the issue that occupied the editorial attention of most newspapers but the outbreak of war in August 1914 provoked other difficult issues to which provincial papers had to respond. These included vexed question of Irish support for the war effort, recruitment to the British Army, and finally conscription. The Easter Rising created further difficult issues to which the provincial print media had to respond. These included the response to the Rising itself, the rise of Sinn Féin and

the parallel demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party, the establishment of Dáil Éireann in 1919, the War of Independence, and finally the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

This examination of editorial commentary is all the more relevant due to the fact that the vast majority of provincial papers were published on a weekly basis. Accordingly, most provincial titles published in excess of fifty editorials per year (with the exception of those that experienced periods of suppression). Other titles were published more frequently such as the *Londonderry Sentinel* (three times per week), and the *Cork Constitution* (daily except Sunday) which meant they contained a far greater amount of editorial comment. Nonetheless, these two titles, similar to the majority of the other papers examined in this study, concentrated their editorial focus principally on national issues. There were some exceptions to this amongst the newspapers examined in this study but they only account for a small minority. The weekly, rather than daily, editorial output of the vast majority of provincial titles allowed them to reflect critically on national events and consequently (unlike national newspapers) they had more time to deliver a considered rather than an immediate reaction to events. Accordingly this thesis provides a detailed analysis of the contemporary response to the many critical developments that took place between 1914 and 1921 that, to date, have been largely overlooked.

The individual titles that constitute the case studies in this thesis were selected through the process of purposive sampling. This is defined as a series of strategic choices about how case studies are selected. More specifically, this study utilised maximum variation sampling, i.e. identifying and examining cases that cover the spectrum of positions and perspectives in relation to the phenomenon being scrutinised so as to include extreme, typical, and neutral positions and perspectives.¹ In this thesis, the case studies were strategically selected so as to ensure a comprehensive representation of political outlook whilst also maintaining a geographical balance. With regard to the Irish provincial press during the 1914-1921 period this entailed an examination of a broad mixture of newspapers. This included titles that were considered early supporters of Sinn Féin, titles that remained loyal (or somewhat loyal) to the Irish Parliamentary Party, titles representing the unionist viewpoint, titles that were suppressed, titles that were predominantly associated with a particular personality, and finally, titles that maintained a somewhat distanced stance on events in Ireland during these years.

¹ John W. Creswell, *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, 2007), pp 125-9

1.2 Sources

Researching such aforementioned newspapermen as William Sears, Maurice Griffin, and William Doris is no easy task. Few political and military figures of this era left personal papers, with even less of them deciding to write memoirs. Personalities such as Tom Barry, Dan Breen, and Ernie O'Malley proved an exception to this general trend. Newspapermen, however, left virtually nothing in the form of personal papers much less published memoirs or autobiographies. This dearth of source material is compounded by the fact that 'newspapers refrain, as a rule, from discussing their affairs in their own columns', as one prominent Ulster title put it on the occasion of its centenary in 1929.² The scarcity of primary source material becomes even clearer when examining some of the personal papers of the very few journalists who left some form of documentation. Ernest Blythe, a senior Sinn Féin figure during the Anglo-Irish War and a minister in the first Free State Government, was originally a journalist by trade. However, despite providing a substantial witness statement to the Bureau of Military History in Dublin, Blythe only made passing reference to his time as editor of the *Southern Star* in Skibbereen between 1918 and 1919. The aforementioned Frank Neco displayed even greater reticence in revealing his profession in his statement to the same body. Neco was a member of the Irish Volunteers and was imprisoned in Wales following the 1916 Rising yet he made no mention of the fact that he was working as a reporter for the *Dundalk Democrat* at the time. Even on the fiftieth anniversary of the Rising in 1966 Neco only wrote anonymously of his experiences and made no mention of his reporting job at the time.³ William Myles, a member of the Irish Volunteers while simultaneously working as a reporter for the *Clonmel Nationalist*, only made passing reference to his journalistic work in his statement to the Bureau of Military History.

The paucity of journalistic recollections simply means that other avenues must be explored. Among the first of these alternative channels of investigation is the somewhat morbid pursuit of seeking out the obituaries of such journalists. In years gone by adopting such a method may well have been a thankless task as ascertaining the publication dates of the obituaries of various journalists would have been almost excruciatingly time-consuming. The advent of the internet, however, with its attendant search facilities, renders this a considerably less fraught avenue of research. This is a point raised by Adrian Bingham who notes that the digitisation of a variety of titles allows 'a far greater and more sophisticated

² *Londonderry Sentinel*, 29 Sept. 1929

³ *Dundalk Democrat*, 9 April 1966; Neco's obituary in the same paper in 1970 revealed that he had only identified himself as "No. 1468", the prison number allocated to him, when describing his involvement in the Easter Rising and his subsequent imprisonment.

engagement with newspaper content'. He does, however, caution that 'digital archives only provide us with newspaper content' and 'do not offer information about the production of newspapers or about their reception by actual readers'.⁴ This information deficit can also be extended to include those who wrote for newspapers.

Yet in the case of this particular study the steadily increasing number of newspaper archives becoming available online means that the death notices of individual journalists can be identified much faster and with less difficulty than was previously the case. Nevertheless, such an approach must be treated with some caution as obituaries understandably tend to be quite subjective, avoiding any inclination to "speak ill of the dead". Nonetheless, they can be trusted to supply a relatively detailed outline of the career of the journalist including any political affiliations or otherwise that they may have had. Provincial newspapers, from which such obituaries are taken, are also the provider of other vitally important source material. Centenary editions or commemorative issues of such publications frequently contain historical information regarding the relevant title that is simply not available anywhere else. Some of these commemorative editions were only published quite recently and consequently were obtained with little difficulty. Other such editions, however, had to be accessed from the particular newspaper's archive, in a similar manner to the sourcing of the aforementioned obituaries. These newspaper archives were accessed digitally, on microfilm, and hardcopy. An increasing number of Irish newspapers are becoming available online via the *Irish Newspaper Archive* website from where they were accessed for this study. Those titles relevant to this study that are not yet available via this platform were consulted through the newspaper archive of the National Library of Ireland (NLI). The majority of titles consulted in this repository were viewed on microfilm though in a few instances the hardcopy is provided. Nonetheless, this thesis draws upon more than provincial newspaper archives alone as a primary source.

As the reaction of the print media in the provinces to the political and military situation of the time is central to this study the more conventional manuscript sources are also drawn upon. These include not only the aforementioned Bureau of Military History but also repositories of other manuscript documents such as the National Library of Ireland and the archives of University College Dublin. Such repositories hold the personal papers of senior political figures such as John Redmond, Desmond Fitzgerald, Erskine Childers and Piaras Béaslaí among others. While such papers reveal little direct contact with the

⁴ Adrian Bingham, 'The digitization of newspaper archives: opportunities and challenges for historians' in *Twentieth Century British History*, 21, no. 2 (2010), pp 225-30

provincial press there are other documents to be found that are of considerable relevance. These include items such as memoranda relating to dealing with the press, instructions to local branches of the Sinn Féin party, and general guidelines as to the most effective use of propaganda.

The search for primary sources is not limited to Ireland. The Colonial Office records of the UK National Archives contain much that is of relevance to this study. Amongst these archives are documents pertaining to the publication of what was termed “seditious literature”. Such documents relate to official publications that emerged from nationalist organisations such as Sinn Féin, the Irish Volunteers, and the Irish Citizen Army. However, a number of provincial titles also came to be categorised as “seditious” by the British authorities. Moreover, the records of the Colonial Office contain press censorship reports that were regularly produced in the years immediately prior to the foundation of the Irish Free State. These reports provide an invaluable insight into how Lord Decies, the Irish Press Censor at the time, viewed the output of Irish newspapers. Furthermore, they also detail precisely the copy submitted to the Censor by a wide variety of newspapers, for which permission to publish was denied. In this respect such documentation not only reveals the mind-set of the British authorities but also supply a clear indication of the type of material that newspaper editors were forbidden from printing.

The fact that such primary source material exists in the UK is testament to the seriousness afforded to the printed word by the British authorities at the time. This in turn highlights the difficulties faced by journalists who covered this conflict. The initial legislation governing what could appear in the print media was the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). This was a wide-ranging piece of legislation but its regulations with regard to the press were originally put in place to exert as much control as possible over the print media, both in Britain and in Ireland, during World War I. As the Anglo-Irish War dragged on this legislation was superseded by the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act. Neither piece of legislation, as will be discussed, provided clear guidelines as to what was or was not acceptable to print. Such ambiguity may necessarily be characteristic of legislation pertaining to the print media but the prevailing circumstances in Ireland between 1916 and 1921 made the running of a newspaper and the work of journalists all the more difficult.

1.3 Methodology

This study is principally comprised of a variety of case studies of provincial newspapers across the four provinces of Ireland. The key characteristic of a case study is its ability to illuminate the general by

looking at the particular: by examining particular provincial newspaper titles as case studies this thesis aims to identify and illuminate the characteristics that were common to all such titles in the period under review. As outlined by Martyn Denscombe 'case studies focus on one (or just a few) instances of a particular phenomenon with a view to providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance'.⁵ Adopting the case study approach allows the researcher to focus their attention on a specific phenomenon and facilitates forensic scrutiny of that case. It further allows a sharp research focus and enables the researcher to interrogate the specific context and characteristics of the phenomenon under investigation. By this virtue, conducting a case study is not storytelling in a narrative sense: it is a critical examination of a phenomenon to illuminate its inner workings and characteristics.

One of the strengths of the case study approach is that it allows the researcher to draw upon a variety of sources to collate information about the case (in this instance, the Irish provincial press, 1914-1921) under examination. To that end several sources, as outlined in the previous section were utilised in order to avoid reliance solely on editorial comment. Aforementioned sources such as obituaries, witness statements, personal papers, plus censorship records and other files held in the national archives of the UK were mined for information which added a greater quantity and quality of data to the research.

In adopting the case study approach, this thesis has employed the 'discovery led' form of case study in which the researcher firstly describes in detail the events, processes, and relationships at the core of the case under examination. Secondly, the key issues affecting those within the case are explored. Thirdly, the findings are utilised to identify the key characteristics of the case under examination.⁶ This study also followed David McNabb's case study model in which research questions are formulated, units of analysis defined (in this case the provincial titles selected for examination), data is gathered through intensive and in-depth examination of each unit of analysis, and finally, conclusions are derived from the data on which analysis has been conducted.⁷

In terms of meeting the criteria to qualify as a unit of analysis, it was determined that each provincial title that was defined as a unit of analysis was unambiguously 'a self-contained entity and had 'distinct

⁵ Martyn Denscombe, *The good research guide for small scale social research projects* (4th ed., Maidenhead, 2010), p.52

⁶ Ibid, p.55

⁷ David E. McNabb, *Research methods for political science: quantitative and qualitative methods* (London, 2004), p.359

boundaries’.⁸ Titles that qualified as units of analysis were carefully selected so as to ensure the exclusion of Dublin and Belfast based newspapers on their metropolitan rather than provincial orientation. They were also chosen as being representative of each province in terms of geography thus ensuring no geographical bias. Furthermore, titles were chosen as being representative of each province in terms of politics (nationalist/unionist/independent) so that no political bias existed. Finally, these titles were chosen as being broadly representative of the provincial press of the time.

As outlined by Denscombe, when drawing inferences from the study of a particular case the researcher firstly needs to identify significant features on which comparison with others in the class can be made. Additionally the researcher is required to show how the case compares with others in the class in terms of these significant features.⁹ In this respect the key characteristics of each title (unit of analysis) under scrutiny are made explicit so that commonalities and differences between them are vividly illuminated. It is through this process of intensive and detailed examination that it is possible to highlight the factors that are common across all, or most, of the titles under examination and thereby identify features that were characteristic of Ireland’s provincial press in the period under examination.

1.4 Structure of thesis

The main body of this thesis is divided into five sections. The first of these sections (chapter two) provides a broad overview of the provincial press at the start of the period in question. This overview considers the difficulties and challenges that manifested themselves during these turbulent times. This includes a brief examination of relatively simple matters such as the day-to-day life of the provincial journalist to the more pressing issues of how a variety of external parties sought to exert as much influence and control as possible over the print media in the provinces. These external parties initially took the form of political organisations such as the Irish Parliamentary Party and later Sinn Féin. The outbreak of the World War I, but more particularly the Easter Rising of 1916, resulted in the external pressure taking the form of censorship, the threat of suppression, and ultimately the actual suppression of many provincial titles and in some cases serious attacks on newspaper offices. Accordingly this opening chapter also examines the relevant legislation under which such censorship took place and the manner in which it was applied.

⁸ Denscombe, op. cit., p. 56

⁹ Ibid, p.61

The remaining four sections (chapters three to six) follow a relatively straightforward though no less forensic an approach. The individual chapters examine in detail the provincial press in the respective provinces. This includes specific and detailed focus on four or five titles from each province though Dublin and Belfast newspapers are excluded as they do not form part of the provincial press. Examination of an equal amount of papers from each province facilitates a reasonable geographical balance. Some titles are chosen arising from the fact that they came into considerable conflict with the authorities and were forcibly suppressed while others have been selected because they traditionally represented a more moderate form of nationalism. A number of other titles are chosen because they can be unambiguously categorised as unionist organs and accordingly this lends a political balance to this study. Such organs were principally located in Ulster but not restricted to that province.

In Leinster all of the newspapers considered were unequivocally nationalist and found themselves incurring the wrath of the British authorities at one time or another. The titles in question are the *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, *Midland Tribune*, and *Meath Chronicle*. In order to give voice to the southern unionist view of developments, the *Cork Constitution* is one of the Munster publications to be examined. Also from County Cork the *Skibbereen Eagle*, a paper with quite a chequered history, is subjected to similar scrutiny. Also undergoing detailed scrutiny is the *Clonmel Chronicle*, a paper that sought to follow a neutral line under the editorship of Arthur Ross Burns, a northern Presbyterian. The two remaining Munster newspapers to come in for detailed analysis are titles that arguably suffered the greatest disruption within the period covered by this study. The *Southern Star* of Skibbereen and the *Kerryman* based in Tralee both experienced suppression, forcible closure (in the case of the *Kerryman*), and the imprisonment of their editors. Consequently any history of the Irish provincial press would be glaringly incomplete without affording them comprehensive attention.

Connacht is the only one of the four provinces that did not feature a unionist title of major significance but it renders the story of its provincial newspapers no less important or interesting. The editor-proprietors of two of the titles examined in this study endured terms of imprisonment similar to the experience of the two Munster editors. The aforementioned P.J. Doris of the *Mayo News* and Patrick Dunne of the *Leitrim Observer* were incarcerated as a result of their journalistic endeavours so it would be historically remiss to overlook the cases of both their publications. The other two Connacht titles, the *Tuam Herald* and the *Roscommon Herald*, unlike most of the other nationalist organs featuring in this

study, were established prior to 1880 and traditionally represented a more constitutional brand of nationalism than that espoused by Doris and Dunne.

Unsurprisingly there were far more unionist newspapers in Ulster than in the other three provinces combined. This study focusses specifically on two of them, the *Impartial Reporter* of Enniskillen and the *Londonderry Sentinel*. These differed not alone in political sympathy to most of the contemporary nationalist titles but also due to the fact that they were well-established and were very much family businesses. By the second decade of the twentieth century each title had been inextricably linked with a number of generations of the same family for close on a century. The *Impartial Reporter*, although almost one hundred years old by this time, was under the proprietorship of only its third owner, William Copeland Trimble, his father having served as first editor of the paper following its establishment in 1825. The *Londonderry Sentinel* meanwhile, founded only four years after the Enniskillen paper, was owned by James Colhoun whose father and grandfather had preceded him as owners of the paper.¹⁰ By complete contrast the third newspaper from the province to feature was not only unreservedly nationalist but also newly arrived on the scene. The *Donegal Democrat*, first published in 1919, was established by John Downey and Cecil A. Stephens in the aftermath of Sinn Féin's decisive victory at the general election of December 1918.¹¹ The Irish Parliamentary Party, which was all but decimated at this election, was closely associated with the remaining Ulster newspaper that is the focus of this chapter. The *Anglo-Celt* of Cavan, whose managing-director, John F. O'Hanlon, was the unsuccessful Irish Parliamentary Party candidate in the East Cavan by-election of 1918, was another of the older group of nationalist titles founded prior to 1880.

The adoption of such a structure facilitates a balanced but comprehensive portrayal of the provincial press and the lives of its editors and journalists during this crucial period of Irish history. Titles representing not just both sides of the political divide but also the competing strands of Irish nationalism are scrupulously analysed. The journalistic voice of unionism is also the subject of comprehensive and thorough analysis but this analysis is not confined to titles located in Ulster. It is neither feasible nor practical to examine in minute detail newspapers from every corner of Ireland but a spread of provincial journals from Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Wexford, Offaly, Kilkenny, Meath, Mayo, Galway, Roscommon, Leitrim, Cavan, Donegal, Derry, and Fermanagh ensures there is no geographical bias. It is in such a

¹⁰ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 29 Sept. 1929

¹¹ Oram, op. cit., p.140

manner that this historical gap can be filled and justice done to this long-neglected aspect of Irish history.

Chapter 2 – Provincial newspapers: politics and censorship

The introduction to this study noted the position of considerable prominence and influence that the print media had come to occupy by the early twentieth century. The vast appeal of the medium is acknowledged by Felix M. Larkin who comments that this was a period during which ‘the press reached the zenith of its influence in political and social life in Great Britain and Ireland’.¹ In such circumstances it is no great surprise that the political forces of the day should seek to ensure that their aims and ideals were afforded the most favourable attention possible from an outlet that was fast becoming a tool of mass communication. Accordingly this chapter examines how those centrally involved in the Irish conflict between 1916 and 1921 sought to exert their influence, and control if possible, over this medium. However, this chapter also delves a little further into the journalistic history of the period.

While the introduction to this study explored the reasons behind the proliferation and increased popularity of newspapers, this chapter explores some of the characteristics of the newspaper business itself. This ranges from the nature of ownership of provincial titles to the concerns and working conditions of those employed in the profession. The religious and political affiliations of those titles are also considered in detail. By extension the relationship between the provincial press and Irish political parties is afforded similar attention. This relationship was sometimes cultivated by the newspaper itself but after the 1916 Rising several provincial titles became the object of undesired attention. Contributing greatly to this situation was the press censorship that had been in force since the outbreak of World War I but remained in force in Ireland for almost a year after the end of the war. In this respect both the censorship regulations and the role of the Press Censor’s office in Dublin are closely examined.

The combination of the increasingly hostile situation in Ireland plus the level of scrutiny under which newspapers had to operate gave rise to journalistic challenges for which no previous experience could be adequate preparation. Essentially the years from 1914 to 1921 marked a time when efforts to limit and control the output of the print media intensified to an extent previously unknown. It is imperative that such circumstances are fully appreciated and understood before proceeding to document the cases of individual newspapers. In summary, this chapter provides a broad yet comprehensive overview of the journalistic environment within which provincial titles were compelled to operate.

¹ Larkin 2012, op. cit., p.125

2.1 The Irish newspaper business in the early 1900s

The Irish newspaper industry in the opening decades of the twentieth century differed little to that of Britain and many other countries. Reporters filed their copy anonymously and the author's name almost never appeared with their articles. The conditions under which journalists plied their trade during the period under consideration in this study are starkly outlined by Walsh who comments that they 'filled the columns of their newspapers anonymously in a literary endeavour barely removed from the industrial discipline of the factory'.² The industrial revolution era working conditions notwithstanding, Irish journalism, according to a contemporary historian of the Fourth Estate, had attained a position of some considerable stature by the early 1900s. In his 1911 book, *Masters of English journalism*, T.H.S. Escott noted the extent to which the 'Irish genius' had 'so widely permeated the English press'. Not alone did Escott recognise the impact of Irish journalists working in England but he also acknowledged the achievement of 'authority and success' that 'made him a power in his native land from [the] Giant's Causeway to Cape Clear'.³ Escott's geographical emphasis would certainly suggest that provincial newspapers shared equally in what he clearly believed to be the burgeoning success of the broader print media in Ireland.

Those who controlled such provincial newspapers cannot easily be classified into a small number of homogenous groups. Nonetheless, a division into two general categories can provide a reasonably broad overview of the proprietorship-editorship of the Irish provincial press during this period. The first category was comprised of slightly longer-established titles whose ownership (and frequently editorship) had transferred through one or more generations of the same family. The second category consisted of many of those (principally nationalist) titles that had only been established relatively recently and were essentially still only finding their feet as the turbulent 1914-21 period approached. The former category incorporates unionist and nationalist publications such as the *Tuam Herald*, *Roscommon Herald*, *Anglo-Celt*, *Impartial Reporter*, and *Londonderry Sentinel* (as will be seen in later chapters) plus titles such as the *Leinster Express*, *Sligo Champion*, and *Banbridge Chronicle*.⁴ The latter

² Walsh, op. cit., p.22

³ T.H.S. Escott, *Master of English journalism: a study of personal forces* (London, 1911), pp 305-306

⁴ *Leinster Express*, 7 Aug. 1943; *Sligo Champion*, 14 Jan. 1966; *Banbridge Chronicle*, 2 June 1951; Michael Charles Carey succeeded his father as editor-proprietor of the *Leinster Express* in 1903; Alfred McHugh took over ownership of the *Sligo Champion* after the death of his father, P.A. McHugh MP, in 1909; Arthur Waldo Emerson became owner of the *Banbridge Chronicle* following the death of his father in May 1912.

category covers papers such as the *Leitrim Observer*, *Kerryman*, and *Enniscorthy Echo* (as will also be detailed in later chapters) and, amongst others, the *Connacht Tribune* and *Tipperary Star*.⁵

The dearth of journalistic memoirs and autobiographies referred to in the introduction renders it difficult to describe the challenges faced by these editors and proprietors (and indeed the reporters who were employed by them) while working in the newspaper business during these years. There is one source, however, which does shed some light in this regard. The Irish Journalists Association was an organisation formed in 1909 that sought to address the concerns of working journalists and bring about improved working conditions where it was deemed necessary. Although labelling this body a trade union might be an overstatement it did strive to address issues such as reporters' salaries though obviously with very limited success as the Irish Journalists Association went out of existence within two years of the foundation of the Free State. Nevertheless, its short-lived monthly newsletter, the *Irish Journalist*, featured several contributions from newspapermen that document, albeit to a limited extent, the experience of working as a journalist in Ireland at that time.

In a representative organisation comprised principally of ordinary employees, the employer could be conceived as one of the main barriers to its objectives. Accordingly contributions from editors or proprietors were extremely scarce. Nonetheless, the November 1915 issue of the *Irish Journalist* featured an article entitled 'Sidelights – On editing a provincial paper'. The author was T.J.W. Kenny, editor of the *Connacht Tribune*. Kenny's writing tended to be overly-colourful at times but he did provide some insight into the challenges of running a provincial newspaper. He argued that it was 'not a mere local paper'; neither was it 'a one-horse show' whose contents 'never embrace anything outside the rural district of the demesne walls'. Kenny recognised that it was the editor's duty to 'see to it that the paper is made of general as well as local interest' and also to understand 'that its readers know something of the existence of the telegraph, the railway train, the Atlantic liner – or the war'. The *Connacht Tribune* editor further asserted that it was the specific function of a provincial newspaper to 'take a political character' but should not sink to the status of being a mere mouthpiece of a particular political party.⁶ Unfortunately Kenny did not broach the subject of censorship though this may well have

⁵ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 May 1940; *Tipperary Star*, 7 Nov. 1925; Thomas J.W. Kenny founded the *Connacht Tribune* in 1909; Edward Long established the *Tipperary Star* also in 1909.

⁶ *Irish Journalist*, Vol. I No. 13, Nov. 1915

been purely due to space limitations.⁷ Regardless of the non-discussion of censorship, Kenny's article does at least provide some indication of the mind-set of the provincial editor.

It is regrettable that the views of other provincial editors were not similarly documented but fortunately the *Irish Journalist* did bequeath the opinions of a number of reporters that shed some light on the concerns of the ordinary journalist working in the provinces. It is probably of little surprise that foremost of those concerns was the matter of salary. In December 1914 a provincial reporter (only identifying himself as 'Ogánach') claimed that the maximum wage a journalist in his position could expect to earn was in the region of thirty-five shillings per week. In almost time-honoured fashion this state of affairs was attributed to the perennial city versus country conflict. The needs of the journalist working outside the capital (the Irish Journalists Association was a Dublin-based organisation) was 'little understood by his metropolitan confrère'. The anonymous contributor further berated 'the indifference of the Dublin journalist for his country cousin', an indifference that was 'begotten of ignorance'.⁸

The antipathy and sense of injustice felt by this particular member of the provincial press corps is quite intriguing in light of an article that appeared in the previous month's issue of the same newsletter. This contribution bemoaned the failure of journalists in the provinces to form local committees 'to discuss their own local grievances and to deal promptly with any matters that might arise affecting their interests'. The same contribution referred to a weekend meeting organised in a large provincial centre at which 'not a single pressman in that centre put in an appearance'. It added that some of these pressmen stated afterwards that 'it would be more than their positions were worth to join the Association'. In a scathing conclusion the same pressmen were lambasted for their 'hopeless apathy' and for being 'past masters in the art of criticising the efforts of those who are honestly trying to do something to improve their conditions, but when it comes to a question of doing anything for themselves they are as helpless as the infant in arms'.⁹

The stinging criticism was not wholly unjustified if the views of another anonymous provincial reporter from a few months later is to be believed. This writer contended that some pressmen in the provinces could earn up to £3 per week though not from salary alone. He detailed how profit from travel expenses (earned primarily in his case from cycling to wherever his job took him but being allowed to claim a train

⁷ Kenny may not have mentioned censorship due to the fact that it only became a far more pressing issue for provincial papers in the aftermath of the Easter Rising even though restrictions on the reporting of military operations had been in effect since the start of World War I.

⁸ *Irish Journalist*, Vol. I No. 3, Dec. 1914

⁹ *Ibid*, Vol. I No. 2, Nov. 1914

fare) plus other incidental expenses could raise the weekly income to this amount. Nonetheless, this particular journalist stated categorically that it was up to provincial pressmen ‘to make themselves worth more money’. Such amelioration in pay and conditions could best be achieved by joining the Irish Journalists Association ‘in large numbers’. Failure to do so meant that provincial pressmen would ‘have only themselves to blame for getting badly paid for their work’.¹⁰ It seems, however, that such urgings fell on deaf ears as almost eighteen months later the *Irish Journalist* (in one of its final issues) was still lamenting ‘the failure of our provincial members to form County Committees’.¹¹

The mind-set of individual journalists (albeit a small number of them) is at least discernible to some extent from the pages of the *Irish Journalist*. The political leanings of the individual provincial titles that employed these journalists can be discerned from the *Newspaper Press directory and advertiser’s guide*. In its own words this annual publication contained ‘particulars of every newspaper, magazine, review, and periodical published in the United Kingdom and the British Isles’.¹² The directory was in essence the trade journal for the print media in Britain and Ireland and effectively the “bible” for advertisers. In addition to providing brief but descriptive listings for almost all newspapers, both national and local, it also carried advertisements placed by selected newspapers that were directed at potential advertisers. Such listings and advertisements reveal much about the nature of the Irish newspaper business at the time.

In most cases the *Newspaper Press Directory* stated the broad political sympathy of individual titles. The collation of such political sympathies from the 1917 edition of the directory, plus numerous aspects of the research carried out for this study, reveals the following breakdown of political allegiance during the 1914-1921 period:

Nationalist	69
Unionist/Conservative	43
Independent	12
Neutral	5
Political sympathy not stated	6

¹⁰ Ibid, Vol. I No. 7, Apr. 1915

¹¹ Ibid, Vol. II No. 6, Sept. – Oct. 1916

¹² *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers’ guide 1917*

These figures do not include every Irish publication listed in the *Newspaper Press Directory*; rather the data has been extracted so as to include only provincial titles.¹³

While the majority of unionist titles were understandably concentrated in Ulster it is important to note that there were also unionist papers published in many other parts of the country. These were spread over numerous different counties and included titles such as the *Carlow Sentinel*, *Kilkenny Moderator*, *Wicklow Newsletter*, *Waterford Conservative Gazette*, *Midland Counties Advertiser*, *King's County Chronicle* (Offaly), *Limerick Chronicle*, *Longford Journal*, *Meath Herald*, *Sligo Independent*, and *Westmeath Guardian*.¹⁴ Unfortunately accurate circulation figures are not available for any provincial newspapers so it can only be speculated that these titles may only have been catering for a small readership by comparison with their nationalist counterparts.¹⁵ Indeed, many titles were quite happy to promote themselves as the only paper of a specific political persuasion in a certain region.

The *Ulster Herald*, for example claimed to be 'the only nationalist weekly paper for mid and west Ulster' while the *Waterford Standard* asserted that it was 'the only unionist paper in the city and county'.¹⁶ On the other hand some provincial papers laid claim to a readership well beyond their natural catchment area, sometimes even outside the country. The *Northern Standard*, a unionist organ from Monaghan, stated that its circulation encompassed not only its county of publication but extended 'throughout the north of Ireland'. The *Tyrone Constitution* made the significantly more grandiose assertion that it had 'a considerable circulation in America, India, and the colonies'. Not to be outdone, the *Connaught*

¹³ The figures exclude the main national newspapers plus other newspapers whose main circulation was in the three major cities of Dublin, Cork, or Belfast. Also excluded are magazines and periodicals plus titles which were effectively localised editions of other newspapers e.g. the *Fermanagh News* (Enniskillen) and *Donegal Independent* (Letterkenny) were local editions of the *Donegal Vindicator* (Ballyshannon) while the *Monaghan Democrat* was the local edition of the *Dundalk Democrat*. Also, these figures take into account some obvious errors and omissions relating to the *Newspaper Press Directory* e.g. titles such as the *Longford Leader*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, and *Western News* (Ballinasloe) were listed as independent organs even though their sympathies were clearly nationalist. The directory also did not include a listing for the *Kerryman* or the *Southern Star* (Skibbereen), both papers being unambiguously nationalist organs.

¹⁴ Appendix B shows the geographical location of each provincial title while Appendix C provides an overview of the political sympathies/orientation, publication dates, and key figures at each individual provincial newspaper during the 1914-21 period.

¹⁵ The *Newspaper Press Directory* did not supply circulation figures for individual titles and they were not published during this period. Nonetheless, newspapers were the only existing mass medium so it can reasonably be concluded that they circulated widely considering the attention afforded to them by the British authorities in terms of regulation and censorship.

¹⁶ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, pp 215-6

Telegraph believed that its readership was spread not only 'throughout the province of Connaught' but also extended to the United Kingdom and America.¹⁷

It was also not unusual for newspapers to declare some form of religious affiliation. To twenty-first century readers this might appear strange and possibly even slightly sectarian. Nonetheless, in the early twentieth century the trend was far from uncommon. The *Fermanagh Times* was a 'thorough Protestant and conservative paper' while the *Longford Journal* advocated 'the interests of all sects of Protestants'. The *Ulster Gazette* (Armagh) simply advocated 'sound Protestant principles' and supported the Church of Ireland, and in a somewhat similar manner, the *King's County Chronicle* (Offaly) merely stated that it was 'attached to the reformed churches of Ireland, England, and Scotland'.¹⁸ Nationalist titles, whose religious sympathies obviously lay predominantly with the Catholic Church, were notably less forthright in declaring the religious creed to which they subscribed. One of the very few nationalist papers to make any assertion in this respect was the *Kilkenny Journal*; it described itself inoffensively as a 'defender of Roman Catholic principles' rather than 'the impugner of other men's creeds'.¹⁹

Perhaps even more revelatory were the advertisements placed by some publications in the *Newspaper Press Directory*. Numerous titles wished to convey a specialised appeal to potential advertisers. The *Cork Weekly Free Press* being was one such example as it portrayed its readership as being comprised extensively of 'the farming and commercial classes'. Others, such as the *Nenagh News*, 'read by all classes – the peer and the peasant', wished to depict themselves as having a more universal and egalitarian appeal. However, many other papers promoted themselves in a manner that may seem extremely supercilious over a century later. Dublin's *Daily Express* (not to be confused with British publication of the same name) declared to potential advertisers that it was 'the financial and society paper' that was 'read by all the best people'. The *Cork Constitution* boasted that it was read 'by people representing a greater purchasing power than the readers of all the other papers published in Munster'. The *Irish Times* followed a similar line when contending that it was 'the organ of the moneyed community' while its weekly edition, the *Weekly Irish Times* was read 'throughout the land in all well-to-do families'.²⁰

¹⁷ Ibid, pp 209-215

¹⁸ Ibid, pp 207-209

¹⁹ Ibid, p.213

²⁰ Ibid, p.206, 547, 583-4

Expressions of political sympathies tended not to appear in advertisements though there were some exceptions. The *Ulster Gazette* declared itself the 'official organ of the mid-Armagh Conservative Association and the County Grand Orange Lodge of Armagh'. The *Londonderry Sentinel* clearly wanted potential advertisers to know that it was 'opposed to Home Rule or any legislation tending to sever the Union between England and Ireland'.²¹ Such outright statements of political affiliations were not typical of most provincial papers however. In general such detail appeared under the newspaper's listing rather than in an advertisement (not all papers ran advertisements). As with religious outlook, unionist titles tended to articulate their political allegiances in a somewhat more overt manner than their nationalist counterparts. While most nationalist papers merely described themselves as 'nationalist' their unionist counterparts tended to be rather more effusive in this regard. The *Ballymena Observer*, for example, unambiguously advocated 'loyalty to the throne and the maintenance of the Union' while the *Strabane Weekly News* was 'a staunch supporter of the Unionist party'. The *Belfast Newsletter* adopted a slightly more moderate tone, simply supporting 'unionist principles' while the aforementioned *Daily Express* sought to 'maintain intact the imperial union'.²²

Nationalist titles were slightly more tentative in revealing their politics. The *Western People* (Ballina) merely stated its support for 'sound national principles'. The *Enniscorthy Guardian* was only slightly more assertive in claiming to act 'in the interests of "Peasant Proprietors" and was also 'for home rule'. The *King's County Independent* was slightly more effusive, declaring itself 'a strong advocate of the national cause' that also devoted 'much space to political and general affairs affecting the welfare of Ireland'. Other nationalist papers were not only more forceful in asserting their nationalist credentials but were equally happy to publicise their allegiance to the principal force of Irish nationalism at the time, the Irish Parliamentary Party. The *Fermanagh Herald* was 'a thorough nationalist paper' that supported 'all the movements of the party', while the *Galway Observer* identified itself as 'the recognised organ of the national party' but equally advocated 'freedom for all classes'.²³

The links between provincial newspapers and the Irish Parliamentary Party, and indeed the Unionist Party, was not something that happened by accident. Nor was it a situation that came about because several MPs just happened to be newspaper proprietors or editors. It was a scenario that evolved as politicians (not only in Ireland) came to realise the increasingly influential position occupied by the print

²¹ Ibid, pp 84-5

²² Ibid, pp 207-8, 215

²³ Ibid, pp 207-215

media. Accordingly they recognised the necessity to cultivate this relationship so as to ensure that as many newspapers as possible were sympathetic to their aims and aspirations. This may have involved financial support for newspapers where feasible or indeed playing a role in their initial establishment. The relationship could occasionally be mutually beneficial as many newspapermen moved into the political arena on the strength of their journalistic experience. This was a noticeable feature of the Irish Parliamentary Party during its time as the dominant force in Irish nationalism. Its successor in this position, the Sinn Féin party, held radically different ideas as to how Irish self-government should be achieved. However, Sinn Féin differed little from its predecessor in its desire to exert as much influence as possible on the press, both national and local, and the party spared little effort to fulfil that desire.

2.2 Political parties and Irish newspapers

The rise of the popular press in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries coincided with the predominance of the Irish Parliamentary Party as the main force of Irish nationalism. Hence it is no great surprise that their paths should have crossed with considerable regularity during these years. The *Freeman's Journal*, which became 'the foremost nationalist newspaper in Ireland in the nineteenth century', had extremely strong links with the party from the early 1880s onwards. The paper's owner, Edmund Dwyer Gray, was a Home Rule MP who supported Parnell's leadership bid despite initial misgivings. Parnell himself was fully cognisant of the benefits of a supportive newspaper as he launched his own publication, *United Ireland*, in 1881 under the editorship of William O'Brien (formerly a reporter with the *Freeman's Journal* and yet another journalist who subsequently became an MP).²⁴ This deep-rooted engagement with the popular press has been remarked upon by a number of historians. Boyce believes the development of the party during Parnell's time as the 'most modern of political movements' was attributable not only to 'its strict pledge of loyalty' but also to 'its use of the popular press'.²⁵ The use of the popular press referred to by Boyce was not limited to national publications. As early as 1880, Parnell was consulting with Edward Walsh, the editor of the *Wexford People*, regarding the candidature of Timothy Healy in the upcoming election to the House of Commons.²⁶ Links with the provincial press grew even stronger following Parnell's demise. Senior party figures, such as the aforementioned William O'Brien, enjoyed what Paul Bew describes as 'a specially warm relationship

²⁴ Felix M. Larkin, 'A Great Daily Organ': The *Freeman's Journal*, 1763-1924' in *History Ireland*, 14, no.3 (May-June, 2006), p.45

²⁵ Boyce 2005, op. cit., p.271

²⁶ Parnell to Walsh, 5 Nov., 1880 (N.L.I., John Redmond papers, MS15,220/1)

with a wide range of important provincial newspapers'. This relationship embraced an impressive geographical spread that included titles in each of the four provinces.²⁷

The close ties between the Irish Parliamentary Party and the provincial press draw further critical analysis from historians. Legg makes the very relevant point that the involvement of so many newspaper proprietors in active politics meant that 'political parties gained a more subtle understanding of the way the press could be used' as such proprietors possessed 'an intimate understanding of the working of politics in practice'.²⁸ Boyce articulates a similar view in stating that the Dublin-based papers 'did not possess the special local knowledge and intimacy that the editors and writers of the provincial newspapers enjoyed'. These circumstances allowed 'able and talented journalists' like James Daly of the *Connaught Telegraph* and Tim Harrington of the *Kerry Sentinel* to become 'local – and in some cases national – political leaders as well'.²⁹

The increasingly intimate relationship between the party and the provincial print media occasionally resulted in sympathetic newspapers seeking the assistance of the party. In October 1905 David Sheehy, MP for South Meath, wrote to party leader John Redmond requesting that some financial support be allocated to the *Drogheda Independent* (the paper had got itself into debt as a result of a libel action). Sheehy urged that generous help be provided to the editor, Michael A. Casey, as the paper had 'a great circulation in Louth, Meath, and North Dublin' and was 'a very influential supporter of our movement'.³⁰ In a similar manner John Dillon, deputy leader of the party, wrote to Redmond concerning urgent appeals for financial assistance he had received from the *Connaught Leader*.³¹ The close engagement with the provincial press also extended to involvement in the establishment of newspapers. In March 1901, John Muldoon, MP for North Donegal (and later East Wicklow and East Cork), introduced John Redmond to 'two Omagh gentlemen' (Mr Lynch and Mr O'Connor) at the House of Commons who were seeking the party's help 'in the project of establishing in that town a nationalist newspaper for Tyrone and Fermanagh'. Muldoon urged Redmond's endorsement of the project and merely asked that he write

²⁷ Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland 1890-1910: Parnellites and radical agrarians* (Oxford, 1987), p.113. O'Brien enjoyed this 'warm relationship' with provincial titles such as the *Connaught Telegraph* (Castlebar), *Mayo News* (Westport), *Kerry People* (Tralee), *Killarney Echo*, *Sligo Champion*, *Roscommon Messenger*, *Limerick Leader*, *Midland Tribune* (Birr), *Southern Star* (Skibbereen), *Westmeath Independent* (Athlone), and *Anglo-Celt* (Cavan).

²⁸ Legg, op. cit., p.173

²⁹ D. George Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland* (3rd ed., Dublin, 1995), p.205

³⁰ Sheehy to Redmond, 25 Oct. 1905, MS15,228/1

³¹ Dillon to Redmond, 25 Sept. 1905, MS15,182/7; *Connaught Leader* was a provincial title published in Ballinasloe between 1885 and 1907.

to Lynch and O'Connor saying that he had heard of the possibility of the establishment of a nationalist newspaper in Omagh and that he hoped it would be 'entirely successful'.³² The 'Mr Lynch' referred to by Muldoon was in actual fact Michael Lynch who subsequently was central to the foundation of the *Ulster Herald* in Omagh later the same year.³³

The ties between the provincial press and the Irish Parliamentary Party have received significant attention from historians but links to Sinn Féin have drawn far less analysis. In many respects this is quite understandable; Sinn Féin's victory at the 1918 general election sounded the death knell for the constitutional party but Sinn Féin's time as the major force in Irish politics effectively lasted only four years (1917-1921). On the other hand the party founded by Isaac Butt in 1873 occupied this position for over four decades. Allied to this is the fact that following its 1918 election victory Sinn Féin placed great emphasis on gaining favourable publicity in the foreign press. The distribution list for the *Irish Bulletin* (the newsletter of Dáil Éireann referred to in the introduction) provides firm evidence of this concentration of attention on the foreign media.³⁴ This aspect of Sinn Féin strategy is dealt with comprehensively by Maurice Walsh but it should not mask the fact that the party's desire to enjoy the benefits of a supportive and sympathetic provincial press was just as strong as that of the party it had vanquished at the polls in December 1918.

Guidelines issued to local party organisers in May 1917 stressed the need to 'take steps to bring all possible influence to bear' not only on 'members of public boards and other persons of importance in their districts' but also 'on the local press to secure support for the policy of Sinn Féin'.³⁵ Further instructions assumed a decidedly more menacing tone as those organising local branches were bluntly told that 'the influencing of local newspapers' was to be secured by sending:

deputations to the editor or proprietor, before whom the prospect of support or its opposite should be intelligently and candidly put. If local "Nationalist" papers will not express local opinion on national subjects there is no use for them.

³² Muldoon to Redmond, 27 Mar. 1901, MS15,208

³³ *Ulster Herald*, 20 Apr. 1935

³⁴ Names and addresses of recipients of *Irish Bulletin* (daily list) as at end of July 1921 (B.M.H., Mary Alden Childers collection, CD6/9/16k); In addition to being sent to recipients in Ireland, Britain, and the USA the proscribed newsletter was sent to press outlets in several European countries and also to Australian, Canadian, and Japanese press representatives.

³⁵ Official instructions for the organisation of Sinn Féin clubs, 16 May 1917, CD6/6/3

The party's apparently ambivalent attitude towards the maintenance of a free press in the country was further indicated by the instruction that:

articles and letters on Sinn Féin should be sent to the press, and their insertion demanded if necessary.³⁶

This hard-line attitude towards provincial newspapers did not always translate into actual intimidation. Apart from County Cork, where the *Cork Examiner*, *Cork Constitution*, and *Skibbereen Eagle* attracted the undesired attention of the IRA, there is little evidence of republicans threatening any other provincial newspapers. Nevertheless, there is little doubt that Sinn Féin regarded this section of the print media as a crucially important medium for their publicity. From around the middle of 1918 the party's propaganda department (the forerunner of the Department of Publicity set up by Dáil Éireann) commenced a series 'of weekly notes, written from the national point of view and sent out to the provincial press'. These notes were sent to 'upwards of 40 newspapers in all parts of the country' that 'received and in the majority of cases used these notes'. The person in charge of Sinn Féin's propaganda department at this time was Robert Brennan, formerly a provincial journalist himself having worked at the *Enniscorthy Echo*.³⁷ The Department of Publicity, headed initially by Lawrence Ginnell and then by Desmond FitzGerald, that superseded the department headed by Brennan was similarly focussed in its intent to influence, to the greatest extent possible, both national and local press coverage of the unfolding situation in Ireland. To this end it included among its tasks not only the 'daily supervision of the press' but also, where possible, 'a daily supply of news to the press', 'the provision for the press of suitable articles', and also the 'indirect influencing of the editorial policy of the press'. With this in mind daily interviews were to be held with the Dublin press allied to correspondence with the provincial press. However, if possible a representative of the department 'should be free to travel to the provinces to interview editors of the provincial papers'.³⁸

Irish republicans continued in their endeavours to dictate the nature of the press coverage of the increasingly hostile situation in the country right up to the closing stages of the Anglo-Irish War. As late as May 1921, Erskine Childers, who had succeeded Desmond FitzGerald as head of the Department of Publicity reported that 'constant efforts are being made to influence the Irish press to present news in a

³⁶ How to form Sinn Féin clubs, CD6/9/4

³⁷ The Department of Publicity, history and progress, Aug. 1921, CD6/9/6h

³⁸ Some notes on general principles of propaganda, MS33,913/9

form more favourable to the National movement'.³⁹ However, by this stage the more militant side of Irish republicanism had begun to display a concerted interest in ensuring favourable newspaper coverage. Also, in May 1921, the IRA issued a set of directives to local brigade commanders that clearly illustrated this desire. A general order was sent to local IRA units stating that brigade commandants were to 'be held responsible for the prompt transmission to GHQ [General Headquarters] of reports of conflicts, ambushes, attacks, execution of spies, and enemy outrages in their district'. If a written report could not be sent without undue delay the brigade commandant was to 'immediately send a suitable man to GHQ to report verbally to the Director of Publicity'.⁴⁰ This instruction, seeking to ensure the swift documenting of the IRA's version of events, was accompanied by a memo requesting specific information regarding local newspaper correspondents. Brigade commandants were required to divide local newspapers or their correspondents into four different categories – 'friendly', 'friendly but intimidated', 'neutral', and 'hostile'.⁴¹ Those local journalists classified as 'friendly' were to be supplied regularly and promptly 'with all information with regard to military activities which it was desirable to make public'. However, the recommended method for dealing with newspapers or their correspondents that fell into any of the other three categories took on a decidedly more sinister tone. Those categorised as 'hostile', 'neutral', and even 'friendly but intimidated' were to be 'regularly supplied with information, and pressure brought to bear on them to publish it'. Where such 'pressure' did not produce the desired result then 'drastic action' could be taken.⁴²

Regrettably little is known of the response of individual IRA units to this directive from GHQ. This may well be primarily due to the fact that a truce was called less than two months after its issuance. Fortunately one response that was documented was from the Cork No. 1 Brigade which makes for fascinating reading as this was an area that witnessed a greater amount of hostilities during the War of Independence than almost any other area of the country. The brigade provided GHQ with the names of almost 50 local journalists working in County Cork plus areas of Kerry, Limerick, and Waterford. Also included in its response was the classification for a number of newspapers as had been requested of them, in addition to a number of comments regarding certain titles. The *Cork Examiner* was considered 'the most dangerous rag in Ireland', pretending 'to express moderate opinion', but 'actually hostile' to

³⁹ Report from the Department of Publicity 16 Mar. – 7 May 1921 (U.C.D., Desmond FitzGerald papers, P80/14/16)

⁴⁰ General Orders, No. 25, 4 May 1921 (N.L.I., Florence O'Donoghue papers, MS31,208)

⁴¹ Newspapers to be classified as 'friendly but intimidated' were defined as those that were 'so intimidated by the enemy as to be afraid to use or publish information unfavourable to the enemy'.

⁴² Publicity memo no. 1, 4 May 1921, MS31,208

republican aims. The *Cork Constitution* was also regarded as ‘openly hostile’ but did not arouse any similarly derogatory comment evidently because it circulated ‘only to confirmed Unionists’. The *Waterford News* was classified as ‘friendly but intimidated’ but the *Waterford Star*, *Waterford Standard*, and *Munster Express* were all viewed as ‘hostile’ and doing harm to the republican cause.⁴³

The IRA’s antagonism toward the *Cork Examiner* resulted in the paper’s offices being attacked in December 1920 (following repeated condemnations of IRA violence) with its printing machinery sustaining serious damage. This antipathy for the Cork newspaper was shared by elected Sinn Féin representatives. In an exchange with Piaras Béaslaí (TD for Kerry East) in Dáil Éireann in March 1921 Seán Hayes (TD for Cork West who had a significant connection to the *Southern Star* newspaper in Skibbereen as detailed in Chapter 5) bemoaned how ‘provincial papers, such as the *Cork Examiner*’, were ‘hampering the work of the Republic’.⁴⁴ Criticism of IRA actions had also resulted in the offices of the *Irish Independent* being raided by armed republicans in December 1919 following the attempted assassination of Lord French, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, at Ashtown, County Dublin. Dan Breen, the Tipperary IRA leader stated how he and his comrades who took part in the operation took umbrage at the tone of the paper’s reporting of the attack.⁴⁵ Indeed it was not unknown for newspapers that disagreed with the policies or tactics of Irish republicans to suffer attacks on their offices or staff. Peter Hart, while accepting that ‘both sides tried to suppress hostile newspapers’ points to the cases of the *Cork Examiner*, *Cork Constitution*, and *Skibbereen Eagle*, all of whom ‘had their employees and premises attacked and their papers seized and burned by the rebels’.⁴⁶

It is important to note Hart’s qualification that attempts to suppress newspapers were not limited to the Irish republican side. There were numerous instances of the British military raiding the offices of provincial newspapers; these occurrences are examined in detail in later chapters that document the experiences of individual newspapers. Most of these incidents occurred from early 1920 onwards. Prior to that, censorship had been in effect as it had been since the start of World War I. The introduction of war-time censorship in Britain and Ireland coincided with the British authorities launching a massive propaganda campaign that involved them seeking to control the output of the print media to an extent

⁴³ Schedule No.I - Newspapers, MS31,208

⁴⁴ Dáil Éireann debates, Vol. F, No. 20, 11 Mar. 1921

(*Houses of the Oireachtas*, <http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1921/03/11/00023.asp>)

⁴⁵ Dan Breen, *My fight for Irish freedom* (Dublin, 1981), p.105; Breen took part in the attack at Ashtown but not in the raid on the *Irish Independent* as he had been injured in the earlier operation.

⁴⁶ Peter Hart, *The IRA and its enemies: violence and community in Cork, 1916-1923* (Oxford, 1998), p.103

previously unknown. This aspect of British policy and their subsequent continuation of censorship in Ireland (after it had been discontinued in Britain at the end of the war) are considered in the next section.

2.3 British war-time propaganda and Irish censorship

The limited amount of texts that document this period of Irish journalistic history make only passing reference to censorship regulations and even less to the British Government's dealings with the print media during World War I. It is necessary, however, to consider both of these issues for two reasons. Firstly, it is important to understand the experience that the British Government had gained during the war in dictating newspaper coverage of the conflict. Secondly, it is essential to appreciate the restrictions under which Irish newspapers had to operate, particularly after the 1916 Rising, when the situation in Ireland began to grow increasingly militant.

The British Government's desire to exert its influence over the print media was borne out of the realisation that 'this war would require propaganda of unprecedented sophistication and scope'. Even prominent authors such as Thomas Hardy, James Barrie, John Galsworthy, Arthur Conan Doyle, H.G. Wells, and John Buchan were recruited to serve the cause.⁴⁷ Britain also seized a massive advantage in the forthcoming propaganda war when one of its cable ships, *Telconia*, cut the direct under-sea cables linking Germany with the United States. This left the British in almost total control of the news flow across the Atlantic which was a crucial factor in winning the sympathy of the American people.⁴⁸ The British Government also realised from an early stage that 'the ideal recruiting ground for propagandists was from among the most powerful newspaper proprietors and editors'. Such proprietors were generally happy to co-operate for the simple reason that 'war was good business for newspapers'.⁴⁹

The Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, was foremost among those at the highest level of the British Government to have an enthusiastic appetite for the war of words. Lloyd George is described by historians as 'being fascinated by the revolutionary expansion of the popular press' and of having a passionate interest in propaganda.⁵⁰ As a consequence, the press was seen as a potential ally in the

⁴⁷ Adam Hochschild, *To end all wars: a story of protest and patriotism in the First World War* (London, 2012), pp 147-8

⁴⁸ Philip M. Taylor, *Munitions of the mind: a history of propaganda from the ancient world to the present era* (3rd ed., New York, 2003), pp 177-8

⁴⁹ Phillip Knightley, *The first casualty: from the Crimea to Vietnam: the war correspondent as hero, propagandist, and myth maker* (3rd ed., New York, 2003), p.69

⁵⁰ James Margach, *The abuse of power: the war between Downing Street and the media from Lloyd George to*

pursuit of war aims which possibly goes some way to explaining what is generally perceived as British success in this regard during World War I. Even though strict censorship of the reporting of military operations had been in effect since the early days of the war British newspapers were generally happy to co-operate as many editors saw themselves as willing partners 'in the government's effort to win the war'.⁵¹ Most importantly, however, was the assistance of newspaper proprietors and they were duly rewarded with 'knighthoods and lordships' that 'were generously distributed among the press and, finally, prestigious posts in government itself'.⁵² As another historian comments, 'this was Lloyd George's way of thanking the 'press lords' for their loyal service'.⁵³ The complicity of major sections of the press had a downside, however.

The failure to report anything that even remotely portrayed the actual horrors of war led to resentment for the war correspondent amongst those ordinary soldiers serving at the front.⁵⁴ The totally illusory nature of newspaper reports of military activity was even acknowledged by Lloyd George who admitted privately in December 1917 that:

if the people really knew, the war would be stopped tomorrow. But of course they don't – and can't know. The correspondents don't write and the censorship would not pass the truth.⁵⁵

The war correspondent even incurred the wrath of one of the greatest of the war poets, Siegfried Sassoon. In his poem 'Fight to a Finish' Sassoon derides the 'Yellow-Pressmen' whom he visualises being bayoneted by 'the boys' during their victory march through London.⁵⁶ This loss of credibility in those reporting from war zones had a knock-on effect in Ireland. As Maurice Walsh points out, the ensuing conflict in Ireland afforded journalists 'who had been under attack for their collusion with government propaganda during the First World War' the opportunity 'to reassert their identity as truth tellers'.⁵⁷ The effort to regain lost credibility resulted in prominent British newspapers such as *The Times*, *Daily Mail*,

Callaghan (London, 1978), p.17; Taylor, op. cit., p.187

⁵¹ Alice Goldfarb, 'Propaganda in Britain and Germany during the First World War' in *Journal of Contemporary History*, 13, no.3 (July, 1978), p.478

⁵² Ibid p.486

⁵³ Niall Ferguson, *The pity of war* (London, 1998), p.214; The most notable recipients of such posts were Lord Northcliffe of *The Times* and *Daily Mail*, Sir Max Aitken (later Lord Beaverbrook) of the *Daily Express*, and Sir George Riddell of the *News of the World*.

⁵⁴ Hochschild, op. cit., pp 223-4

⁵⁵ Ferguson, op. cit., p.213

⁵⁶ Paul Fussell, *The Great War and modern memory* (London, 1981), p.86

⁵⁷ Walsh, op. cit., p.188

Daily News, and *Manchester Guardian* displaying little hesitancy in being highly critical both of the actions of British armed forces in Ireland and of British Government lethargy in finding a resolution to the Irish situation.⁵⁸

Despite the massive propaganda campaign waged by Britain during World War I very few resources were deployed during the Anglo-Irish War to ensure victory in this particular aspect of the conflict. This may have been because the British Government believed there was little necessity to engage in propaganda on what was, for them, a purely domestic issue. It was September 1920 before former Fleet Street journalist Basil Clarke was recruited for such a purpose. His time in Ireland, however, was not marked by any great success. As Michael Hopkinson observes 'he was soon associated with the failure to counter in any coherent way the wave of propaganda resulting from the deaths of Terence MacSwiney and Kevin Barry'.⁵⁹ Effectively this left military censorship as the only tool employed by the British authorities to control the output of Irish newspapers.

The Press Censor's office in Dublin was comprised of the Chief Press Censor plus eleven other staff, three of whom were army personnel.⁶⁰ The position of Chief Press Censor from 1916 to April 1919 was held by Lord Decies (born John Graham Beresford). Entering the British Army in 1887 he served throughout the Boer War and had also accompanied General Sir John Maxwell to Ireland during the Easter Rising of 1916.⁶¹ Decies was assisted by Major Bryan Cooper who succeeded to the post following the former's resignation in April 1919. Cooper had previously been elected as a Unionist MP for South County Dublin in 1910.⁶² Little is known of others who worked in the Press Censor's office but the few who have been traced, although Irish-born, held a firm allegiance to Britain.⁶³

⁵⁸ Christopher Doughan, , 'What the papers said: portrayals of the Irish War of Independence in the British and Irish print media'. (M.A. thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2011), pp 34-5.

⁵⁹ Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Dublin, 2002), p.45; Hopkinson further notes that by this stage 'both the military and political leadership' in Dublin Castle had become 'obsessed with the hostile coverage by Irish newspapers'. Efforts to boost their own propaganda campaign were seriously hampered by the fact that 'lines of communication between the various publicity agencies were confused and often overlapped'.

⁶⁰ *Irish Independent*, *Freeman's Journal*, 5 June 1918

⁶¹ *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 2 Feb. 1944; *Irish Press*, 3 Feb. 1944

⁶² *Irish Times*, 12 July 1930

Cooper was subsequently elected to Dáil Éireann in 1923 as an independent member and was again elected four years later but this time as a Cumann na nGaedhael member.

⁶³ *Irish Independent*, *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Aug. 1919; *Irish Times*, 26 Aug. 1919; Two of those who have been identified were a Captain Shaw and W.R. Williamson who held positions as senior assistants to Lord Decies. Shaw had served during the Gallipoli campaign and was formerly honorary secretary of the Irish Unionist Alliance. Williamson, a Derry native, had seen service for over a year on the Western Front with the

There is no sense that Lord Decies was the tyrannical symbol of British power that Irish republicans would probably have wished him to be portrayed. Indeed the little that is known of the Chief Press Censor from 1916 to 1919 suggests that he was a reasonable and honest individual. One provincial newspaper, although disagreeing with the nature of the censorship in Ireland, described him as a 'courteous, affable, and capable gentleman, with whom it was easy to arrange matters on a reasonable and satisfactory basis'.⁶⁴ On his resignation from the post another nationalist provincial title commented that 'Lord Decies acted all through in a most courteous and tolerant manner' and felt 'certain that all sections of the Irish press regret his departure'.⁶⁵ Indeed Decies himself was also willing to acknowledge the talents of those diametrically opposed to the government he represented. In one of his regular press censorship reports he conceded that the Sinn Féin organ *Nationality* was 'extremely well written and edited' by Arthur Griffith, adding that 'much that is written is undesirable but extremely difficult to censor'.⁶⁶ Decies' sense of fair-mindedness was further illustrated in October 1921 when he wrote to the *Freeman's Journal* criticising the British authorities for the continuing internment of Irish political prisoners.⁶⁷

Despite the fact that Decies was clearly a decent and upright person he still had the difficult task of enforcing censorship. He may have earned the respect of Irish newspaper editors but the censorship he had to impose was, understandably, to prove unpopular with those in charge of Irish newspapers. Nonetheless, censorship was hardly a new phenomenon in Irish journalism. As far back as the 1870s the British Government introduced 'measures to limit the freedom of the press to claim to speak on behalf of a separate Irish people'.⁶⁸ Even before the situation in Ireland grew increasingly tense following the Easter Rising the war-time censorship had come in for stinging criticism. Regulations that had been instigated at the start of the war to limit what could be published were described as 'probably the strictest, most rigid, and most autocratic the press of these countries has ever experienced'.⁶⁹ To make matters worse the censorship had been conducted in an 'arbitrary and high-handed' manner, 'strongly marked by egregious incompetency and ridiculous absurdity'.⁷⁰

Inniskilling Fusiliers.

⁶⁴ *Killarney Echo*, 17 June 1916

⁶⁵ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 3 May 1919

⁶⁶ Press Censorship Report, September 1917 (Colonial Office, UK National Archives, CO904/166/1)

⁶⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Oct. 1921

⁶⁸ Legg, op. cit., p.107

⁶⁹ *Irish Journalist*, Vol. I No. 1, Oct. 1914

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, Vol. I No. 2, Nov. 1914

Press censorship was originally incorporated in the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA) and subsequently renewed in the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (ROIA) though there was little difference between the applicable regulations in both acts. In April 1918 Lord Decies sent a letter to the editors of all Irish newspapers reminding them of their obligations under law as to what was permissible to publish. The main thrust of the regulations, couched in legalistic language, refer to the ban on reports or statements 'intended or likely to cause disaffection or to interfere with the success of His Majesty's Forces' and also of 'statements intended or likely to prejudice the recruiting of persons to serve in any of His Majesty's Forces'.⁷¹ The latter regulation was initially borne out of the intention that the press should not be a hindrance to recruiting and in the later stages of the war that it should not promote anti-conscription sentiment. These concerns ceased to be relevant once the war had ended so it was the former regulation that created the greatest difficulty. Perhaps understandably the problem was frequently one of interpretation but the rapid emergence of Sinn Féin compounded the issue.

Most speeches made at Sinn Féin meetings tended to be vehemently anti-British in nature. Hence any reports of such speeches risked breaching censorship regulations even if such views did not reflect the editorial policy of the paper. Early in his tenure Decies endeavoured to clarify the matter by explaining that it was not his intention 'to interfere with reasonable criticism of political or military matters, as long as the language used was not calculated to incite the people'. He further added that 'any matter of a doubtful nature' should be referred to his office before publication.⁷² Many newspapers availed of this facility rather than risk possible suppression. Nevertheless, there is evidence to suggest that as Sinn Féin grew stronger censorship was utilised as a barrier to its aspirations.

In March 1918 Decies described many of the speeches at Sinn Féin meetings around the country as constituting 'the most violent anti-English propaganda' and stressed the need for censorship to be 'maintained over the reproduction of oratory of this description' which would greatly diminish its effect'.⁷³ By August 1918 Decies obviously felt that this policy was proving effective as he noted that 'the restrictions of censorship are proving an increasing embarrassment to the seditious activities of Sinn Féin'.⁷⁴ Two months later the Chief Press Censor virtually conceded, albeit indirectly, that censorship was being deployed as barrier to Irish republican aims when he reported that it had acted like 'a fire

⁷¹ Press Censorship Report, April 1918, CO904/166/2

⁷² *Kerryman*, 17 June 1916; Decies made his comments at a meeting with local newspaper proprietors and editors in Tralee.

⁷³ Press Censorship Report, March 1918, CO904/166/2

⁷⁴ Press Censorship Report, August 1918, CO904/167/1

extinguisher on the dangerous element in Ireland' and that it could 'stand as the most immediate and visible obstacle to Sinn Féin aspirations'.⁷⁵ Following that party's success in the general election of December 1918 Decies still maintained that censorship had been an overall success. In an interview with the *New York Times* he argued that this success was due to the 'loyal support of Irish newspaper men'. Sinn Féin's electoral success, he argued, was down to the British Government trying to justify their preoccupation with the war as an excuse for failing to deal comprehensively with the Irish situation.⁷⁶ Privately though, Decies was questioning the necessity of on-going censorship. In his monthly report for December 1918 he accepted totally its justification as a war-time measure but doubted its efficacy in peacetime. Praising the support he had received 'from all sections of the Irish press' he contended that such support constituted 'a strong argument for the discontinuance of censorship while yet it retains a measure of good-will'.⁷⁷

Press censorship reports for the period reveal that it was reports of speeches made at Sinn Féin meetings, and to a lesser extent at meetings of local councils, that were censored to the greatest extent. Quite often the tone of such speeches was highly provocative (if not inflammatory) so it has hardly a surprise that permission to publish was refused. This trend is illustrated by a few brief examples. In July 1918 the *Wexford People* was not allowed publish the text of a speech by Father Michael O'Flanagan in which he stated that any attempts to impose conscription would be countered by 'guerrilla warfare' carried out by 'bands of men up and down the country with little communication between one another'.⁷⁸ O'Flanagan sometimes appeared to act like a magnet to the censor's attention; three months later the *Meath Chronicle* was denied permission to publish the majority of a speech he made at Trim. This was not too difficult to understand given that during the course of his lengthy oration he referred to England as 'a hypocrite' that was 'professing to fight for freedom' when 'she was merely throwing dust in the eyes of the world'.⁷⁹ In Munster the *Clare Champion* was prevented from publishing comments made by a local priest at a pre-election meeting in support of Eamon de Valera; references to 'English

⁷⁵ Press Censorship Report, October 1918, CO904/167/1

⁷⁶ *Irish Independent*, 16 Jan. 1919; Extracts from Lord Decies' interview with the *New York Times* were quoted in the *Irish Independent*

⁷⁷ Press Censorship Report, December 1918, CO904/167/1

⁷⁸ Press Censorship Report, July 1918, CO904/167/1; At the time O'Flanagan held the position of joint vice-president of Sinn Féin.

⁷⁹ Press Censorship Report, October 1918, CO904/167/1

tyranny', 'armed hosts of militarism', 'strutting petty Czars in charge of the police', and 'England's tools of oppression' were hardly going to be passed by the censor.⁸⁰

Sinn Féin's subsequent electoral success in December 1918 led to more militant public utterances that continued to keep the office of the censor busy. The following month the *Wexford People* was refused permission to publish a report of a Sinn Féin meeting at which it was stated that Ireland need not fear 'British guns or British bayonets' and that resolutions passed at such meetings were of no consequence 'unless backed up by the resolution passed from the rifle'.⁸¹ At a meeting of Mountmellick District Council it was claimed that 'tyrants' with 'inhuman hearts' would treat domestic animals better than Irish political prisoners were currently being treated – the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* was not allowed report the comments.⁸² The *Drogheda Independent* was similarly denied permission to publish comments made at a demonstration for returned prisoners at which it was stated that England used the tools of 'the prison and convict ship' to argue her case and that 'brute force' would be responded to by similar methods if required.⁸³

There were some instances of editorial comment being censored but this did not occur with any great frequency. In a number of other cases the censorship ranged from the bizarre to what would simply be considered amusing almost a century later. On the bizarre front, the *Galway Express* was prohibited from publishing sections of a letter that suggested the spread of venereal disease in Ireland was increasing due to the number of soldiers returning from the front.⁸⁴ In a similar vein was the suggestion at a meeting of the Tipperary Board of Guardians in February 1919 that the killing of two RIC men at Soloheadbeg the previous month was engineered by the British Government in order to blacken Ireland's name 'before the nations of the world'. Unsurprisingly the *Tipperary Star* had to edit these comments out of its report.⁸⁵ What would now most likely be regarded as light relief was provided by two cases from September 1918 and February 1919. In the earlier case the *Irish Independent* was not allowed to report that mottoes such as "Up the Rebels" and "Join de Valera's IRA" had been painted on

⁸⁰ Press Censorship Report, December 1918, CO904/167/1

⁸¹ Press Censorship Report, January 1919, CO904/167/2

⁸² Press Censorship Report, February 1919, CO904/167/2

⁸³ Press Censorship Report, March 1919, CO904/167/2

⁸⁴ Press Censorship Report, July 1918, CO904/167/1; Letter was from a body called The Committee of Protection of Ireland from Venereal Disease

⁸⁵ Press Censorship Report, February 1919, CO904/167/2; The incident referred to at Soloheadbeg is generally regarded by historians as marking the start of the War of Independence.

walls and public buildings around the town of Letterkenny.⁸⁶ Six months later the strange combination of political prisoners and dog licences proved the unlikely reason why the *Irish Times* could not report on a Sinn Féin meeting at Mullingar. The meeting had passed a resolution calling on the party's supporters throughout Ireland 'to refuse to pay dog licences pending the release of Irish political prisoners in English and Irish jails'.⁸⁷

The strange, and even slightly comedic, nature of a small section of censored newspaper items notwithstanding, the regulation of the press remained a problematic issue both for the British authorities and Irish newspapers. Ultimately, press censorship in Ireland was abruptly abolished at the end of August 1919.⁸⁸ It is not entirely clear why the British Government made such a move at this particular stage. Perhaps they decided to act on Lord Decies' recommendation from the previous December. Decies successor, Major Bryan Cooper, had publicly questioned the effectiveness of censorship while still occupying the position of Chief Press Censor.⁸⁹ Whatever the reasons, the move was certainly not acknowledged as an act of conciliation. Kenneally argues that the abolition of censorship actually made the situation worse for Irish newspapers.⁹⁰ At the time at least one provincial newspaper agreed, arguing that its discontinuance would 'not leave the Irish press one whit more free hitherto'.⁹¹ As will be seen in forthcoming chapters it was a view shared by many other titles.

The problem was that while the office of the Press Censor was in operation newspapers could at least obtain some form of guidance as to what was permissible to publish. To a certain degree the Press Censor provided some form of protection but that protection ceased to exist after August 1919. The ending of press censorship coincided roughly with the escalation of the situation in Ireland to a military conflict. As those in Sinn Féin who favoured pursuance of their goals by military rather than political means gained the upper hand the conflict with Britain grew decidedly more violent. In this hostile environment provincial newspapers were frequently caught in the crossfire. Their experiences are documented and analysed in the following chapters.

⁸⁶ Press Censorship Report, September 1918, CO904/167/1

⁸⁷ Press Censorship Report, March 1919, CO904/167/2

⁸⁸ *Irish Times, Freeman's Journal*, 29 Aug. 1919

⁸⁹ *Irish Independent*, 12 June 1919; At a debate in Trinity College Dublin in June 1919 Cooper had argued that censorship had never prevented the emergence of any major truth as papers would simply risk censorship and print it.

⁹⁰ Kenneally 2011, op. cit., p.214

⁹¹ *Meath Chronicle*, 6 Sept. 1919

Chapter 3 – Leinster

Leinster newspapers 1914-1921			
<u>County</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Place of publication</u>	<u>Political leaning/orientation</u>
Carlow	<i>Carlow Sentinel</i> <i>Nationalist and Leinster Times</i>	Carlow Carlow	Unionist Nationalist
Kildare	<i>Kildare Observer</i> <i>Leinster Leader</i>	Naas Naas	Independent Nationalist
Kilkenny	<i>Kilkenny Journal</i> <i>Kilkenny Moderator</i> <i>Kilkenny People</i>	Kilkenny Kilkenny Kilkenny	Nationalist Unionist Nationalist
Laois	<i>Leinster Express</i>	Portlaoise	Independent
Longford	<i>Longford Independent</i> <i>Longford Journal</i> <i>Longford Leader</i>	Longford Longford Longford	Independent Unionist Nationalist
Louth	<i>Drogheda Argus</i> <i>Drogheda Advertiser</i> <i>Drogheda Independent</i> <i>Dundalk Democrat</i> <i>Dundalk Examiner</i> <i>Dundalk Herald</i>	Drogheda Drogheda Drogheda Dundalk Dundalk Dundalk	Nationalist Unionist Nationalist Nationalist Nationalist Unionist
Meath	<i>Meath Chronicle</i> <i>Meath Herald</i>	Navan Kells	Nationalist Unionist
Offaly	<i>King's County Chronicle</i> <i>King's County Independent</i> <i>Midland Tribune</i>	Birr Tullamore Birr	Unionist Nationalist Nationalist
Westmeath	<i>Westmeath Examiner</i> <i>Westmeath Guardian</i> <i>Westmeath Independent</i> <i>Westmeath Nationalist & Midland Reporter</i>	Mullingar Mullingar Athlone Mullingar	Nationalist Unionist Nationalist Nationalist
Wexford	<i>Enniscorthy Echo</i> <i>Enniscorthy Guardian</i> <i>New Ross Standard</i> <i>Wexford Free Press</i> <i>Wexford People</i>	Enniscorthy Enniscorthy New Ross Wexford Wexford	Nationalist Nationalist Nationalist Nationalist Nationalist
Wicklow	<i>Bray and South Dublin Advertiser</i> <i>Wicklow Newsletter</i> <i>Wicklow People</i> <i>Wicklow Press</i>	Bray Wicklow Wicklow Wicklow	Unstated Unionist Nationalist Nationalist

3.1 Introduction

In pure geographical terms Leinster is only the third largest of the four Irish provinces with a land area of 19,800 square kilometres. According to the 1911 census it had a population of 1,162,044 though Dublin city and county accounted for 477,196 of this figure.¹ Consequently, the population of the remaining eight counties was 684,848 with County Wexford the most populous (102,273) while County Carlow had the lowest population (36,252) of these counties. The urban centres with the largest populations were Kilkenny city, Wexford town, and Drogheda and Dundalk in County Louth. In total thirty-five local newspapers served Leinster between 1914 and 1921. The four titles that are examined in this chapter, the *Meath Chronicle*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, and *Midland Tribune* were published in areas that displayed a variety of demographical statistics.

The *Meath Chronicle* was published in Navan which had a relatively small population of just under 4,000. Nevertheless, the *Chronicle* was the only nationalist paper based in County Meath which had a population of just over 65,000 of which 93% were Catholic. The situation was slightly different with regard to the *Enniscorthy Echo*. It faced competition from a rival nationalist paper, the *Enniscorthy Guardian*, in the town of Enniscorthy which had a population of 5,495. Furthermore there were three other nationalist papers serving County Wexford, the *New Ross Standard*, *Wexford Free Press*, and *Wexford People*. The volume of competition, however, was somewhat offset by the fact that County Wexford, as noted, had the largest population of the Leinster counties (outside Dublin) with Catholics accounting for 93% of the populace.

With a population of 10,514 Kilkenny city was one of the largest population centres in the province and was also where the *Kilkenny People* was published. The overall population of the county was just under 75,000 of which almost 95% was Catholic. The *Kilkenny People's* main rival in the area was the nationalist *Kilkenny Journal* though the city and county was also served by the unionist *Kilkenny Moderator*. The *Midland Tribune*, published in Birr, County Offaly, did not have to contend with a nationalist rival in the same town. The county's only other nationalist paper was the *King's County Independent*, published in Tullamore. Birr, however, was also home to the unionist *King's County Chronicle*. The town's population at the time was just over 4,000 while County Offaly boasted a population of just over 57,000 of which 90% was Catholic.

¹ W.E. Vaughan and A.J. Fitzpatrick, *Irish historical statistics: population, 1821-1971* (Dublin, 1978), pp 3-68; All the demographical statistics and information provided in this section are based on the 1911 census and are cited from Vaughan and Fitzpatrick's work.

3.2 Leinster newspapers – an overview

At the start of 1914 most of the nationalist titles in Leinster, which accounted for the majority of newspapers in the province, were generally supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party. However, the turbulent events that occurred in the years that followed resulted in many of them changing their allegiance. That allegiance simply diminished at some newspapers, but others committed wholeheartedly to the cause of Sinn Féin. This chapter examines four titles that are included in the latter group. The four newspapers that are closely examined in this chapter, the *Meath Chronicle*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, and *Midland Tribune* all came to be recognised as Sinn Féin organs and accordingly reflect the dramatic shift in Irish nationalist politics that occurred in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. Two of these titles, the *Enniscorthy Echo* and the *Kilkenny People* came into serious conflict with the British authorities which led to extended periods of suppression. Accordingly an examination of the experiences of these titles facilitates an understanding of the journalistic environment that prevailed in Ireland during this time. The *Meath Chronicle* and *Midland Tribune* also attracted the unwanted attention of the British authorities during this time though not to the same extent as the former two titles. However, prior to examining the cases of these four newspapers it is necessary to briefly examine the other main titles in Leinster during this time.²

In October 1915 the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Baron Wimborne, hosted a function at the Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park in Dublin for editors of the Irish press. This gathering of representatives of the print media was held ‘in order to consult with them as to the lines on which their co-operation could most effectively be given to the recruiting campaign’ that had recently been inaugurated in Ireland.³ According to news reports at the time the Lord Lieutenant ‘was glad to welcome the 80 gentlemen who were present’ despite the short notice, and he also ‘paid a very cordial tribute to the assistance which the Press had already given in connection with the prosecution of the war’.⁴

Given the fractious relationship between the Irish print media and the British authorities in Ireland that was later to manifest itself, the Phoenix Park gathering was quite remarkable to the point of almost

² See Appendix D for a more comprehensive overview of Leinster newspapers.

³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 Oct. 1915; *Irish Times*, 29 Oct 1915, 29 Jan. 1916; While the editors or representatives of many newspapers attended this event many others sent letters of apology for non-attendance and others appear to have paid no attention to it at all. The eagerness on the part of the British authorities to enlist the assistance of newspaper editors to bolster recruitment is further evidenced by the fact that a number of them, including John Healy of the *Irish Times* and William J. Flynn of the *Freeman’s Journal*, were taken on a tour of the western front in January 1916.

⁴ *Ibid*

appearing anachronistic. Yet this ostensibly amiable meeting took place only six months prior to the 1916 Rising. Among the '80 gentlemen' present were editors of national newspapers plus other publications based in the three main cities (Belfast, Cork, and Dublin), but the vast majority of attendees were drawn from the Irish provincial press. Both unionist and nationalist titles were represented as were several longer-established titles in addition to numerous (principally nationalist) organs that had been established from around 1880 onwards. This diverse mixture obviously included several Leinster publications.

One of the oldest of these was the *Leinster Express* which was the sole newspaper serving County Laois. It was an independent organ whose editor-proprietor was Michael Charles Carey who had assumed control of the paper following the death of his father in 1903 and remained in that position for almost forty years..⁵ The *Leinster Express* had been established in 1831 by Henry W. Talbot who also launched the *King's County Chronicle* in neighbouring County Offaly in 1845. In 1873 the *Chronicle* was sold to John Wright, a staunch unionist from County Armagh who remained as editor-proprietor until his death in 1915.⁶ County Offaly was also home to two nationalist papers, the *Midland Tribune* (which is closely examined in a subsequent section), and the *King's County Independent*, later to become the *Offaly Independent*. This latter title was published by one of the significant titles in County Westmeath, the *Westmeath Independent*.

The *Westmeath Independent* was owned by Thomas Chapman who was initially supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party, but transferred his allegiance to Sinn Féin in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising.⁷ Subsequently the paper had quite a charmed relationship with the British authorities and in October 1920 its premises were partially destroyed after being attacked by Crown Forces. The damage was of such an extent that the *Westmeath Independent* only resumed publication in February 1922.⁸ One of the other main nationalist titles serving the county was the *Westmeath Examiner* which had been established in 1882 by John P. (J.P.) Hayden. Remarkably, Hayden remained as editor-proprietor until his death in 1954.⁹ The journalistic longevity displayed by Hayden was a feature that was evident across the entire provincial press. Hayden also served as an MP of the Irish Parliamentary Party as did James P.

⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.214; *Leinster Express*, 7 Aug. 1943;

⁶ *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981); *Midland Tribune*, 13 Nov. 1915;

⁷ Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party: provincial Ireland 1910-1916* (Oxford, 2005), p.241

⁸ *Westmeath Independent: 150th Anniversary Special Supplement* (July 1996); *Offaly Independent*, 22 Apr. 1922;

⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 2 Oct. 1982

(J.P.) Farrell, who founded the *Longford Leader* in 1897. Similar to Hayden, Farrell lost his seat at the general election of 1917.¹⁰ He also served as the first president of the GAA in County Longford.¹¹ This link between provincial newspapermen and the GAA was replicated at many titles across the country.

The two principal newspapers in County Louth also displayed a number of features that were common to many nationalist papers across the four provinces. The Catholic clergy had a significant involvement in the establishment of the *Drogheda Independent* in 1883 while Michael A. Casey, editor of the paper for fifty years following his appointment in 1889, was noted for his devout Catholicism.¹² This Catholic dimension was just as much a feature of the Irish provincial press at this time as the aforementioned links to the GAA. Another trait that was in evidence at many newspapers, albeit to a lesser extent, was the co-existence of the competing strands of Irish nationalism. This was very much the case at the *Dundalk Democrat*. The paper's long-time editor was Thomas F. (T.F.) McGahon who, in addition to holding a strong Catholic faith, was an unstinting supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party.¹³ However, the paper's reporting staff included Frank Neco, a member of the Irish Volunteers who was imprisoned following the Easter Rising. Neco served at the paper for sixty years including twenty as editor.¹⁴

The principal newspaper in County Wicklow was the *Wicklow People* which was one of a group of titles owned by the *People* group of publications. This group also included the *New Ross Standard* and the *Enniscorthy Guardian* but its main journalistic venture was the *Wexford People*, which was established in 1853.¹⁵ Its editor during this period was Edward O'Cullen who was a strong supporter of the GAA.¹⁶ James Reddy, long-serving manager of the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* in neighbouring County Carlow was similarly noted for his loyal support of the GAA and indeed Reddy served as secretary of the Carlow County Board. He was also a Gaelic League enthusiast, another organisation to receive considerable support from the provincial press.¹⁷

¹⁰ 75 years of Longford: *The Longford Leader* 1897-1972 (29 September 1972)

¹¹ Tom Hunt, 'County Longford: sport and society, 1850-1905' in Martin Morris, James Kelly and Fergus O'Ferrall (eds.), *Longford: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2010), pp 527-8; Mike Cronin, Paul Rouse, and Mark Duncan, *The GAA: county by county* (Cork, 2011), p.255

¹² *Drogheda Independent: Centenary Supplement* (11 May 1984); *Drogheda Independent*, 25 Mar. 1938;

¹³ *Dundalk Democrat*, 2 Feb. 1941

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 7 Mar. 1970

¹⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide* 1917, pp 212-6

¹⁶ *Wexford People*, 24 Dec. 2003

¹⁷ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 8 Apr. 1944

County Kilkenny was served by two nationalist newspapers, the *Kilkenny People* (which is examined in a subsequent section), and the *Kilkenny Journal*.¹⁸ The latter paper had started out as *Finn's Leinster Journal* in 1767.¹⁹ Links to the GAA were also evident at County Kildare's main newspaper, the *Leinster Leader*. Following its establishment in 1880 one of its early editors was John Wyse Power, one of the co-founders of the GAA. Similar to the *Drogheda Independent*, local Catholic clergy also had a significant involvement at the time of the paper's foundation.²⁰

The provincial press in Leinster was also notable for featuring a number of unionist titles. Probably the foremost among these was the aforementioned *King's County Chronicle* in County Offaly. However, other titles were also published such as the *Westmeath Guardian*, *Longford Journal*, *Dundalk Herald*, *Carlow Sentinel*, and *Kilkenny Moderator*. Most of these titles ceased publication within the first decade or two of the establishment of the Irish Free State. Another paper to fall into this category was the *Meath Herald* which was established in 1845 but ceased publication in 1936. Nevertheless, by 1914 the main paper in the county was the nationalist *Meath Chronicle*, which is the subject of the first case study in this chapter.

3.3 Case Study 1: *Meath Chronicle*

Origins

Similar to the other three Leinster newspapers closely examined in this chapter the *Meath Chronicle* was amongst that considerable number of nationalist newspapers established after 1880. The paper was founded in May 1897 by Tom Daly with the assistance of his brother Michael. Tom Daly began his career with the *Drogheda Independent* and went on to work for the *Wexford Free Press* before joining J.L. Carew's *Leinster Leader*. Carew then appointed Daly editor of what appears to have been the fairly short-lived *Wicklow & Wexford Leader*. Daly subsequently assumed editorial control of the *Carlow Vindicator*, a Parnellite organ with which he remained until the foundation of the *Chronicle*. Tom Daly followed in the mould of so many provincial newspaper owners and editors of the time in that he was devoutly Catholic and a staunch supporter of the GAA. His considerable journalistic experience is said to

¹⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213

¹⁹ Michael O'Dwyer, 'A history of Kilkenny newspapers 1767-2009' in John Bradley (ed.), *Kilkenny through the centuries: chapters in the history of an Irish city* (Kilkenny, 2009), pp 382-6

²⁰ *Leinster Leader: Centenary Supplement* (15 November 1980)

have resulted in his friendship with several leading political figures, most notably Arthur Griffith. Tom Daly died in January 1917 at the relatively young age of 48. His brother, Michael, who had assisted in the foundation of the paper, died only a few months later while still serving as editor.²¹ In its early years the paper was printed in Kells but this changed in 1907 when it was first produced in Navan by James Davis on a contract basis. Davis had moved there some years earlier from his native Fermoy and purchased the plant and goodwill of the defunct *Irish Peasant* newspaper. James Davis acquired the *Meath Chronicle* following the death of the Daly brothers in 1917. It was the beginning of a family association with the newspaper that has lasted well into the twenty-first century.²²

The journalists

The *Meath Chronicle* is an example of stability and longevity within the Irish provincial newspaper business. In the first century of its existence it had only seven editors and four of these had already served their editorship by 1919. Apart from the two Daly brothers the paper was also edited for a short period by Michael Judge. Judge's membership of the provisional committee of the Irish Volunteers meant that he had a significant involvement in the Howth gun-running during which he received a bayonet wound to the stomach.²³ Unfortunately little more is known of Judge but considerably more is known of the fourth of these editors, Hugh G. Smith.

Smith was a nephew of Tom and Michael Daly, who established the paper in 1897. Born in 1895 in Kells he took part in the 1916 Rising as an IRA dispatch rider prior to joining the *Chronicle*.²⁴ Local historian, Oliver Coogan, credits Smith with the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers in Meath in the aftermath of Easter 1916.²⁵ Coogan further describes Smith as 'the vitriolic anti-British columnist'; it is difficult to verify the accuracy of this description but there is little ambiguity as to Smith's allegiance to the IRA and Sinn Féin.²⁶ The paper's centenary issue describes him as a 'fearless freedom fighter' who, on one

²¹ *One hundred years of life and times in North Leinster: A Meath Chronicle centenary publication* (30 August 1997); *Meath Chronicle*, 13 Jan. 1917, 28 Jul. 1917;

²² *One hundred years of life and times in North Leinster: A Meath Chronicle centenary publication* (30 August 1997); *Meath Chronicle*, 2 May 1931; Similar to many printing operations around the country Davis's business extended beyond newspaper publication and also included book-binding, paper bag-making, and wallpaper-making.

²³ *One hundred years of life and times in North Leinster: A Meath Chronicle centenary publication* (30 August 1997); Maume 1999, op. cit., p.186

²⁴ *Ibid*; *Irish Times*, 10 May 1975; Smith's obituary indicates he joined the *Meath Chronicle* after Easter 1916 though there seems to be a little uncertainty in this regard.

²⁵ Oliver Coogan, *Politics and war in Meath, 1913-23* (Dunshaughlin, 1983), p.24

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.90

occasion during the Anglo-Irish War, 'carried a rifle and ammunition on his motorcycle' from Dublin to the Drumbaragh IRA Company in Kells.²⁷ While editor, Smith also worked for Sinn Féin on the campaign of Liam Mellows for the North Meath constituency in the 1918 general election.²⁸

Smith was succeeded as editor in 1919 by Patrick Quilty, a Limerick man, who had worked on the *Ballina Herald* prior to joining the *Chronicle*. Although possibly not as active as Smith in militant circles Quilty's political sympathies differed little from those of his predecessor. Already a Sinn Féin member before his move to Navan he was said to have done 'splendid intelligence work' in the town while his home was 'a sanctuary for men "on the run"'. Unlike Smith who went on to other journalistic pursuits, Quilty remained with the paper for a prolonged period, serving as editor until his death in 1960.²⁹

The *Meath Chronicle* also employed other like-minded journalists such as Seán Hayes, who was imprisoned at both the Curragh and Arbour Hill for his IRA activities during the War of Independence.³⁰ This accommodation of journalists so sympathetic to republican philosophy would probably not have taken place however, without a proprietor of a similar political outlook. In this respect the likes of Smith, Quilty, and Hayes had the ideal figure at the helm of their newspaper in the person of James Davis. On his death in 1931 his obituary stated that on assuming control of the paper in 1917 Davis 'determined that its proud national record should not suffer at his hands' and that 'he saw to it that it continued to support the policy of Sinn Féin'. Notably it also declared that Davis preferred to leave 'the different departments to carry on with a reasonably free hand'.³¹ With such an owner in place the output of the *Meath Chronicle* was bound to make for interesting consideration.

Editorial comment 1914-1921

At the beginning of 1914, and indeed throughout the early years of World War I, the *Meath Chronicle* declared under its masthead that it was 'published in the principal towns and villages of Meath and adjacent counties'. By 1921 this had been replaced by the appended titles of *Cavan and Westmeath Herald*. The *Chronicle* was usually constituted of eight pages divided into seven columns though the

²⁷ *One hundred years of life and times in North Leinster: A Meath Chronicle centenary publication* (30 August 1997)

²⁸ *Meath Chronicle*, 4 Dec. 1918

²⁹ *Irish Press*, 28 Nov. 1960; *Meath Chronicle*, 3 Dec. 1960; *Irish Times*, 10 May 1975; Hugh G. Smith moved to the *Irish Independent* and in 1924 joined the Censorship Department of the newly formed National Army. He was one of the original journalists in the *Irish Press* in 1931. He also served as resident Irish correspondent for the *New York Times* and as Dublin correspondent for the *Belfast Telegraph*.

³⁰ *Meath Chronicle*, 4 Apr. 1921, 24 Dec. 1921;

³¹ *Ibid*, 2 May 1931

page count frequently dropped to four during the course of the war. The front page was generally a mixture of adverts and news items but this changed around 1919 when it became almost completely devoid of advertising. Those advertisements that appeared were principally comprised of the staples of Irish provincial papers such as local grocery and drapery shops, various items of clothing, bicycles, medications, and a broad range of farm machinery and supplies. Amongst the most regular brands to appear in the advertising sections were Ford motor cars, 'Bendigo' tobacco, and 'Findlaters' tea, while the *Meath Chronicle's* own printing business also featured prominently.

As a nationalist organ the *Meath Chronicle* was initially quite supportive of the Home Rule movement but by 1918 its allegiance had unambiguously shifted to the Sinn Féin party. There were indications as early as 1915 that the paper was quite sympathetic to Irish republicanism but support for Sinn Féin became more open as the fortunes of that party rose dramatically after Easter 1916. This support came at a cost as in December 1918 a force of police and military dismantled and removed the paper's printing machinery. Contemporary reports indicate that the reason for the raid was because the paper's plant had been used in the production of Sinn Féin election leaflets.³² Press censorship reports for that time do not indicate any transgression by the paper so it seems reasonable to surmise that this was simply an effort to disrupt Sinn Féin's election campaign in County Meath. The printing machinery was returned about a week later but in no way did the occurrence restrain the *Meath Chronicle* from expressing its views about what it considered as efforts by the authorities to control the output of Irish newspapers.³³

Three months earlier a regulation had been introduced forbidding the reporting of meetings for which police permits had not been issued. The requirement prompted the paper to editorialise that censorship, ostensibly introduced in time of war, 'had slowly and deliberately filched away every little liberty a section of the Irish press enjoyed. It further added that censorship was now being 'directed towards the extinction of the Sinn Féin movement'.³⁴ At the time of the raid on its printing works in December 1918 the paper claimed that no reason had been given for the action.³⁵ On the resignation of Lord Decies five months later the *Meath Chronicle* acknowledged that he had performed his duties 'with the utmost courtesy and urbanity' but protested at the continued 'curtailment of the liberty of the Irish

³² *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Dec. 1918

³³ *Ibid*, 9 Dec. 1918

³⁴ *Meath Chronicle*, 31 Aug. 1918

³⁵ *Ibid*, 7 Dec. 1918

press'.³⁶ Even when censorship was abolished in September 1919 it was not viewed as a conciliatory measure. The editorial at the time claimed that, even though it had been intimated several months earlier, that censorship was voluntary, many publications had submitted content that might be deemed seditious 'for their own protection' but this protection, 'such as it was', had now been removed.³⁷ In the latter stages of the War of Independence the paper railed against how 'the Irish press has to canvas the possibility of interference in publishing what it bona fide believes to be true'. 'The provincial press', it further commented, 'almost fears to call its soul its own'.³⁸

The antagonism with which, by 1921, the *Meath Chronicle* regarded British rule in Ireland was somewhat distant from its editorial policy in the months leading up to the outbreak of World War I. As a nationalist newspaper it was generally critical of the procrastination of the British Government in finding a resolution to the Home Rule issue. Its attitude to the war was accepting rather than supportive. As hostilities commenced it prophetically editorialised that 'war with all its horrors threatens to devastate the old world'.³⁹ Prior to Easter 1916 most editorials dealt with the progress of the war and are probably only notable for how the delay in the relay of information regarding military operations was occasionally remarked upon.⁴⁰ However, an indication of the stance that the paper would later assume is provided by a column entitled 'Searchlights' that first appeared around October 1914.

This contribution was usually placed in a position of prominence close to the editorial and was generally signed by a columnist named 'Tara'. Oliver Coogan claims that 'Tara's' real identity was probably future editor, Hugh G. Smith.⁴¹ However, there is some doubt in this regard as other reports indicate Smith only joined the *Chronicle* after the 1916 Rising. Regardless of the columnist's actual persona 'Searchlights' was quite revelatory in signifying the underlying sympathies of the *Meath Chronicle*. As early as October 1914 'Tara' was pouring scorn on those encouraging recruitment to the British Army and reminding readers that 'every loyal son of Ireland should remember that his first duty should be to his own country'.⁴² In general this column was quite scathing in its attitude to John Redmond and the Irish

³⁶ Ibid, 3 May 1919

³⁷ Ibid, 6 Sept. 1919

³⁸ Ibid, 26 Feb. 1921

³⁹ Ibid, 8 Aug. 1914

⁴⁰ Ibid, 13 Mar. 1915, 12 Feb. 1916; In March 1915 the paper noted how 'long weeks after a lengthy list of killed, wounded and missing lifts some of the supposed trifling incidents to quite a different level'. Almost a year later it was observed how 'war news remains meagre' which led to conjecture being 'more in evidence than plain fact at this stage of the war'.

⁴¹ Coogan, op. cit., p.24

⁴² *Meath Chronicle*, 3 Oct. 1914, 24 Apr. 1915; Despite the opposition of this column to recruitment into the

Parliamentary Party. Redmond's assumption of control of the Volunteer movement was described as the fulfilment of his objective to 'crush every independent body that he cannot readily control'.⁴³ Redmond 'and his poltroons always disliked the Volunteers', and were 'bent on their destruction from the beginning', according to 'Tara'.⁴⁴ Indeed the 'Searchlights' column made the point of distinguishing between the National Volunteers (under Redmond's control) and the Irish Volunteers, and stated categorically that its sympathies were entirely with the latter body.⁴⁵ The 'Searchlights' column ceased to appear in the wake of the 1916 Rising which seems to have marked a turning point in the outlook of the *Meath Chronicle*.

The first editorial after Easter 1916 noted that 'a sad page has been added to the gloomy record of insurrectionary outbreaks in our country' and regretted 'the folly of the men who disregarded the wise counsel of Eoin McNeill'. Nevertheless, it unambiguously declared that the 'calamitous outbreak would never have occurred' had the British Government dealt firmly with the situation 'created in Ulster by Sir Edward Carson' by the use of 'violence and intimidation'.⁴⁶ While a subsequent editorial protested at 'the undue severity' in dealing with the leaders of the rebellion considerable foresight was evident in its observation that the Irish Parliamentary Party, 'the only nationalist organisation capable of dealing with the situation', had not faced such a momentous challenge 'in all its history'.⁴⁷ Prior to Easter 1916 *Meath Chronicle* editorials dealt principally with the war in Europe, thereafter the focus increasingly shifted to developments in Ireland. The readiness to acknowledge that the Irish Parliamentary Party had an important role to play, articulated in the aftermath of the Easter Rising, soon dissipated. Outright antagonism towards British policy in Ireland and unwavering support for Sinn Féin soon became the order of the day.

The vehemence of the opposition to the British Government's actions with regard to Ireland was further fuelled by the introduction of conscription in April 1918. Opposition to such a measure had been articulated through the 'Searchlights' column as early as December 1915.⁴⁸ When conscription was

British Army it was recognised that for some it was not really a matter of choice, such as 'the poor labourer whom perhaps necessity drives into donning the khaki'.

⁴³ Ibid, 24 Jul. 1915

⁴⁴ Ibid, 16 Oct. 1915

⁴⁵ Ibid, 26 Jun. 1915; 'Tara' acknowledged a letter from Bulmer Hobson that made a clear distinction between the "National" Volunteers and the "Irish" Volunteers.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 6 May 1916

⁴⁷ Ibid, 13 May 1916, 20 May 1916;

⁴⁸ Ibid, 11 Dec. 1915, 18 Mar. 1916; In December 1915 the column suggested that conscription could be prevented 'by joining the Irish Volunteers' while in March 1916 it was claimed that 'fear of the Irish

finally enacted in Ireland the paper was unqualified in its condemnation of the move. Over a number of editorials the paper declared that 'England is committing a blunder at once the gravest and most criminal of those which have characterised her government since the outbreak of the war' and more bluntly that 'the English Government have declared war on the Irish people'.⁴⁹ In the months that followed little opportunity was lost to label conscription as the 'blood tax' that constituted 'the first act of the English Government in its declared war on the Irish nation'.⁵⁰

By this time Hugh G. Smith was editor of the *Meath Chronicle* and its support for Sinn Féin was as unstinting as its criticism of the British Government. Sinn Féin by-election victories in Roscommon and Longford in the first half of 1917 had certainly drawn editorial comment but outright support for the party had not been voiced (possibly because Smith had not yet become editor or James Davis had not yet become proprietor). The tone had changed markedly by the time of the Clare by-election in July 1917. Eamon de Valera's victory was hailed as a repudiation of 'the weak and foolish spirit that had been let creep into Irish national politics for close on a generation' and Clare voters had now pronounced 'the true voice of nationalist Ireland'.⁵¹ It was around this time also that notices for Sinn Féin clubs began to appear for the first time. This possibly signified the *Meath Chronicle's* wholehearted conversion to the Sinn Féin cause.

William T. Cosgrave's victory in Kilkenny in August 1917 was interpreted as merely a natural progression. The paper editorialised that in any nationalist constituency 'the defeat of a Sinn Féin candidate has become all but unthinkable'.⁵² However, the defeat of the Sinn Féin candidate in South Armagh the following February was attributed to collusion between the Irish Parliamentary Party and Unionists when the 'virulent sectarian animosity that divided Hibernianism and Orangeism like a wedge, all suddenly evaporated before the menace of Sinn Féin'.⁵³ Damning criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party had become a regular feature of editorials and it was labelled the 'West British Provincial Party' following its victory in Waterford in March 1918.⁵⁴ Such castigation of the rapidly weakening force in Irish politics had grown even more robust by the time of the East Cavan by-election three months later. John F. O'Hanlon (managing-director of the *Anglo-Celt* in Cavan), who was standing in opposition to Sinn

Volunteers and nothing else' had saved the country 'from being included in the Compulsory Service Bill'.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 13, 20 Apr. 1918

⁵⁰ Ibid, 4, 19, 26 May, 15 Jun. 1918;

⁵¹ Ibid, 14 Jul. 1917

⁵² Ibid, 18 Aug. 1917

⁵³ Ibid, 9 Feb. 1918

⁵⁴ Ibid, 30 Mar. 1918

Féin's Arthur Griffith, was described as a 'pro-Britisher' and 'England's candidate'.⁵⁵ Griffith's resounding triumph was hailed as 'the greatest victory for Irish independence won for a generation'.⁵⁶

As early as September 1918 the paper was anticipating a general election. 'The coming election', it stated, 'will be one of supreme importance to Ireland' and 'the only party that stands by the historical claim of the Irish nation to complete independence is the Sinn Féin party'.⁵⁷ The weeks leading up to the election saw a continuance of the now familiar pattern of stinging criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party accompanied by near exultation of Sinn Féin ideals. As the election approached the paper published the Sinn Féin manifesto (as passed by the Censor) and also included comprehensive portrayals of Liam Mellows and Eamonn Duggan, the party's candidates in Meath.⁵⁸ Such endorsement was hardly surprising given that the editor was heavily involved in the party's campaign in the county.⁵⁹ The election itself was preceded by the aforementioned suppression of the paper plus an editorial reminder that the poll represented a choice between 'freedom or slavery'.⁶⁰ Sinn Féin's subsequent triumph was regarded as a victory for 'a force which even the strength of a mighty Empire cannot overcome'.⁶¹

Unsurprisingly the first meeting of Dáil Éireann in January 1919 was viewed with great positivity. The fledgling assembly 'represented to the fullest the only democratic body that can be recognised as having the essentials upon which moral government rests, namely, the unfettered allegiance and consent of the people'.⁶² Much of the *Chronicle's* enthusiasm for republican strategy was based on the expectation of a favourable outcome for Ireland at the Peace Conference that had convened in Paris following the end of World War I. Such hopes were, to a great extent, based on the assumption of American support for the Irish cause. U.S. President, Woodrow Wilson's declarations about the rights of small nations seemed to give the paper particular cause for encouragement. When it became clear that Irish delegates would not even get a hearing at the Conference the paper questioned whether Wilson's 'lofty principles'

⁵⁵ Ibid, 15 Jun. 1918

⁵⁶ Ibid, 29 Jun. 1918

⁵⁷ Ibid, 7 Sept. 1918

⁵⁸ Ibid, 23, 30 Nov., 14 Dec. 1918;

⁵⁹ *Irish Independent*, 4 Dec. 1918, *Meath Chronicle*, 14 Dec. 1918; The *Irish Independent* reported Hugh G. Smith as one of the speakers for Liam Mellows at the time of the paper's suppression while the *Meath Chronicle* itself reported Smith as in attendance at a rally in Kells at the close of the campaign.

⁶⁰ *Meath Chronicle*, 14 Dec. 1918

⁶¹ Ibid, 28 Dec. 1918

⁶² Ibid, 25 Jan. 1919

were 'mere diplomatic vapourings as unmeaning and hypocritical as England's mouthings about freedom and justice'.⁶³

As the situation in Ireland grew increasingly violent during the War of Independence the paper consistently maintained that Irish nationalists should pursue their goal by strictly peaceful means. Even though the two successive editors, Smith and Quilty, are credited with having IRA sympathies the editorial message conveyed was one of restraint. 'Violence or crime will but play the game of the enemies of the nation' the paper declared in September 1919.⁶⁴ It could, of course, be argued that indicating support even for some of the aims of the IRA could risk suppression or even worse. Nonetheless, very little comment was passed regarding IRA activities though the killing of an RIC constable at Ballivor in November 1919 and an attack on the Protestant church in Navan in May 1920 were roundly denounced.⁶⁵ As hostilities intensified in 1920 vilification of Crown Forces in Ireland became a regular feature. The country was 'being studded with the full panoply of warfare' while Irish people were 'setting about the necessary work of peacefully and constitutionally manning the public bodies'.⁶⁶ As the violence was reaching its zenith in 1921 the paper defiantly claimed that 'England has tried the methods of the terrorist and those methods have failed'.⁶⁷

As hostilities ended with the calling of a ceasefire in July 1921, the *Meath Chronicle* counselled extreme caution. This was hardly surprising for a title that only recently had labelled David Lloyd George 'a pigmy in the breeches of a giant'.⁶⁸ Nonetheless, firm confidence in the Irish plenipotentiaries was expressed as final negotiations with the British Government approached. The paper regarded the conclusion of the talks and the formulation of Articles of Agreement as a vindication of this confidence. 'Ireland owes a deep debt of gratitude to Arthur Griffith and his colleagues for the magnificent handling of the situation' stated the first editorial following the culmination of the negotiations in London. In an almost celebratory manner the same editorial, headed "Saorstát na h-Éireann", voiced the belief that the Anglo-Irish agreement gave 'substance to that freedom for which Ireland endured its Cavalry for the past four or five years, not to speak of what our forefathers had suffered'. The failure to achieve Irish unity was regretted but the hope was expressed that an 'All-Ireland Parliament with full powers to work

⁶³ Ibid, 3 May 1919

⁶⁴ Ibid, 20 Sept. 1919

⁶⁵ Ibid, 8 Nov. 1919, 8 May 1920; While it decried the killing RIC Constable Agar in November 1919 the same editorial also made the point that Sinn Féin had no connection with recent outrages.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 22 May 1920

⁶⁷ Ibid, 24 Mar. 1921

⁶⁸ Ibid, 16 Oct. 1920. 2 Jul. 1921;

for the advancement of the Irish Free State' could soon come about'.⁶⁹ This was a significant change in tone for a paper that had consistently articulated its total opposition to any form of partition.⁷⁰

As members of Dáil Éireann commenced debating the terms of the agreement and tensions became apparent the paper assumed a decidedly pro-Treaty stance. It counselled that it would be unwise to cast aside the Treaty to 'renew the struggle in the more virile fashion which would entail further blood sacrifice'.⁷¹ This was a far cry from only a few months previously when the desire for peace was expressed but the paper asserted that Ireland was 'prepared for the reverse should circumstances demand a continuation of sacrifice'.⁷² Indeed the evidence indicates a sense of *realpolitik* taking hold in the paper by December 1921. Addressing those it termed 'doctrinaire republicans' the penultimate editorial of 1921 argued that the achievement of an Irish Republic, 'standing in rigid isolation, was not practical politics'.⁷³ The final editorial of that year was most notable for criticism of Eamon de Valera for probably the first time within the pages of the *Meath Chronicle*. His failure to provide an alternative to 'bald rejection' of the Treaty prompted the paper to reason that there was 'only one constructive policy before the country', and that was 'acceptance of the peace treaty'.⁷⁴

Conclusion

The *Meath Chronicle* was an unequivocally nationalist organ from its establishment in 1897. It was particularly supportive of organisations such as the GAA and the Gaelic League. A people 'who suffer their language to decay', it declared in a 1917 editorial, 'cannot claim to be a nation'.⁷⁵ Unlike many other provincial titles, however, it never had any major links to the Irish Parliamentary Party. Indeed by the middle of 1917 its nationalism had unambiguously translated into support for Sinn Féin. From this time forward it availed of every possible opportunity to rail against the continued British presence in Ireland. Despite this affinity for Irish republican ideals there were no direct calls for an independent Irish republic. Possibly this subtle differentiation allowed the *Chronicle* to adopt a somewhat more pragmatic approach at the time of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Although it had repeatedly voiced vehement opposition to a settlement that included either partition or any British role in Irish affairs it welcomed the Treaty

⁶⁹ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

⁷⁰ Ibid, 20 Aug. 1921; Only three months earlier the *Meath Chronicle* had declared that 'we will not have partition in any guise or form, Ireland is one and indivisible, geographically, politically, and historically'.

⁷¹ Ibid, 17 Dec. 1921

⁷² Ibid, 16 Jul. 1921

⁷³ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

⁷⁴ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921

⁷⁵ Ibid, 6 Oct. 1917

with no little enthusiasm. Perhaps this could be explained by a sense of war weariness or a realisation that the attainment of goals that were simply articulated was far from simple in reality. The reasons for such a reaction notwithstanding, the *Meath Chronicle* ended up assuming a stance on the Treaty that broadly coincided with the majority of the members of Dáil Éireann and an even greater majority of the Irish people.

Meath Chronicle – Timeline

1897: founded by Tom Daly with the assistance of his brother Michael.

1907: printing operation moves from Kells to Navan.

1917: acquired by James Davis following the death of the Daly brothers.

1897-1919: edited successively by Tom Daly, Michael Daly, Michael Judge, and Hugh G. Smith.

1918: printing machinery seized by Crown Forces.

1919-1960: edited by Patrick Quilty.

3.4 Case Study 2: *Enniscorthy Echo*

On the occasion of its golden jubilee in 1952, the editorial of the *Enniscorthy Echo* suggested that when the history of the Irish provincial press came to be written, it would not be possible to ignore the part played by the paper and its staff in the movement for Irish independence.⁷⁶ This was an entirely reasonable claim as the significance of what the paper articulated during the 1914-1921 period is almost outweighed by the personalities who plied their trade at the paper during these years. As the same editorial proudly pointed out, the paper did not appear for almost nine months following the Easter Rising. This was mainly due to the suppression of the paper, but also because most of its staff had been imprisoned in the aftermath of the Easter Rising. At the time the *Echo* had been in publication for just under fourteen years which made it the youngest of the five titles serving County Wexford.

⁷⁶ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 17 May 1952

The people behind the *Echo*

The founding father of the *Enniscorthy Echo* in 1902 was undoubtedly William Sears. Originally from Ballinrobe, County Mayo, his journalistic career began with the *Western People* in Ballina.⁷⁷ His connection to County Wexford originally stemmed from time he spent early in his career on the staff of both the *Wexford People* and the *Wexford Free Press*. He subsequently became the youngest member of Wexford District Council and also married local woman, Greta Morris, when he was about thirty years of age.⁷⁸ One of the many newspaper obituaries written of Sears when he died in 1929 noted that ‘he severed his connection with the old Irish Nationalist Party’ around 1905 and became ‘an ardent follower of the doctrines’ of Arthur Griffith.⁷⁹ No reason is supplied for this sudden change of allegiance but there is one possible explanation.

In July 1905 Sears wrote to the Irish Parliamentary Party leader, John Redmond, seeking the latter’s support for his candidacy for the South Mayo constituency. Sears pointed out to Redmond how he and his paper had done sterling work on the national question in County Wexford and he also informed Redmond that his uncle, Edward Jennings, had been honorary secretary of the Land League branch that led the protest against Captain Boycott in Mayo in 1879.⁸⁰ Redmond replied wishing Sears well in his quest for election to parliament but advised that selection of candidates for specific constituencies was a local party matter in which he could not interfere.⁸¹ Sears then wrote back to the party leader asking that Redmond write him a letter of approval as a parliamentary candidate without any reference to a constituency.⁸² There is little record of any further correspondence on the matter but Sears never stood for election on behalf of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Consequently it seems that Sears’s transfer of loyalty to Sinn Féin around this time could be more than mere coincidence. His ambition was ultimately fulfilled in 1918 when he was returned unopposed as Sinn Féin MP for South Mayo.⁸³ Nonetheless, his transfer of allegiance could hardly be described as one of political convenience. As his obituary noted in the paper he founded, his militant stance and support for Sinn Féin resulted in him serving prison terms

⁷⁷ *Western People*, 30 Mar. 1929

⁷⁸ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 30 Mar. 1929; *Irish Independent*, 25 Mar. 1929;

⁷⁹ *Mayo News*, 30 Mar. 1929

⁸⁰ Sears to Redmond, 28 Jul. 1905, MS15,245/8

⁸¹ Redmond to Sears, 1 Aug. 1905, MS15,245/8

⁸² Sears to Redmond, 23 Aug. 1905, MS15,245/8

⁸³ *Mayo News*, 30 Mar. 1929; Sears was also elected to Dáil Éireann in 1921 and 1922 but lost his seat in 1927 when he stood as a Cumann na nGaedhael candidate.

totalling more than two years, spent in Frongoch and Ballykinlar internment camps and in Mountjoy Gaol.⁸⁴

The ostensibly close relationship between the *Enniscorthy Echo* and the Irish Parliamentary Party in the early years of the paper is reasonably understandable given that one of its co-founders and financial backers was Sir Thomas Esmonde. In 1900 Esmonde was elected as the party's MP for the North Wexford constituency. By 1907 Esmonde appeared to be following the lead given by Sears as he withdrew from Westminster and joined Sinn Féin. However, Patrick Maume, in his portrayal of Esmonde, gives the impression that Esmonde's defection may have had more to do with internal party squabbling than with any major commitment to Arthur Griffith's party. This is borne out by the fact that he later returned to the Irish Parliamentary Party fold and loosened his links with the *Enniscorthy Echo*.⁸⁵

Within a few years of Esmonde distancing himself from the *Echo* the paper was attracting the attention of the police authorities. In January 1915, on the suspicion that what they termed 'seditious publications and leaflets' were being printed at the offices of the paper, the police identified Sears, Cornelius J. Irwin, Martin Donohoe, James Donohoe, John Bennett, and Patrick Kehoe as directors of the paper. The conclusion that the paper was a Sinn Féin organ is evident from the fact that the same report identified Patrick Byrne as a director who had signalled his intention to resign 'if the Sinn Féin policy was not dropped'.⁸⁶ With such a pro-Sinn Féin directorship in place it is hardly surprising that the *Echo* attracted journalists with an undisputed commitment to the republican cause.

One of the most prominent of these journalists was Laurence (Larry) de Lacy who was also named in the same police report that listed the paper's directors. He was identified as sub-editor and believed 'to be responsible for the printing of any seditious publications printed in the office'.⁸⁷ What was termed 'seditious publications' was most likely the *Irish Volunteer*, the newspaper of the Irish Volunteer movement. The police had earlier noted the *Irish Volunteer* as an 'extreme paper' and subsequently discovered that it was printed at the *Echo* offices with de Lacy, an IRB member, its editor.⁸⁸ Around February 1915 de Lacy fled to the US after a quantity of explosives was found in the bedroom of his

⁸⁴ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 30 Mar. 1929

⁸⁵ Maume 2009, op.cit.; Esmonde remained as MP for North Wexford until 1918 when he lost his seat to Roger Sweetman of Sinn Féin.

⁸⁶ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/4

⁸⁷ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/4

⁸⁸ Inspector General's and County Inspectors' monthly confidential reports, CO904/94-414, CO904/96-214; Murphy, op. cit., p.400

house.⁸⁹ A colourful character to say the very least, de Lacy spent quite an eventful number of years in the US before returning to Ireland.⁹⁰ In a long journalistic career he served time as editor of the *Clare Champion* and the *Drogheda Argus* and was also a sub-editor at the *Irish Times* and *Irish Independent*. In his later years he retired to his farm near Enniscorthy but also wrote a botany column for the *Irish Independent* under the nom-de-plume “Fieldman”.⁹¹ While de Lacy’s absence from Ireland during the 1916-1921 period meant he could not play a significant role in the upheavals of these years this was not the case with other journalists working at the *Enniscorthy Echo*.

Robert Brennan joined the staff of the *Echo* in 1909. In addition to his journalistic work he was also an organiser of the Gaelic League, Sinn Féin, the IRB, and the Irish Volunteers in his native County Wexford. He was sentenced to death for his part in the 1916 Rising and while this was later commuted, he served a number of prison terms before hostilities finally ceased in July 1921. Brennan also worked for Sinn Féin’s propaganda department (as mentioned in the previous chapter) and was involved in the production of the *Irish Bulletin*, the Dáil Éireann newsheet, between February 1921 and January 1922. He joined the Irish delegation in London in the early stages of the Treaty negotiations but ultimately assumed an anti-Treaty stance. Brennan was also involved in the establishment of the *Irish Press* and was the first general manager of the paper.⁹²

Seán Etchingham, who worked for the *Echo* from its establishment in 1902 until 1915, similarly had a death sentence imposed after the 1916 Rising that was later commuted. Like Brennan also, Etchingham opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. In common with the paper’s editor, William Sears, he was also an elected representative. He was returned for the East Wicklow constituency in the 1918 general election and was subsequently elected in West Wicklow and then in North Wexford. A devout Catholic, Etchingham was highly active in both the Gaelic League and the GAA in County Wexford.⁹³ Indeed Etchingham may have been the reason the *Enniscorthy Echo* first came to the attention of the authorities. As early as September 1914 an RIC report singled him out as preaching ‘veiled sedition’ and

⁸⁹ Personalities (Laurence De Lacy), CO904/198/99-7

⁹⁰ Personalities (Laurence De Lacy), CO904/198/99-3; *Irish Journalist* Vol. I No. 13, Nov. 1915; *Irish Independent*, 12 Jan. 1953, 19 Nov. 1973; While in America de Lacy found time to get married, work for Hearst Newspapers, and receive an eighteen month prison sentence for conspiring to liberate a former German Consul-General. He also remained active in Irish republican circles and was closely associated with Éamon de Valera’s tours of the U.S.

⁹¹ *Irish Independent*, 19 Nov. 1973; *Irish Times*, 20 Nov. 1973;

⁹² Michael Kennedy, ‘Brennan, Robert’ in McGuire et al (eds.); *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 13 Nov. 1964;

⁹³ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 28 Apr. 1923; *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 25 Apr. 1923;

encouraging 'anti-English feeling' through the pages of the newspaper.⁹⁴ Etchingham served a number of prison terms in the years after Easter 1916 that may have contributed to his death, due to ill-health, at the relatively early age of 56.

Although Sears, de Lacy, Brennan, and Etchingham are significant journalistic figures whose paths crossed at the *Enniscorthy Echo* it would be an injustice to the paper not to mention some of the other writers who also served on the staff of the paper during this critical period of Irish history. Thomas McCarthy was one such writer who, in addition to being involved in the labour movement, was also an IRB member and one of the early organisers of the Volunteer movement in the Enniscorthy area.⁹⁵ Aodh de Blacam (Hugh Blackham) was London-born of Ulster parents; he converted to Catholicism in 1913 and joined the *Echo* staff two years later. Described as 'intensely nationalistic' he was involved in the Gaelic League in Enniscorthy and even organised Irish classes for the paper's typographical staff.⁹⁶ James Bolger, brother-in-law of Robert Brennan, worked on the reporting staff of the *Echo* until 1916 and later served with both the Wexford and Dublin brigades of the IRA during the War of Independence.⁹⁷ David Sears, son of William, joined the staff of the paper in 1918 and was also a battalion commander in the IRA. He attended Patrick Pearse's St. Enda's school in Rathfarnham and as a sixteen-year-old student he participated in the Easter Rising, seeing action in the South Dublin Union.⁹⁸

Police surveillance, suppression, and censorship

The *Enniscorthy Echo* was one of the first provincial newspapers to attract the attention of the British authorities. In addition to the aforementioned identification of Etchingham in September 1914 the *Echo* was also noted in an RIC report from October 1914 as one of the 'few extreme papers' amongst the provincial press, though this was hardly borne out in its editorials.⁹⁹ The monitoring by the RIC continued and on the basis that 'seditious leaflets' were being printed at the paper's offices the authorities decided in January 1915 to detain, where it was deemed necessary, postal packages addressed to William Sears

⁹⁴ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/4

⁹⁵ Murphy, op. cit., p.400

⁹⁶ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 20 Jan. 1951; *Irish Independent*, *Irish Press*, *Irish Times*, 15 Jan. 1951; De Blacam later wrote for the *Irish Independent* and the *Irish Times* but most prominently he contributed a column to the *Irish Press* for almost seventeen years under the name "Roddy the Rover".

⁹⁷ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 27 Apr. 1963; *Irish Independent*, *Irish Press*, 22 Apr. 1963; Bolger later joined the *Irish Independent* and was the paper's GAA correspondent from 1924 until 1944.

⁹⁸ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 8 Sept. 1951; *Irish Independent*, 7 Sept. 1951; David Sears became chairman of the *Enniscorthy Echo* in 1929 following the death of his father. He was drama critic for the *Irish Independent* for a number of years and also authored several of his own plays.

⁹⁹ Police reports, CO904/94-414

(editor), Cornelius J. Irwin (manager), and Laurence De Lacy (sub-editor).¹⁰⁰ Indeed a personal file was maintained on De Lacy and his movements continued to be monitored after he fled to the US around February 1915.¹⁰¹

With this level of surveillance it is hardly surprising that the *Echo* was suppressed in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising. The paper was published on 22 April 1916 but did not reappear until 3 February 1917. Robert Brennan recalled being told by William Sears (while both were detained) that it was not just the journalistic staff that had been arrested but also the printers and even the messengers. He further recollected how it seemed 'a bad joke that the military had also served on the proprietors a notice suspending publication of the paper indefinitely'.¹⁰² On its return the paper's editorial referred to the 'large number of the staff who had been interned without trial'.¹⁰³ The most notable of those arrested and detained was, of course, William Sears, proprietor and editor. It was not to be the last term of imprisonment Sears would endure and it was not the last brush his publication would have with the authorities. Significantly though, no such clash resulted in the non-appearance of the paper.

The *Echo* was still occupying police time in September 1919 when its offices were searched for 'seditious literature'. In its report of the incident, the only document that the *Irish Times* saw fit to report as having been seized was the programme of a concert hosted by the local GAA club the previous week.¹⁰⁴ Three months later, possibly in a sense of solidarity from its own experiences, an *Echo* editorial was highly critical of Chief Secretary, Ian McPherson, and the Dublin Castle authorities for suppressing 'the very moderate, very respectable, staid old *Freeman's Journal*'.¹⁰⁵ While the suppression of the *Freeman's Journal* was deemed worthy of editorial comment the IRA raid on the offices of the *Irish Independent* about a week later did not merit similar editorial attention.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁰ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/4

¹⁰¹ Personalities (Laurence De Lacy), CO904/198/99-32; De Lacy was described as appearing 'to be living comfortably in New York in a god flat and to be a great deal at home'.

¹⁰² Robert Brennan, *Allegiance* (Dublin, 1950), p.80

¹⁰³ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 3 Feb. 1917

¹⁰⁴ *Irish Times*, 25 Feb. 1919

¹⁰⁵ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 20 Dec. 1919; Ian Kenneally, *The paper Wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland 1919-1921* (Cork, 2008), p.9; The *Freeman's Journal* was suppressed for its persistent criticism of the authorities in Dublin Castle and 'for publishing offensive articles about the military, RIC and the proposed recruitment of a new auxiliary force'.

¹⁰⁶ As detailed in the previous chapter the IRA took exception to the coverage in the *Irish Independent* of their attempt to assassinate the Lord Lieutenant, Lord French.

The increasing level of violence in Ireland saw Wexford declared a Martial Law area in 1921 which had a consequent effect on newspapers in the county. From early March until mid-August almost all editorials in the *Echo* were preceded by the proviso that all news and advertisements in the paper were 'censored by the Military Authorities, to whom the paper has to be submitted before being printed and published'. The restrictions did not discourage it from accusing the British Government of implementing a 'vindictive policy of reprisals in Ireland'.¹⁰⁷ Notably though, no editorial comment was afforded to the incidents that gave rise to the reprisals. The censorship was only withdrawn in the middle of August, almost a month after the truce had been called in the War of Independence.¹⁰⁸

According to the *Echo*: Editorial comment 1914-1921

Most unusually for an Irish provincial publication the *Enniscorthy Echo* normally consisted of fourteen to sixteen pages prior to World War I, though this dropped to eight pages during the course of the war. Each page was divided into seven columns which was the general standard for most provincial papers at the time. The appended title of *South Leinster Advertiser* appeared above a front page that was predominantly made up of lists of recent auctions and property sales. The diverse range of services advertised included ironmongery, dental surgery, tailoring, installation of electric lights, insurance coverage, in addition to a cargo steamship service (Coast Line) operating between Wexford and Liverpool. Various brands of bicycles were also advertised as were motor cars both for sale and hire. In common with the majority of other provincial newspapers of the time agricultural machinery and supplies also featured strongly in addition to frequent farming announcements and notices.

With the amount of advanced-nationalist journalists on its staff, not to mention the proprietor and directors, it is scarcely surprising that a decidedly pro-Sinn Féin editorial policy was adopted, particularly in the years after 1916. To a certain extent the paper's editorial comment did not differ greatly from that of the *Meath Chronicle*. Similar to its counterpart in County Meath the paper enthusiastically embraced the Irish-Ireland movement and frequently professed its support for the Irish language. 'We must not set aside the old tongue of our fathers' it warned in May 1915.¹⁰⁹ Also, any notion of partition was unequivocally opposed from the very start. The paper accused the British Tories of 'making a pawn of Ulster' and claimed that 'the entire country was disgusted' at the thought of any of the Ulster

¹⁰⁷ *Enniscorthy Echo*, 4 Jun. 1921

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 13 Aug. 1921

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 29 May 1915

counties being excluded from Home Rule.¹¹⁰ However, the attitude of the *Echo* was slightly different to that of the Navan-based title in one respect.

The *Enniscorthy Echo* did not join in the outright castigation of the Irish Parliamentary Party that became such a prominent feature of the *Meath Chronicle*. Indeed the paper was occasionally willing to acknowledge the work of the party where and when it saw fit. With the impending ratification of the Home Rule bill in 1914 the *Echo* editorialised that it was a ‘proud and happy’ occasion for Mr Redmond who had ‘led his party with faultless tact’, and in whose hands ‘Ireland’s case was always safe’.¹¹¹ Over a year later John Dillon was warmly praised for his opposition to conscription in the House of Commons and for ‘making it perfectly clear to the Government’ that ‘Ireland had made up her mind that she would not have conscription’.¹¹² Even when the political atmosphere in the country had irrevocably changed by the time of John Redmond’s death in 1918 the paper still had no qualms in accepting the sincerity of his efforts. In a genuinely heartfelt tribute it was acknowledged that ‘no man did more than Mr. Redmond to bring about a kindly feeling between England and Ireland’ but his ‘profound faith in British democracy’ was sadly misplaced.¹¹³ Nonetheless, the political allegiance of the *Enniscorthy Echo* had by this time unquestionably shifted to the Sinn Féin party.

Following the initial Sinn Féin by-election victories in North Roscommon and South Longford the *Echo* stated unequivocally that ‘complete self-government’ could not be won by ‘parliamentarianism’ and that the country had now taken up ‘the mote up-to-date weapon of Sinn Féin’.¹¹⁴ By the time Éamon de Valera won the East Clare by-election in July 1917 the paper was unambiguously asserting that nationalist Ireland had ‘abandoned the policy of begging at Westminster and has nailed the Sinn Féin colours to the mast’.¹¹⁵ The endorsement of the newly emerging political force became increasingly effusive as it claimed that:

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 24 Jan. 1914, 21 Mar. 1914;

¹¹¹ Ibid, 30 May 1914

¹¹² Ibid, 25 Sept. 1915

¹¹³ Ibid, 9 Mar. 1918; The editorial published on the death of Mr Redmond also contended that ‘if there was one spark of justice in the British nature it would have responded to his noble appeals’ but his ambitions were scuppered by ‘Carson’s opposition, the Curragh mutiny, and Asquith’s betrayal’.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 12 May 1917

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 14 Jul. 1917

The people in towns and villages are meeting in their thousands, and under the banner of Sinn Féin are pledging themselves to Ireland's service. In almost every case the local clergy lead the way.¹¹⁶

One the eve of the general election the following year it editorialised that only one of the parties going to the polls stood for 'the absolute independence of Ireland' and 'that party is known the world over to be the Sinn Féin party'. The same editorial labelled the Irish Parliamentary an organisation that 'stands for an English settlement of the Irish question; for a decision by our enemies of what our destiny is to be'.¹¹⁷ Much of the hope for Irish independence was based on the proclamations of President Wilson. However, the paper avoided criticism of the U.S. President when it became apparent that the Peace Conference would not consider the aspirations of Irish nationalists. Instead the *Echo* regarded Wilson as unfortunate in having 'to deal with two wily tricksters, Lloyd George and Clemenceau', who 'battered up his Fourteen Points very thickly and then got the poor man to swallow the lot'.¹¹⁸

As the War of Independence grew more protracted during 1920 editorials became more damning in their condemnation of British rule in Ireland. Little restraint was evident as the paper bluntly stated that:

The British people are still the master hypocrites of Europe, of the world, of this age, and of all time. They still continue to speak of freedom and praise freedom and at the same time to keep shackles on Ireland, Egypt, and India.¹¹⁹

Following reprisals carried out by Crown Forces in Trim, Mallow, and Balbriggan the paper compared them to the burning of Louvain in Belgium by the Germans in World War I. Accusing Britain of hypocrisy the paper claimed that 'a crime when committed by the Germans, becomes excusable when committed by the British'. The same editorial alleged that the Black and Tans were specifically assembled 'to crush the movement supported by four-fifths of the people'.¹²⁰ Shortly afterwards the paper asserted that the 'terrible pass in Ireland today' was solely due to 'the deliberately planned and ruthlessly executed campaign of the British cabinet'.¹²¹ However, like the *Meath Chronicle*, the activities of the IRA merited little or no attention in the editorial columns of the *Enniscorthy Echo*.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 11 Aug. 1917

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 14 Dec. 1918

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 22 Nov. 1919

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 13 Mar. 1920

¹²⁰ Ibid, 2 Oct. 1920

¹²¹ Ibid, 16 Oct. 1920

The ceasefire of July 1921 was broadly welcomed and interpreted as 'the best indication of the genuine desire for an honourable peace uppermost in the hearts of the Irish people'.¹²² If the reaction to the ending of hostilities was one of guarded optimism the news of the conclusion of Articles of Agreement for the Anglo-Irish Treaty was greeted with a great degree of relief and extreme positivity. 'The realisation of the dream of the great patriots of the past was within sight' according to the editorial that also happily proclaimed that 'never again was England to have the appointing of judges, magistrates or police'. There appeared to be a realisation that the gap between what was desirable and what was achievable was not so easily bridged. This was most evident in the acknowledgement that 'Mr Griffith and his colleagues could never hope for a settlement if they were not prepared to give and take'.¹²³ As differences began to emerge the paper solidly maintained its support for the agreement. This was most likely attributable to William Sears who unambiguously supported the Treaty.¹²⁴ It accentuated the positive aspects of the Treaty such as the complete withdrawal of Britain's 'claim to domination in Irish affairs' and that Ireland would now be regarded as an equal rather than a subject. It was particularly critical of the comments in Dáil Éireann of Erskine Childers who opposed the Treaty.¹²⁵ Unfortunately this turned out to be a sad portent of events to come.

Conclusion

In common with many other provincial newspapers the *Enniscorthy Echo* strongly supported the Irish Parliamentary Party in the paper's early years. This allegiance shifted rather swiftly, however, and was buoyed by the republican sympathies of both its directors and staff. Few other provincial, or indeed national, titles witnessed the involvement of so many of its own journalists in the movement for Irish independence. This involvement resulted in many of them serving terms of imprisonment or, in the cases of Brennan and Etchingham, receiving death sentences. The *Enniscorthy Echo* is justifiably regarded by a number of historians as one of the earliest papers to support Sinn Féin. Nevertheless, from an editorial perspective this did not really manifest itself until after Easter 1916. Once this happened, however, that support was open and unequivocal. Support for the Anglo-Irish Treaty was

¹²² Ibid, 16 Jul. 1921

¹²³ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

¹²⁴ Ibid, 30 Mar. 1929; William Sears was described as standing for the acceptance of the Treaty and being 'an unswerving supporter of Arthur Griffith'.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921; The paper described the style of criticism adopted by Childers as 'very irritating' and was particularly irked by what it claimed was his acceptance that the Treaty would grant Ireland the same level of autonomy as Canada which was 'practically sovereign independence' but that the Treaty should still be rejected as 'Irishmen could not make the same use of their chance that the Canadians did'.

enthusiastic and steadfast, quite possibly influenced by the respect William Sears had for Arthur Griffith. Nonetheless, in a microcosm of what happened in Dáil Éireann, former journalists with the paper (such as Brennan and Etchingham) took a rather different view than their erstwhile colleagues.

Enniscorthy Echo – Timeline

1902: founded by group led by William Sears but also including Sir Thomas Esmonde, sitting MP for North Wexford, as financial backer.

1905: William Sears unsuccessfully seeks nomination as Irish Parliamentary Party candidate for South Mayo constituency. Sears transfers allegiance to Sinn Féin soon afterwards.

1907-1909: Sir Thomas Esmonde leaves Irish Parliamentary Party to join Sinn Féin. On his return to the Irish Parliamentary Party Esmonde begins to sever his links with the paper.

1914: paper comes to the attention of police authorities for the first time.

1916: suppressed following Easter Rising and does not reappear until February 1917.

1918: William Sears elected as Sinn Féin MP for South Mayo.

1916-1921: William Sears serves various terms of imprisonment along with other journalists from the paper.

1929: death of William Sears.

3.5 Case Study 3: *Kilkenny People*

The history of the Irish provincial press in the late nineteenth century and the opening decades of the twentieth century are distinguished by a variety of editors who were inextricably and singularly linked to individual publications. This was a feature of all four provinces and was not confined to titles of any one particular political persuasion. Prime examples of such a characteristic in Leinster were Michael A. Casey at the *Drogheda Independent* and J.P. Hayden at the *Westmeath Examiner*. However, few other newspapermen epitomised this aspect of provincial journalism to the same extent as Edward Thomas (E.T.) Keane of the *Kilkenny People*. Keane was co-founder of the paper in 1893 along with Patrick J. (P.J.)

O'Keefe and was also the paper's first editor. He remained in this position until his death over fifty years later.¹²⁶

Born in Listowel, County Kerry he made his way to Kilkenny via the *Munster News* in Limerick and the *Clonmel Nationalist* before working at the *Kilkenny Moderator* prior to the establishment of the *Kilkenny People*. The *Kilkenny People* was founded as a Parnellite organ, as the *Kilkenny Journal* had become highly critical of Parnell in the late 1880s. Keane's co-founder at the paper, P.J. O'Keefe, was an IRB member and also served on the executive committee of the Kilkenny GAA. He later became mayor and borough treasurer of Kilkenny. O'Keefe tended to the commercial side of the paper's business while Keane directed editorial policy.¹²⁷

Edward Thomas Keane

It is really not possible to discuss the fortunes of the *Kilkenny People* during these years without firstly considering its co-founder, proprietor, and editor, E.T. Keane. He was described by a former colleague (probably Frank J. Geary who went on to edit the *Irish Independent* for over a quarter of a century) as being 'forthright in his speech and in his writings' and also someone who 'could hit hard' and 'did hit hard, many a time'.¹²⁸ In July 1917, the Press Censor, Lord Decies, labelled him 'a decidedly dangerous class of man'.¹²⁹ This attention from the office of the Press Censor arose out of Keane's involvement with the Sinn Féin party to whose cause Keane was converted after Easter 1916.

So swift was Keane's conversion to the republican ideology that he is regarded as a central factor in the election of William T. Cosgrave as Sinn Féin MP for Kilkenny city in August 1917.¹³⁰ One source even suggests that Keane wished to stand for election as Sinn Féin candidate himself. Local Irish Parliamentary Party activist John Loftus, in a letter to leader John Redmond, claimed that Keane 'had no love for Cosgrave as he had hoped to be the Sinn Féin candidate himself'.¹³¹ Regardless of his electoral ambitions, Keane was by this stage chairman of the local Sinn Féin club and through both his newspaper editorials and speeches at Sinn Féin rallies was converting increasing numbers of people to the

¹²⁶ *Kilkenny People*, 19 May 1945

¹²⁷ Ibid, pp 391-2; *Kilkenny People*, 19 May 1945;

¹²⁸ *Kilkenny People*, 19 May 1945; *Irish Independent*, 22 Dec. 1961; A section of Keane's obituary in the *Kilkenny People* in May 1945 was signed by 'F.J.G.', most likely Frank J. Geary who worked for the paper from around 1916 until 1921.

¹²⁹ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-523

¹³⁰ J.J. Comerford, *My Kilkenny IRA days: 1916-22* (Kilkenny, 1978), pp 188-9; Oram, op. cit., p.131;

¹³¹ Loftus to Redmond, 20 Jul. 1917, MS15,263/3; Loftus was seeking the nomination for his brother Pierce who he claimed was 'a great friend of Keane'.

republican cause.¹³² He was arrested in August 1917 and October 1919 which roughly coincided with both suppressions of his newspaper and this only further solidified his status as a bastion of the independence movement in the Kilkenny area.

The 1917 arrest resulted from a seditious speech he had made at Ballingarry, County Tipperary on 12 August. A large crowd gathered at the railway station in Kilkenny to cheer him off as he was being removed to Military Headquarters in Cork.¹³³ He was released about ten days later.¹³⁴ Keane's second arrest took place shortly after the second suppression of the *Kilkenny People* though the two events were not connected.¹³⁵ This time he received a twenty-eight day prison sentence for the possession of firearms. The conviction seems to have been fairly spurious as the small amount of firearms found in his home were almost obsolete with one being little 'more than a toy' according to Keane.¹³⁶ He was released about a week before the completion of his sentence due to ill-health. Keane was said to be in a weak condition and had lost considerable weight during his incarceration.¹³⁷ While expressions of concern regarding the state of his health were genuine Keane remained editor of the paper for another quarter century and he had an almost equally robust relationship with the authorities of the Irish Free State as he had with their predecessors.¹³⁸

Censorship and suppression

In a manner not totally dissimilar to the *Enniscorthy Echo* the significance of the editorial comment of the *Kilkenny People* is somewhat diminished by the tribulations of its editor and the fact that the paper was twice suppressed during the 1916-1921 period. Admittedly the latter experience stemmed from what appeared in its editorial columns but it is the mere fact that the paper was subjected to two fairly lengthy suppressions that has left a more indelible mark on Irish journalistic history. However, unlike its counterpart in neighbouring County Wexford the *Kilkenny People* did not come under the police radar prior to 1916. The first instance of the paper attracting the attention of the authorities was in May 1916.

This attention was provoked by the editorial of 20 May 1916. In summary this article was bitterly critical of police action in Kilkenny following the 1916 Rising. In a lengthy and rather long-winded editorial the

¹³² Comerford, op. cit., pp 188-9

¹³³ *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 28 Aug. 1917

¹³⁴ *Irish Times*, 8 Sept. 1917

¹³⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Oct. 1919; *Kilkenny People*, 4 Oct. 1919;

¹³⁶ *Kilkenny People*, 18 Oct. 1919

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 1 Nov. 1919

¹³⁸ Marie Coleman, 'Keane, Edward Thomas ('E.T.') in McGuire et al (eds.)

question was posed as to why in Kilkenny, where 'there has never been the slightest suggestion of trouble' were so many citizens 'dragged from their homes, many of them humble wage-earners'. Possibly the authorities were most angered by the reference to General Sir John Maxwell as a 'military dictator'.¹³⁹ Subsequently Maxwell wrote to Keane stating that he considered the aforementioned editorial was 'written with the intention of inciting the people against the military authorities'. Maxwell's letter further indicated that, until further notice, proofs of the paper were to be submitted 'to the County Inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Kilkenny, before publication'. The letter was quoted in its entirety in the *Kilkenny People* of 3 June 1916 but Keane was not granted permission to publish his response to Maxwell. Accordingly most of the editorial was left blank but preceded by a declaration that if the paper 'cannot speak free and untrammelled, it will not speak in the accents of slavery'.¹⁴⁰ The abrasive attitude of Keane to any form of censorship set the tone for Keane's relationship with the office of the Press Censor and resulted in the close monitoring of his paper for the next few years. In August 1916 Lord Decies noted with disapproval the tone of the paper but decided against any immediate action being taken.¹⁴¹

The official monitoring of the *Kilkenny People* continued as the paper's support for Sinn Féin grew stronger. In late June 1917 Decies wrote to Keane reminding him 'that the publication of articles or other matter which infringe the Defence of the Realm regulations cannot be permitted'.¹⁴² As no satisfactory response was received the decision to suppress the paper was taken in July 1917. Decies believed the suppression would have a 'salutary effect' and would 'serve as a warning to the Irish press as a whole'.¹⁴³ Decies may have had a point in this regard as the Press Censorship Report for the following month noted a 'greatly increased number of proofs submitted to this office by country papers'.¹⁴⁴ However, if the suppression of the *Kilkenny People* prompted a greater degree of caution on the part of other provincial titles it also strengthened the broader perception that the authorities were interfering with the freedom of the press.

The move even resulted in a question in the House of Commons as to the reason for the action to which the Chancellor, Andrew Bonar Law, bluntly replied that the paper was suppressed for contravening

¹³⁹ *Kilkenny People*, 20 May 1916

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 3 Jun. 1916

¹⁴¹ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-580

¹⁴² *Ibid*, CO904/160/6-526

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, CO904/160/6-519

¹⁴⁴ Press Censorship Report, August 1917, CO904/166/1

Defence of the Realm regulations. The question was then asked if similar action would be taken against the *Morning Post* but no response was given.¹⁴⁵ At a more local level the suppression was condemned by both the Castlecomer Board of Guardians and Kilkenny Corporation.¹⁴⁶ Another provincial newspaper, the *Connacht Tribune*, weighed in with its support for Keane and his newspaper. While conceding that the *Kilkenny People* had recently 'taken a line with which we do not altogether agree' it described Keane as 'an able and fearless journalist' and protested strongly against the gagging of 'a newspaper owner by the Prussian policy of dismantling his machinery and doing incalculable injury to his business'.¹⁴⁷ The *Irish Independent* joined in the criticism, complaining that the *Kilkenny People* 'was suppressed for some unnamed offence' and accusing the authorities of selectively using 'all the formidable penalties which the Defence of the Realm Act' makes available to them.¹⁴⁸

Ultimately the paper did not appear from mid-July until mid-October 1917. The suppression was only lifted when Keane was compelled to agree that his paper would be subject to official censorship and that nothing would be published in the future 'to which official censorship could take exception'.¹⁴⁹ The solidarity of fellow newspapermen was expressed by the Irish Newspaper Owners' Association which congratulated Keane 'upon the restoration of his printing plant and machinery' and expressed the hope 'that he would have suffered nothing from the suspension of his newspaper'.¹⁵⁰ On its return the editorial announced that its "long vacation" had terminated but acknowledged that the paper was 'only permitted to appear under official censorship'.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, in July 1918 the paper appeared to go on the offensive.

Through his solicitor Keane complained to Lord Decies that a report of speeches made at a political meeting in Kilkenny, which had been deleted by the Censor's office from the proofs of the *Kilkenny People*, had been reported in both the *Kilkenny Journal* and the *Kilkenny Moderator*.¹⁵² Lord Decies

¹⁴⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Jul. 1917; *Irish Independent*, 24 Jul. 1917, 22 Feb. 1918; The *Morning Post* of London was prosecuted for what was considered a similar contravention of Defence of the Realm regulations and subsequently fined £100 plus costs. According to the *Irish Independent* this was 'a mere bagatelle to a wealthy newspaper like the *Morning Post* and less than many shopkeepers have been fined for profiteering'.

¹⁴⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, 27 Jul. 1917;

¹⁴⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 15 Sept. 1917

¹⁴⁸ *Irish Independent*, 6 Oct. 1917

¹⁴⁹ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-518; *Irish Independent*, 4 Oct. 1917;

¹⁵⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Oct. 1917

¹⁵¹ *Kilkenny People*, 13 Oct. 1917

¹⁵² Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-464

accepted the validity of Keane's complaint and effectively conceded that this was an oversight on the part of the Censor's office. Decies went on to state that the *Kilkenny People* editor 'may congratulate himself that by his actions he avoids any breach of the Defence of the Realm regulations' whereas the other two Kilkenny newspapers would 'have to answer for their actions' as they saw fit to violate these regulations 'without any reference to this office'.¹⁵³ It is not altogether certain but Keane may have harboured a lingering sense of injustice at this incident that may have been a factor in the second suppression of the paper in August 1919.

In summary this second suppression resulted from the publication of certain items in the issue of 2 August 1919 that had already been deleted by the Censor's office from the proofs of the paper. The items again referred to speeches made at a recent political meeting in County Kilkenny and in reality were fairly innocuous by the standards of the time. Nonetheless, it was considered 'a deliberate and calculated defiance' of censorship regulations that swiftly led to the suppression of the paper.¹⁵⁴ Keane's case may not have been helped by the fact that he had questioned whether Major Bryan Cooper (who had now replaced Lord Decies as Press Censor) could perform his role in a totally objective manner given his unionist background.¹⁵⁵ This was a most unfair accusation to make against Cooper and indeed Keane acknowledged 'that it was a wrong suggestion for me to make' in a letter to Cooper some weeks later in which Keane effectively admitted that his contravention of the censorship regulations was due to a fit of temper.¹⁵⁶ In the first editorial after the ending of the suppression Cooper was referred to as 'an honourable man who would not consciously do what was unfair or unjust'.¹⁵⁷

The paper reappeared on 13 September following considerable written correspondence with the authorities and a meeting between Keane and Major Cooper. By this time government censorship had officially ended. Nonetheless, this second suppression provides a pertinent example of the difficulties faced by newspapers during these years and of the dilemmas faced by editors. They had to decide whether to print content without reference to the Press Censor and risk the consequences or alternatively submit proofs for approval and face the possibility of being refused permission to publish.

¹⁵³ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-466

¹⁵⁴ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-485

¹⁵⁵ *Kilkenny People*, 2 Aug. 1919

¹⁵⁶ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/6-480; Keane admitted that it was not always possible 'to bring to bear on my judgement and actions that calm judicial temperament, which would save me from the serious consequences that occasionally follow hasty decisions'.

¹⁵⁷ *Kilkenny People*, 13 Sept. 1919

However, from September 1919 onwards the latter option ceased to exist with the ending of official censorship.

Editorial comment 1914-1921: The Voice of the *People*¹⁵⁸

Prior to the outbreak of World War I the *Kilkenny People* normally consisted of twelve pages (divided into seven columns) though this fell by four pages as the war progressed. The front page was normally comprised of classified ads, primarily details of public auctions, and conventional adverts. The paper appeared to feature more advertisements than most as a wide range of businesses were promoted in the advertising columns as were a multitude of goods and services. In addition to the many local grocery, hardware, and clothing shops that appeared the services of estate agents, dentists, and optometrists also featured significantly as did the paper's own printing works. Farming-related adverts and announcements were also a hallmark of the *Kilkenny People*, though this was scarcely surprising for a paper that included a regular column entitled 'All the news of interest to farmers'. There was also a highly notable concentration on Irish manufactures in the advertising sections, perhaps best exemplified by the Smithwick brewery which emphasised in its advert that it was the 'largest buyer of local barley'.¹⁵⁹

There is little doubt that before Easter 1916 E.T. Keane and his newspaper were enthusiastic supporters of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party. Prior to Redmond's visit to Kilkenny in October 1914, when the implementation of Home Rule appeared imminent, an editorial recognised him as 'the leader of the movement which has won for us this measure of self-government' and 'the man who in the near future will be Prime Minister of Ireland'.¹⁶⁰ Indeed Keane was quite supportive of Redmond's stance regarding the war and the paper frequently carried recruiting advertisements, particularly in the early months of 1915. The sinking of the *Lusitania* in May 1915 provides a stark illustration of the paper's outrage at Germany's prosecution of the war. The incident was labelled 'the crowning infamy of Germany's long series of barbarities since the war broke out' and the same editorial unambiguously declared that Germany 'should be wiped off the map'.¹⁶¹ The scathing nature of such editorial comment can, in hindsight, be seen as an indicator of what was to appear in the lead columns of the *Kilkenny*

¹⁵⁸ All editorials appeared under this heading in the *Kilkenny People*.

¹⁵⁹ In November 1921 the paper claimed that some British manufacturers were attempting to pass off their products as Irish and accordingly started to publish lists of items (categorised into household, foodstuffs, and general) that the paper claimed were definitely home-produced.

¹⁶⁰ *Kilkenny People*, 17 Oct. 1914

¹⁶¹ *Ibid*, 15 May 1915

People in the succeeding years. The crucial difference was that Keane's ire was to be focussed in a completely different direction.

In the immediate aftermath of Easter 1916 the responsibility for the state of affairs that led to the Rising was laid firmly at the door of the British Government. Its capitulation to 'Carson and his criminal confederates' were angrily cited as the primary reason for this 'most appalling calamity' that 'has drenched the streets and the public places of the capital in human blood'.¹⁶² This description of Dublin contrasted sharply to the depiction of Kilkenny which, an editorial a few weeks later stated, almost with satisfaction, had remained 'as peaceful as a Sabbath evening in midsummer' amid all the disturbances in the capital city.¹⁶³ Despite this apparent pride in the complete absence of any violent unrest in Kilkenny the editorial comment of the *Kilkenny People* grew decidedly more robust and the paper itself became increasingly associated with what the British authorities considered the militant strand of Irish nationalism.

By late 1917 the Irish Parliamentary Party was being referred to as an 'egregious collection of humbugs and charlatans' while Sinn Féin had 'already captured the country' and would 'go on from success to success'.¹⁶⁴ Barely ten months later the party previously led by John Redmond had become the 'West British Parliamentary Party' that was 'doomed to political extinction'.¹⁶⁵ In his memoir of his time in the IRA in Kilkenny J.J. Comerford spoke of how E.T. Keane's 'writings and speeches made sense to all' and how his father used to cut certain editorials out of the paper and read them 'aloud to groups of people at Coolraheen crossroads and at the Salmonpool public house'.¹⁶⁶ While such a recollection may be slightly given to hyperbole the editorial reaction to the introduction of conscription possibly renders such comments understandable. The contrast was made as to how it took the House of Commons twenty-five years 'to pass a Home Rule Act for Ireland' whereas the Conscription Act was 'put into force within a few weeks of its being placed on the Statute Book'. The same fiery editorial proclaimed that, after the horrors of famine, emigration, and landlordism, conscription was now aimed 'at the annihilation of the Irish nation'.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶² Ibid, 29 Apr. 1916; Carson's Ulster Volunteers were also described as 'the most violent, the most fanatical, and the most illiterate mob in all Europe'.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 13 May 1916

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 20 Oct. 1917, 3 Nov. 1917;

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 10 Aug. 1918

¹⁶⁶ Comerford, op. cit., p.189

¹⁶⁷ *Kilkenny People*, 20 Apr. 1918

Broadly speaking the editorial policy of the *Kilkenny People* did not differ greatly from that of the *Meath Chronicle* or *Enniscorthy Echo*. What was distinctive, however, was the highly belligerent tone of many of its editorials. As the situation in the country grew ever more violent in 1920 the paper categorically stated that the ‘supreme outrage’ was ‘the presence of an alien government detested by the people and maintained by brute force’.¹⁶⁸ The character of David Lloyd George was described as ‘bitter, vindictive, and treacherous’.¹⁶⁹ Nonetheless, an editorial from early October provides the best example of the almost confrontational tone of some of the paper’s editorials. The primary target was the Chief Secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, who had presided over a much criticised series of reprisals carried out by Crown Forces. In an unusually short lead article Greenwood was variously referred to as the ‘Canadian Pussyfoot’, ‘a beautiful liar’, an ‘accomplished liar’, and then simply as ‘Liar Greenwood’.¹⁷⁰ For a publication that had already experienced two suppressions the tone and language of such an editorial was quite remarkable to say the least. Yet despite the extremely abrasive nature of such editorials the paper greeted the cessation of hostilities in July 1921 with considerable enthusiasm.

The fact that overtures for a ceasefire had originated on the British side was viewed by the *Kilkenny People* as an indication of ‘a degree of sincerity’ that had not existed previously.¹⁷¹ Prior to the Treaty negotiations solid confidence was expressed in Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins who may not have been ‘trained diplomatists’ but were ‘plain blunt men who are not going to let down their country’.¹⁷² The agreement reached in December 1921 was greeted almost joyously. ‘One of the greatest and most heroic fights for freedom ever put up in ancient or modern history by any small nation’ had ended in victory the paper declared with almost unbridled enthusiasm. Griffith, Collins, and the remaining members of the negotiating team had ‘won an unparalleled personal triumph’.¹⁷³

As the Dáil debates on the Treaty commenced and opposition began to surface the *Kilkenny People* held firm in its support for both the agreement and the Irish signatories. Indeed it was even acknowledged that neither Griffith nor Collins asked or wanted to be part of the negotiating team. They were not sent to London, the paper further argued, ‘to demand an Irish Republic’ and ‘no one has asserted that they did’. According to the paper rejection of the Treaty would mean choosing a policy of ‘self-extermination’

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 22 May 1920

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 16 Oct. 1920

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 2 Oct. 1920

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 16 Jul. 1921

¹⁷² Ibid, 8 Oct. 1921

¹⁷³ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

when self-determination had already been achieved. Resumption of military conflict would result in a 'bloody and ruthless war', not for an 'Irish Republic' but 'for a "shadow", for a "phrase", for one form of treaty as against another'.¹⁷⁴ The great difficulty of reconciling nationalist ideology with political reality seemed to be well appreciated in the editorial columns of the *Kilkenny People*. Similar to its counterparts in Meath and Wexford there was an acceptance that some degree of compromise was simply unavoidable.

Conclusion

Unlike the *Meath Chronicle* and *Enniscorthy Echo* the *Kilkenny People* did not articulate any real support for Sinn Féin prior to Easter 1916. However, once E.T. Keane transferred his allegiance to the republican cause his paper quickly became a vociferous critic of British policy in Ireland. The nature of this criticism landed the paper in trouble with the authorities on several occasions. Much of the friction between the Censor's Office and the paper may well have been attributable to the abrasive and impulsive personality of E.T. Keane who went on to have an almost equally contentious relationship with the authorities of the Irish Free State. His imposing persona looms large over the experiences of the *Kilkenny People* in the years from 1916 to 1921. This only serves to emphasise the binding relationship between the editor and his publication that was a distinctive characteristic of Irish provincial journalism in the early twentieth century.

Kilkenny People – Timeline

1893: founded by E.T. Keane and P.J. O'Keefe.

1916: paper comes to the attention of the Press Censor in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising.

1917: Keane arrested for making a seditious speech. Paper suppressed from July until October for infringing Defence of the Realm regulations.

1919: Paper suppressed from early August until mid-September for breaching Defence of the Realm regulations. Keane subsequently receives 28 day prison sentence for possession of firearms.

1893-1945: E.T. Keane, editor-proprietor

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

3.6 Case Study 4: *Midland Tribune*

The Birr based *Midland Tribune* did not find itself embroiled with the authorities to anywhere near the same extent as the *Enniscorthy Echo* or *Kilkenny People*. Nor is there any record of its proprietor or editor being imprisoned between 1916 and 1921 as was the case with William Sears and E.T. Keane. Nonetheless, this renders an examination of the paper's fortunes between these years and indeed the broader background of newspapers in County Offaly no less interesting. The *Midland Tribune* was ultimately regarded as a pro-Sinn Féin organ but as with so many other titles this is only part of the story.

Origins of the *Midland Tribune*

At the start of the 1880s the unionist *King's County Chronicle* was the only provincial title serving this part of County Offaly. This may have been one of the reasons that prompted three Catholic priests to establish the *Midland Tribune* in 1881, the primary aim of which was to provide a nationalist organ to an area that had previously been devoid of such an influence. The three priests, Robert Little, Denis Sheehan, and Patrick Brennan, occasionally wrote for the paper in its early years but the most significant figure in the opening decades of its existence was John Powell who assumed control in 1888. Powell is credited with putting the paper on a firm footing and significantly improving its fortunes as the first ten years of the *Tribune's* existence had proved quite difficult. By the time of Powell's death in 1901 the paper's circulation had reached around 5,000 and it had also been equipped with new machinery.¹⁷⁵

Originally from Ennis, Powell had worked at the *Kilrush Herald* and the *Clare Examiner* and also spent some time in America before returning to Ireland. He had been involved in the establishment of the *Tribune* and had already served four years as editor prior to taking ownership of the paper in 1888. Powell's tenure as editor was also marked by a several brushes with the law. He appeared before the courts on no less than eight occasions and served three separate prison terms arising out of those appearances. The periods of imprisonment resulted mainly from his advocacy of tenant rights and are believed to have broken his health and impaired his eyesight. These setbacks may have been a contributory factor to his death in 1901 at the relatively young age of 45.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981)

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*

His wife, Margaret, had assumed legal ownership in 1892 while a number of the ten young children he left behind later worked for the paper. John Powell was succeeded as editor by his brother Daniel. Within a year of taking editorial control Daniel Powell received a four month prison term after being convicted of intimidating a local solicitor who had refused to re-let a house to a tenant he had previously evicted. Margaret Powell was also charged with the same offence but her brother-in-law took full responsibility for articles published in the *Midland Tribune* that were intended to bring pressure to bear on the solicitor.¹⁷⁷ On his release he received a 'royal welcome' at Roscrea but his incarceration had a detrimental effect on his previously robust health. He died in 1907 at a relatively young age similar to his brother.¹⁷⁸

Ownership and editorship

Margaret Powell was proprietor of the *Midland Tribune* from 1892 until her death in 1931. The paper had been conveyed to her so that her husband could speak freely without the fear of the sheriff's seizure as a result. In addition to the death of her husband at a relatively young age two of her children also died while quite young. Leo Powell died in 1907 and Bluebell Powell died in 1917.¹⁷⁹ Two of her sons joined the British Army while one of her daughters, Clare, joined the Army Medical Service at the outbreak of World War I but was invalided out of service in 1917.¹⁸⁰ Another son, John B. Powell emigrated to the U.S. around 1913 and became a successful journalist in Boston.¹⁸¹

While Margaret Powell took legal ownership of the *Midland Tribune* in 1892 she did not take an active part in the running of the paper. Accordingly a period of difficulty and uncertainty followed the death of Daniel Powell in 1907. In the five years after his death several of the children of John and Margaret Powell assisted in the production of the paper, most notably the aforementioned John B. Powell.¹⁸² However, a sustained period of stability followed the appointment of James Pike as editor in 1912. Pike was another newspaperman who bolstered the sense of longevity that was characteristic of Irish provincial journalism, remaining in the editorial chair of the *Midland Tribune* until his death in 1948. Hailing from Tullamore, Pike was initially a teacher before turning his hand to journalism. His first journalistic posting was on the staff of Thomas Chapman's *Westmeath Independent* and was later

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ *Irish Independent*, 30 May 1907

¹⁷⁹ *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981)

¹⁸⁰ Ibid; *Irish Independent*, 1 Jun. 1917;

¹⁸¹ *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981)

¹⁸² Ibid

assistant editor to W.P. Ryan at the *Irish Peasant* in Navan and subsequently at the re-named *Peasant and Irish Nation* in Dublin.¹⁸³

Described by Hugh Oram as ‘dour’ and ‘walrus-moustached’ James Pike was also a member of the IRB and the Irish Volunteers.¹⁸⁴ Originally supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Pike and his paper switched allegiance in the months after 1916.¹⁸⁵ In the following months and years Pike was swift to embrace Irish republican ideology and canvassed for Sinn Féin during the 1918 general election campaign. Birr was then a town with a significant unionist community whose antipathy Pike’s political activities appear to have aroused. When loyalists in the town lit a bonfire in Emmet Square (then Cumberland Square) to mark the end of World War I they added Pike’s effigy to that of the Kaiser.¹⁸⁶ Around the same time Pike was accosted on the street by a woman who thrust a Union Jack in his face yelling “make the rebel eat it” and “where now is Sinn Féin and German gold”.¹⁸⁷

The antagonism directed at Pike by members of Birr’s unionist community had little effect on his journalistic career and the *Tribune’s* support for Sinn Féin remained solid. In later years Pike joined the Fianna Fáil ranks and his obituary described him as being ‘a staunch member of the Birr Comhairle Ceanntair and Birr Cumann’.¹⁸⁸ As Pike was a fairly dominant personality at the newspaper there is little record of any other journalists who worked for the *Midland Tribune* during these years. This may simply be due to the fact that (as will be outlined in the next section) the *Tribune* was a significantly smaller operation than titles such as the *Enniscorthy Echo* and the *Kilkenny People*. However, one of those who did work for the paper was Cornelius O’Mahony who joined the reporting staff around 1920. O’Mahony had edited the *Kerry Weekly News* for over ten years until the destruction of the paper’s printing machinery by Crown Forces. O’Mahony was credited as a supporter of Sinn Féin and an active member of the party from a very early stage.¹⁸⁹ Another journalist to work at the *Midland Tribune* during this period, albeit for a short time, was the aforementioned Frank J. Geary. As previously noted Geary had

¹⁸³ *Midland Tribune*, 7 Feb. 1948

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*; Oram, op. cit., pp 139-40;

¹⁸⁵ *Irish Independent*, 9 Oct. 1916; The *Irish Independent* of this date described the *Midland Tribune* as ‘a strong party and partition organ till a few weeks ago’.

¹⁸⁶ Oram, op. cit., pp 139-40

¹⁸⁷ *Irish Independent*, 13 Nov. 1918

¹⁸⁸ *Midland Tribune*, 7 Feb. 1948

¹⁸⁹ *Irish Press*, 30 May 1939; *Midland Tribune*, 3 Jun. 1939;

cut his journalistic teeth under E.T. Keane at the *Kilkenny People* but spent some time with the Birr title before his long association with the *Irish Independent* commenced in 1922.¹⁹⁰

Editorial comment 1914-1921

During the 1914-1921 period County Offaly was served by four different titles that curiously were evenly split between nationalist and unionist. However, this statistic may be a little misleading as it is not really possible to determine the influence exerted by individual titles as there are no figures available for either sales or circulation. The two unionist titles were the *King's County Chronicle* and the *Leinster Reporter*, the latter being the Tullamore edition of the former publication. The other nationalist organ apart from the *Midland Tribune* was the Tullamore based *King's County Independent* (later the *Offaly Independent*) which was owned by the same company (Athlone Printing Works) that published the *Westmeath Independent*.¹⁹¹

The masthead of the *Midland Tribune* also displayed the appended title of the *Tipperary Sentinel and King's County Vindicator*. At six pages in volume it was somewhat smaller than several other provincial newspapers. It also differed from other titles in that it was divided into eight columns. Its front page contained both adverts and news items though frequently only the latter appeared. Local businesses accounted for much of the advertising space though overall there were a slightly lesser proportion of adverts than many other papers. Apart from the promotion of local businesses the advertising columns featured adverts for several different medications, a variety of foodstuffs, and numerous agriculture-related items. One further noticeable aspect of the *Tribune* was regular adverts for cinemas in Birr, Roscrea, and Nenagh which was an evolving feature of many local papers.

Editorials in the *Midland Tribune* often tended to be quite brief (sometimes only five or six sentences) and frequently dealt with matters specific to County Offaly. This may well have been due to the simple fact that the paper was a smaller journalistic and publishing entity than many other provincial titles of the time. Many issues were only comprised of four pages which differed considerably from the *Meath Chronicle*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, and *Kilkenny People* which almost always consisted of eight pages. This tendency towards a smaller paper and brief editorials lessened noticeably after Easter 1916. Nevertheless, it remained quite a distinctive feature throughout the years from 1914 to 1921. Despite

¹⁹⁰ *Irish Independent, Irish Times*, 22 Dec. 1961

¹⁹¹ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1922*, p.216

the frequently brief nature of the leading articles the paper's editorial comment still makes for fascinating reading.

In general terms the *Midland Tribune* was clearly supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party up to Easter 1916. Indeed, in 1914 James Pike took the time to write to the national newspapers to dispel any uncertainty as to his paper's support for the party led by John Redmond. The situation arose due to a minor controversy that had attracted some outside attention, concerning the selection of candidates for the upcoming election. Pike's letter, published in both the *Freeman's Journal* and the *Irish Independent* declared that 'far from being hostile to the Irish Party', his paper had 'consistently supported what we conceived to be its best interests'.¹⁹² The publication of a full page recruiting advertisement the following year seemed to indicate that the *Tribune* was quite supportive of John Redmond's stance on the war.¹⁹³ Nonetheless, there had already been indications that the paper was not entirely in agreement with those calling for support for the British war effort. A few weeks after the shootings that followed the Howth gun-running an editorial bluntly stated that 'nationalists who are now spouting as to the defence of the Empire should not forget the happenings on the streets of Dublin a few Sundays ago, when unarmed Dublin citizens were shot down by Scottish soldiers'.¹⁹⁴

In the aftermath of Easter 1916 the paper regretted the absence of a Parnell-like figure that 'could have controlled the situation as it existed'. In a similar vein to several other provincial newspapers it also cited what it considered the British Government's capitulation to Sir Edward Carson 'and the hanging up of Home Rule' as the immediate cause of the rebellion.¹⁹⁵ Nonetheless, the paper still considered the violence in Dublin 'a very mad and foolish undertaking'.¹⁹⁶ By October the *Tribune* was clearly distancing itself from the parliamentary party, accusing John Redmond of 'toadying to English opinion' and of being 'largely responsible for the rebellion' due to his part in splitting the Volunteer movement.¹⁹⁷

The following year witnessed the *Midland Tribune's* total conversion to the Sinn Féin cause. The party's victory in South Longford was seen as 'a nail in the coffin of the present Irish Party' while de Valera's

¹⁹² *Freeman's Journal, Irish Independent*, 15 Dec. 1914

¹⁹³ *Midland Tribune*, 6 Nov. 1915

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15 Aug. 1914

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 6 May 1916

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 13 May 1916

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 14 Oct. 1916; 'Had there been no Volunteer split', the paper's editorial claimed, 'the "extremists" in the movement would have worked in harmony with, or would have been controlled by the more moderate section'.

victory in East Clare ‘sounded the death-knell of parliamentarianism’.¹⁹⁸ The Sinn Féin defeat in South Armagh early the following year saw the sentiments of the *Meath Chronicle* being echoed with ‘Redmondites and Ulster Orange Partitionists’ now marching ‘shoulder to shoulder’.¹⁹⁹ The advent of the conscription crisis in April 1918 unsurprisingly elicited the paper’s opposition but the *Tribune* was eager that its readers did not lose sight of the fact that it coincided with the first unopposed return of a Sinn Féin candidate. Following Dr Pat MacCartan’s by-election victory the paper proudly stated that ‘North Offaly can now claim in all truth to be Ireland’s premier constituency’.²⁰⁰ Sinn Féin’s resounding victory at the general election several months later was considered ‘the final stroke towards the demolition of England’s effort to disguise the thorough dissatisfaction of the Irish people with the system of rule by force which now reigns supreme in Ireland’.²⁰¹

As a Sinn Féin paper the *Midland Tribune* did not find itself attracting the attention of the Press Censor to anywhere near the same degree as other provincial titles of similar allegiance. Press censorship records indicate the paper being instructed to delete content on only three occasions. However, this certainly does not mean that it did not have strong opinions on the matter. In August 1918 it complained that the phrase “as passed by censor” had become increasingly familiar in relation to the depiction of events in Ireland.²⁰² Nevertheless, its most vociferous criticism of what it regarded as the muzzling of the press came with the announcement in April 1919 that press censorship was to continue.²⁰³ Similar to many other provincial publications the *Tribune* was quite complimentary of Lord Decies and his staff whom it described as ‘both efficient and courteous’. Regrettably they were ‘tools in the hands of higher powers’, whose functions were ‘on an exact par with the German censorship’. The same editorial railed against the notion of voluntary censorship and claimed that it was really ‘based on arbitrary force’. Yet censorship was no longer in force when the paper was suppressed less than six months later.

The suppression followed the publication in its issue of 20 September 1919 of a full page advertisement for the Irish National Loan that had been instigated by Dáil Éireann. Copies of the paper were also seized

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 12 May 1917, 14 Jul. 1917;

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 9 Feb. 1918

²⁰⁰ Ibid, 27 Apr. 1918

²⁰¹ Ibid, 28 Dec. 1918

²⁰² Ibid, 10 Aug. 1918

²⁰³ This announcement coincided with the resignation of Lord Decies as Chief Press Censor and the appointment of Major Bryan Cooper as his successor.

at Roscrea and Cloghan.²⁰⁴ The suppression did not last long and the paper only missed one issue. On its return the editorial voiced its strong opinion on what it regarded as attempts to control the output of the print media in Ireland. The recent closure of the office of the Press Censor had made matters more difficult for Irish newspapers, the paper argued, to the extent that 'it is now almost impossible to know what will or will not leave a paper open to drastic measures'.²⁰⁵ The *Midland Tribune* attracted little further police attention though the lodgings of James Pike and the offices of the paper were searched in May 1921 after exception was taken to comments made with regard to the funeral of an RIC constable.²⁰⁶

A notable feature of editorials during 1920 and 1921 was that there was less focus on the violent incidents that were taking place around the country than was the case in papers such as the *Enniscorthy Echo* and *Kilkenny People*. This should not imply that the *Tribune* remained oblivious to such occurrences. Nevertheless, when describing violent outbreaks in November 1920 in Nenagh, Tullamore, and Templemore as 'tragic experiences' that would have 'shocked the public opinion of the civilised world' its tone was a little more guarded than some of its counterparts.²⁰⁷ It was, however, happy to articulate its antipathy for Lloyd George, stating that where 'other coercionists' such as Cromwell and Pitt had failed he was 'not likely to succeed'.²⁰⁸ It was in its reaction to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 though that the *Midland Tribune's* stance was markedly different from the other three pro-Sinn Féin organs discussed in this chapter.

Its most immediate response to the London agreement was to comment that it 'falls short of the ideal Republic' but equally warned of the dangers of divisions 'in the Irish ranks here at home'. Precious little recognition was afforded to the Irish negotiators other than an acknowledgement 'that the plenipotentiaries in London during the last fateful day were confronted with a very difficult situation'. To the paper's credit it argued that the Treaty 'perpetuates partition' whereas other papers glossed over the Ulster situation or simply ignored it. Its recognition that 'the country is in favour of the acceptance of the Treaty' appeared to be dispelled by its comment that Home Rule would have been accepted in 1914 but 'many things have happened since 1914'.²⁰⁹ The *Tribune's* final editorial of 1921 offered the

²⁰⁴ *Irish Independent, Freeman's Journal*, 22 Sept. 1919; *Irish Times*, 27 Sept. 1919;

²⁰⁵ *Midland Tribune*, 4 Oct. 1919

²⁰⁶ *Irish Independent*, 24 May 1921

²⁰⁷ *Midland Tribune*, 13 Nov. 1920

²⁰⁸ *Ibid*, 7 Aug. 1920

²⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 24 Dec. 1921

cryptic comment that those people now vigorously calling for ratification of the Treaty refused their services to Dáil Éireann when called on and that 'Griffith and Collins are now applauded by these people'.²¹⁰ Crucially though it did not elaborate as to who 'these people' were. In summary the *Midland Tribune* appeared to oppose the Anglo-Irish Treaty but stopped short of making an outright declaration of opposition. Perhaps the paper may not have wished to encourage divisions but the more cynical might suggest that it saved it the tricky task of proposing an alternative to rejection of the Treaty.

Conclusion

The *Midland Tribune* displayed many similar traits to the other three newspapers examined in detail in this chapter. This included support for the Gaelic League which it described as kindling 'the spark from which the present national fire is burning'.²¹¹ It also included a swift transfer of allegiance to Sinn Féin after Easter 1916 (though its previous support for the Irish Parliamentary Party could hardly be labelled as staunch) and subsequent suppression albeit for a minimal period. It differed from the other three titles from an editorial perspective in that it did not focus on national issues to the same extent. This is not to suggest that its commitment to the movement for Irish independence was not as strong as other papers. It merely indicates that the *Tribune* obviously considered local issues as also being of great importance to its readers. However, by far the most notable manner in which the *Midland Tribune* distinguished itself from the other three titles under scrutiny in this chapter was its stance on the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. The paper's centenary issue describes it as being 'neither for or against' but a more accurate description would be that it was non-committal and rather evasive.²¹²

Midland Tribune – Timeline

1881: founded by three Catholic priests, Robert Little, Denis Sheehan, and Patrick Brennan.

1888: John Powell assumes proprietorship.

1892: Margaret Powell (wife of John) assumes legal ownership.

1901: death of John Powell.

1912: James Pike appointed editor.

1919: paper suppressed for one week in September for publishing advertisement for Dáil Éireann loan.

²¹⁰ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921

²¹¹ Ibid, 5 Apr. 1919

²¹² *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981)

1892-1931: Margaret Powell, proprietor.

1912-1948: James Pike, editor.

3.7 Leinster newspapers – Thematic analysis

Quite apart from the political allegiances of individual newspapers there were several discernible features of the provincial press in Leinster between 1914 and 1921. These included prolonged editorial reigns, lengthy periods of family ownership, a highly dominant personality directing the fortunes of the paper, and a distinctly Catholic dimension that manifested itself either at the paper's foundation or in the strong Catholic faith of the editor or proprietor. Also, the province featured a significant amount of unionist titles though almost all of them ceased publication within the first few decades of the establishment of the Irish Free State.

The most remarkable example of such lengthy editorial tenures was unquestionably at the *Westmeath Examiner* where J.P. Hayden fulfilled the role for an incredible seventy-two years (1882-1954). Nevertheless, this trend was also exemplified at other newspapers where editors such as Michael A. Casey (*Drogheda Independent*), E.T. Keane (*Kilkenny People*), and Thomas F. McGahon (*Dundalk Democrat*) served for close on half a century. Other journalists such as Michael Charles Carey (*Leinster Express*) and Patrick Quilty (*Meath Chronicle*) occupied the editorial chair for forty years or more. Such remarkably long periods at the helm of an individual newspaper meant that dominant personalities such as Keane and Casey were inextricably linked to specific titles though such a characteristic could also apply to J.P. Farrell (*Longford Leader*), Thomas Chapman (*Westmeath Independent*), and James Pike (*Midland Tribune*).

Pike served at a paper that more than adequately illustrates the sense of family involvement at individual publications over a prolonged period of time. When John Powell assumed control of the *Midland Tribune* in 1888 it marked the commencement of almost one hundred years of family ownership. In a similar vein the acquisition of the *Meath Chronicle* by James Davis in 1917 was the beginning of a family association with the paper that has lasted for nearly a century. The highly significant family element to the provincial print media is also evident at the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* where one of the co-founders grandsons (Liam D. Bergin) occupied the editorial chair when the

paper celebrated its centenary in 1983.²¹³ The conspicuously Catholic dimension to many Leinster titles was clearly illustrated not only by the establishment of provincial organs such as the *Leinster Leader*, *Drogheda Independent*, and *Midland Tribune* but also in the devoutly Catholic faith of newspapermen such as Tom Daly (*Meath Chronicle*), Thomas F. McGahon (*Dundalk Democrat*), and Michael A. Casey (*Drogheda Independent*).

This strong sense of Catholicism was understandably not a feature of the significant amount of unionist titles within Leinster. By the outbreak of war in 1914 most of these organs had been in existence for well over half a century with the *Kilkenny Moderator* actually celebrating its centenary that year. However, all bar one of these titles ceased publication less than two decades after the foundation of the Irish Free State. The exception was the *King's County Chronicle* in County Offaly which survived until 1948 when it was sold to the *Midland Tribune* but was discontinued as a separate title in 1963. These unionist titles had once occupied a position of prominence within the print media in Leinster but by the second decade of the twentieth century it was recently established nationalist organs such as the *Meath Chronicle*, *Kilkenny People*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, and *Midland Tribune* that had assumed such a role.

These four Leinster newspapers shared a number of common characteristics. All had declared their support for Sinn Féin quite soon after the 1916 Rising and well before the general election of 1918. Although none of the four titles expressed any degree of solidarity with the 1916 rebels there appeared to be a consensus that much of the fault lay with the British Government. It was more or less agreed that the apparent refusal of the British Government to deal with the threat of violence posed by Sir Edward Carson and the Ulster Volunteers created a mood of frustration amongst nationalists that led some to resort to extreme measures. Once this shift in allegiance took place these titles were not shy about pouring scorn on the Irish Parliamentary Party. Strangely this was far less the case with the *Enniscorthy Echo* whose personnel, from its establishment, were comprised largely of either Sinn Féin members or sympathisers. Additionally all four titles were quite supportive of movements such as the Gaelic League and the GAA, though the *Kilkenny People* was slightly less vocal in this regard. With the exception of the *Midland Tribune* these papers enthusiastically embraced the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Finally, at the gathering of the Irish print media hosted by the Lord Lieutenant mentioned at the outset of this chapter only the *Meath Chronicle* amongst these four titles sent a representative. The *Midland Tribune* sent an apology for non-attendance but the *Enniscorthy Echo* and *Kilkenny People* appear to

²¹³ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*: Centenary Issue 1883-1983

have paid no heed to the meeting.²¹⁴ It may be just mere coincidence but it seems curious that these two non-attendees were the Leinster newspapers that subsequently came into more conflict than most with the authorities. Nonetheless, these four publications were, of course, not the only papers in Leinster.

Other titles such as the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* of Carlow and the *Westmeath Independent* displayed similar pro-Sinn Féin sympathies but it was only the latter that attracted the unwanted attention of the authorities. However, it should not be concluded that the province of Leinster was awash with republican organs between 1916 and 1921. Titles such as the *Westmeath Examiner*, *Longford Leader*, *Dundalk Democrat*, and *Drogheda Independent* had long-established associations with the Irish Parliamentary Party and were not as quick to change their loyalties. What might well be considered like-minded publications in other provinces are the subject of detailed scrutiny in succeeding chapters. The *Meath Chronicle*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, and *Midland Tribune* assumed a very definite political stance and suffered the consequences to varying degrees and accordingly merit such attention in this period of Irish journalistic history. Titles that took a different or completely opposing position are also deserving of such scrutiny and this is a matter that is addressed in subsequent chapters.

²¹⁴ *Freeman's Journal, Irish Times*, 29 Oct. 1915

Chapter 4 – Connacht

Connacht newspaper 1914-1921			
<u>County</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Place of publication</u>	<u>Political leaning/orientation</u>
Galway	<i>Connacht Tribune</i>	Galway	Nationalist
	<i>East Galway Democrat</i>	Ballinasloe	Nationalist
	<i>Galway Express</i>	Galway	Unionist up to 1917
	<i>Galway Observer</i>	Galway	Nationalist
	<i>Galway Pilot</i>	Galway	Independent
	<i>Tuam Herald</i>	Tuam	Nationalist
	<i>Western News</i>	Ballinasloe	Nationalist
Leitrim	<i>Leitrim Advertiser</i>	Mohill	Independent
	<i>Leitrim Observer</i>	Carrick-on-Shannon	Nationalist
Mayo	<i>Ballina Herald</i>	Ballina	Neutral
	<i>Connaught Telegraph</i>	Castlebar	Nationalist
	<i>Mayo News</i>	Westport	Nationalist
	<i>Mayoman</i>	Castlebar	Nationalist
	<i>Western People</i>	Ballina	Nationalist
Roscommon	<i>Roscommon Herald</i>	Boyle	Nationalist
	<i>Roscommon Journal</i>	Roscommon	Independent
	<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	Roscommon	Nationalist
	<i>Strokestown Democrat</i>	Strokestown	Nationalist
	<i>Western Nationalist</i>	Boyle	Nationalist
Sligo	<i>Sligo Champion</i>	Sligo	Nationalist
	<i>Sligo Independent</i>	Sligo	Unionist
	<i>Sligo Nationalist/Connachtman</i>	Sligo	Nationalist

4.1 Introduction

Connacht's land area of 17,788 square kilometres makes it the smallest of the Irish provinces and it has traditionally been the least populous. This was certainly the case at the start of the second decade of the twentieth century when its total population was 610,984.¹ The largest population centres were Galway city (13,255) and Sligo town (11,163). The next largest centres of population were Ballina and Ballinasloe

¹ Vaughan et al, pp 3-68; All the demographical statistics and information provided in this section are based on the 1911 census and are cited from Vaughan and Fitzpatrick's work.

with populations of just over and under 5,000 respectively. In total the province was served by twenty-two local newspapers during the 1914-21 period. The four Connacht titles examined in this chapter, the *Tuam Herald*, *Roscommon Herald*, *Mayo News*, and *Leitrim Observer*, were based in areas exhibiting a variety of demographical features.

The *Tuam Herald* was published in a town with a relatively small population of just under 3,000 though it was the only paper based in Tuam. Despite such a relatively small population the paper could compete for readers amongst County Galway's considerable population of 182,224 of which 98% was Catholic. Boyle in County Roscommon, where the *Roscommon Herald* was published, accounted for a population 2,691 out of County Roscommon's total population of 93,956. Similar to County Galway, 98% of the populace were Catholic. The *Western Nationalist* was also published in Boyle while the county was similarly served by two titles based in Roscommon town, the *Roscommon Journal*, and the *Roscommon Messenger* and also by the *Strokestown Democrat*.

The *Mayo News* was the only title published in Westport which had a population of 3,674. At the time County Mayo boasted the largest population in Connacht at just over 192,000 and, as with Galway and Mayo, 98% of the population was Catholic. The *Mayo News* competed for readers amongst the populace with two titles based in Ballina, the *Ballina Herald*, and the *Western People*, and one in Castlebar, the *Connaught Telegraph*, though this was later joined by the short-lived *Mayoman*. County Leitrim, which was home to the *Leitrim Observer*, had a population of 63,582 making it the least populous county in the province. Catholics accounted for just over 91% of the county's populace which was a lower ratio than most of the other Connacht counties. The only other paper published in the county was the *Leitrim Advertiser* published in Mohill.

4.2 Connacht newspapers – an overview

Unlike the last chapter, newspapers from Connacht that undergo detailed scrutiny in this chapter did not all convert wholeheartedly to the Sinn Féin cause, and indeed, in some cases and at certain stages, some expressed views that were quite antagonistic towards that party. In this respect the provincial organs that are subject to close analysis in this section, namely the *Tuam Herald*, *Roscommon Herald*, *Leitrim Observer*, and *Mayo News*, provide a distinctly broader overview of nationalist sentiment in Ireland between 1914 and 1921. Their interpretation and analysis of events during this period provide a

unique insight into the mood of the country at this critical juncture in Irish history. The people behind these newspapers and their experiences during this time also make for compelling scrutiny and are no less deserving of attention than their fellow journalists in the other three provinces. However, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of the local print media in Connacht it is clearly necessary to briefly consider the other major titles in the province.²

The traits that were evident amongst newspapers in Leinster such as prolonged editorial and proprietorial reigns, extended periods of family ownership, strong support for organisations such as the GAA and the Gaelic League, and close ties to the Catholic Church, were just as visible across the print media in Connacht. Other characteristics such as the opposing strands of nationalism co-existing at the same paper were also a feature at some Connacht titles. Similar to Leinster also, the provincial press in Connacht was comprised of some nationalist publications that had been established since 1880, and others of a slightly older vintage.

Amongst the latter group was the *Sligo Champion*, the principal newspaper in County Sligo. The most significant figure associated with the paper was Patrick Aloysius (P.A.) McHugh who acquired the *Champion* in 1885. In common with many other provincial newspapermen McHugh served as an MP of the Irish Parliamentary Party.³ McHugh died in 1909 but by the outbreak of World War I the paper was still a firm supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party.⁴ Its allegiance began to diminish considerably, however, with the rise of Sinn Féin.⁵ County Sligo was also notable for a newspaper takeover by Sinn Féin during this period. In April 1920 a group of Sinn Féin supporters in Sligo town acquired the *Sligo Nationalist* and renamed it the *Connachtman* (or *Connachtach*).⁶ The *Sligo Independent*, a unionist organ, also served the county. Its editor-proprietor from 1921 until its closure in 1962 was William David Peebles who had worked as a reporter at the paper before purchasing it from the Gillmor family in 1921.⁷

² See Appendix E for a more comprehensive overview of Connacht newspapers.

³ *Sligo Champion – Sesquicentenary Issue 1836-1986* (5 December 1986); Padraig Deignan, *The Protestant community in Sligo, 1914-49* (Dublin, 2010), p.45

⁴ Wheatley, op. cit., p.177

⁵ Michael Farry, *The Irish revolution, 1912-1923: Sligo* (Dublin, 2012), p.7

⁶ Ibid, pp.7-8

⁷ *Irish Times*, 6 Jan. 1962, *Sligo Champion*, 14 Dec. 1984; Deignan, op. cit., p.176;

Counties Leitrim and Roscommon were home to a number of titles that pre-dated the emergence of the numerous nationalist titles that began around 1880. Some of these titles such as the *Roscommon Messenger* (established in 1848) and the *Roscommon Herald* (established in 1859) had come to be regarded as nationalist organs while others such as the *Roscommon Journal* (established in 1828) and the *Leitrim Advertiser* (established in 1856) were classified as independent. By the second decade of the twentieth century these had been joined by three nationalist titles, the *Leitrim Observer*, *Western Nationalist*, and *Strokestown Democrat*.⁸

In County Mayo the establishment of the *Western People* in Ballina in 1883 was notable for the involvement of the Catholic Church in a somewhat similar manner to the origins of the *Drogheda Independent*, *Leinster Leader*, and *Midland Tribune*.⁹ The undeniable link between the GAA and the provincial press was also clearly evident at the same paper. Terence Devere, who was involved in the paper's foundation and who became sole proprietor in 1923, was also a founder member of the Ballina Stephenites GAA club.¹⁰ Ballina's other newspaper at this time, the *Ballina Herald*, was briefly suppressed in December 1918, for publishing a Sinn Féin election leaflet. The suppression was regarded with some surprise as the paper had been regarded as a unionist organ following its foundation in 1870.¹¹ At the *Connaught Telegraph* in Castlebar some of the other defining characteristics of the Irish provincial press were also visible. James Daly, who acquired the paper in 1876, was a devout Catholic as well as being significantly involved in the formation of the Land League in County Mayo.¹² In 1892 Daly sold his interest in the paper to Richard C. Gillespie which marked the start of a family association with the paper lasting over one hundred years.¹³ His son, Thomas H. Gillespie, served as editor-proprietor from 1899 to 1939, providing a further example of the lengthy tenures in such senior positions that was such a common feature across all four provinces.¹⁴ Castlebar was also home to the short-lived *Mayoman* (June 1919 to June 1921). Its founder was John J. (J.J.) Collins who was a cousin of Archbishop of Tuam

⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1922*, pp 207-216

⁹ *Western People, 125th Anniversary 1883-2008* (18 November 2008)

¹⁰ *Ibid*; *Western People*, 12 Apr. 1941; Rosa Meehan, *The story of Mayo* (Castlebar, 2003), pp 206-9;

¹¹ *Western People, 125th Anniversary 1883-2008* (18 November 2008); *Irish Times*, 28 Dec. 1918;

¹² Gerard Moran, 'James Daly and the rise and fall of the Land League in the West of Ireland, 1879-82' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 29, no. 114 (November, 1994), pp 201-2

¹³ *Connaught Telegraph – Commemorative Issue* (April, 1996); Meehan, *op. cit.*, pp 207-8;

¹⁴ *Connaught Telegraph*, 4 Apr. 1939

and the paper accordingly had a strong Catholic tone. Collins was also a GAA enthusiast and later served on the Connacht Council of that organisation.¹⁵

One of the most notable events within the print media in County Galway during these years was the Sinn Féin takeover of the *Galway Express*; a paper had previously held unionist sympathies. It was purchased by a group of Sinn Féin supporters in Galway city in September 1917, a further indication of the party's eagerness to acquire its own mouthpieces within the print media.¹⁶ Three years later, however, the offices and printing machinery of the *Galway Express* were destroyed after being attacked by Crown Forces, and the paper ceased publication soon afterwards.¹⁷ Apart from the *Galway Express* the city of Galway was served by three other newspapers at the time, the *Galway Pilot*, *Galway Observer*, and *Connacht Tribune*. The latter paper was the only one to survive into the twenty-first century. The *Connacht Tribune* was founded in 1909 by Thomas J.W. Kenny who shared the strong Catholicism of many of his fellow-newspapermen which was illustrated by his role as a founding director of the Catholic journal, the *Standard*.¹⁸ Outside of Galway city the county was also served by three other newspapers. Two of these were based in Ballinasloe, the *East Galway Democrat* and the *Western News*. The remaining paper, the *Tuam Herald*, was the oldest in the county and is the subject of the first case study in this chapter.

4.3 Case Study 1: *Tuam Herald*

Origins

The *Tuam Herald* did not emerge amongst the substantial number of nationalist newspapers launched in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In fact the origins of the *Tuam Herald* pre-date the Great Famine by almost ten years. The story of the paper begins in 1837 when Richard Kelly bought the type, press, and goodwill of the *Connaught Advertiser* from Mary Bradley. The first issue of the paper subsequently appeared on 13 May 1837. Born in Loughrea in 1810, Richard Kelly came from quite an

¹⁵ Dominic Price, *The flame and the candle: war in Mayo 1919-1924* (Cork, 2012), pp 43-7; *Connacht Tribune*, *Mayo News*, 15 May 1948;

¹⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Sept. 1917; *Irish Independent*, 22 Sept. 1917;

¹⁷ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 Sept. 1920

¹⁸ *Connacht Tribune – 100th anniversary: souvenir centenary supplement* (22 May 2009); *Connacht Tribune*, 11 May 1940;

affluent background. His grandfather, having attained the requisite social standing, had married into a landowning family, the Ousleys of Prospect, Dunmore.¹⁹

Prior to the establishment of the *Tuam Herald* the young Richard Kelly had enthusiastically supported Catholic Emancipation. His Catholicism also inspired his opposition to the payment of tithes to the established Church of Ireland. This was just one of the issues robustly tackled in the early years of the *Herald*. Kelly was also a strong supporter of Daniel O'Connell and the repeal movement of the 1840s. As with so many other editor-proprietors Kelly's active interests extended considerably beyond the print media. While the *Herald* premises also served as a stationery and book shop as well as a general printing office, Kelly additionally fulfilled a number of other roles. During his lifetime Kelly also acted as a Justice of the Peace, Peace Commissioner, Town Commissioner, and Poor Law Guardian. Towards the end of the 1850s he transferred the editorship of the paper to his son, Jasper. Jasper Kelly died at a relatively young age in 1873 and the ownership of the paper was ultimately inherited by his son Richard John (R.J.) Kelly. The paper's founder, Richard Kelly, retained an interest in the running of the paper, despite having moved to Dublin, where he died in 1884. R.J. Kelly subsequently assumed full control and remained at the helm of the *Tuam Herald* until 1930 when the paper passed from the ownership of the Kelly family after almost a century.²⁰

The people behind the *Herald*

R.J. Kelly died in 1931, approximately one year after he had resigned his active interest in the *Herald*. On his departure Kelly had served over fifty years as editor and proprietor, yet again illustrating the tradition of continuity that existed within the ranks of the Irish provincial press. In much the same way as his grandfather before him, R.J. Kelly's interests extended well beyond the journalistic field, except to an even greater extent. He was a senior barrister and also wrote legal texts on subjects such as newspaper libel, registration of tithe, plus a large volume on the Land Acts from 1860 to 1896. Additionally he authored many pamphlets on topics such as peasant proprietary, land reclamation, and Irish industries and railways. His keen Catholicism is evident from his authorship of pamphlets on the lives of Pope Pius X and Benedict XV plus the fact that he was one of the founders of the Catholic Truth

¹⁹ *Tuam Herald: 150th anniversary supplement* (21 May 1988)

²⁰ *Ibid*; *Tuam Herald*, 16 May 1987, 10 May 1988;

Society. R.J. Kelly is also credited with several published volumes of Irish patriotic verse, a history of the Aran Islands, plus works on the lives of Charles Kickham and Saint Jarlath.²¹

Kelly was an unwavering supporter of constitutional nationalism. As a very young man he reported on the first meeting of the Land League at Irishtown, County Mayo, in 1879. He was a loyal supporter of Parnell who was described as a 'trusted friend' in Kelly's obituary. Subsequently Kelly became an equally loyal supporter of John Redmond, which was reflected significantly in the editorials of the *Tuam Herald*. The 150th anniversary issue of the paper states that 'one thing R.J. Kelly was not was a Sinn Féiner' and this is entirely accurate.²² The same could certainly not be said of John Burke, Kelly's long-time manager at the *Herald*, and ultimately his successor as editor-proprietor.

It is one of the curious characteristics of the Irish provincial press of this era that the two competing strands of Irish nationalism often encountered each other in the editorial ranks of local newspapers. In complete contrast to R.J. Kelly, John Burke was not only a committed republican but was actually elected for Sinn Féin as a Town Commissioner in 1907. His journalistic career began at the *Tuam News* and he also worked for the *Mayo News* before spending some time in the US where he worked at the *Irish World* in New York. He joined the *Tuam Herald* in 1901 and became manager a few years later. Unfortunately little is known of the potentially fascinating relationship between Burke and Kelly though it is known that the latter principally resided in Dublin and sent his editorials by train for publication. However, Burke is credited with penning an appreciation of Kelly upon the death of the latter in 1931 in which he described him as 'always a true and staunch friend'.²³

Burke displayed characteristics similar to so many members of the provincial press of that era in that he was a devout Catholic and a keen supporter of both the Gaelic League and the GAA. His Sinn Féin activities led to his house being raided on a number of occasions during the War of Independence. Burke

²¹ *Tuam Herald: 150th anniversary supplement* (21 May 1988); *Tuam Herald*, 5 Sept. 1931; *Irish Times*, 12 Sept., 1931; R.J. Kelly's obituary also credits him with a variety of other roles. From 1903 to 1911 he acted as an assistant legal land commissioner, for a time he was a Crown Prosecutor for County Sligo and a magistrate for County Galway. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries. Additionally, Kelly was known in commercial circles as a director of the National Bank. He also acted as a consular representative of Rumania and Estonia and was additionally the Free State consul for the Republic of Bolivia.

²² *Tuam Herald: 150th anniversary supplement* (21 May 1988)

²³ *Ibid*; *Tuam Herald*, 12 Sept. 1931; The same appreciation also noted the many people 'who got their start in life through the kindness of the late Mr Kelly' and where 'possible to do a good turn he [Kelly] never failed to do his utmost'.

opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 and his support for Eamon de Valera led to his involvement in the organisation of the fledgling Fianna Fáil party. Subsequently he served as chairman of the local Fianna Fáil Cumann for several years, and he continued in his role as a Town Commissioner (as a Fianna Fáil representative in later years) until his retirement from public life due to ill-health in 1943.²⁴

Thirteen years earlier Burke had become editor-proprietor of the *Tuam Herald*. In 1930, R.J. Kelly, whose main interest by this time was his legal career in Dublin, indicated his desire to sell the paper. It was initially sold to a Dunmore man, Gabriel Diskin, who attempted to run the paper as a going concern but gave up the idea within a matter of weeks. It was quickly sold on to Burke who had borrowed a few hundred pounds from relatives to pursue the venture.²⁵ The *Herald* has remained in the ownership of the Burke family well into the second decade of the twenty-first century meaning that despite being one of the oldest of the Irish provincial titles it has remarkably remained in the ownership of only two families during its entire existence.

Editorial comment 1914-1921

In somewhat of a contrast to most of its provincial counterparts the *Tuam Herald* was comprised of only four pages, usually divided into six columns, and this remained constant for almost the entirety of the 1914-21 period. It bore the appended title of *Great Western Advertiser* and its front page was normally devoted to advertisements. Similar to the *Midland Tribune*, cinema listings were a developing feature of the paper. The heavy concentration on agriculture was clearly visible in the *Tuam Herald* and was typified by adverts for ‘Goulding’s’ manures, ‘Dickson’s’ seeds, and the curiously named ‘Oaks’ pig powder. Ads for alcoholic drinks such as ‘Power’s’ apple cider, ‘O’Connell’s’ ale, and ‘D’Arcy’s’ stout also appeared regularly. Apart from this the *Herald* contained a roughly similar proportion of adverts for local retailers and services as other provincial papers while travel adverts for a number of different liner shipping companies (Cunard, American Line, Anchor Line) was a trait it held in common with several other newspapers.

There is no record of the *Tuam Herald* incurring the displeasure of the Press Censor or provoking the anger of the British authorities. This is hardly surprising given the political sympathies of its editor-

²⁴ *Tuam Herald*, 13 Feb. 1954

²⁵ *Ibid*, 16 May 1987, 10 May 2012;

proprietor, R.J. Kelly, who remained steadfast in his support for the Irish Parliamentary Party to the very end. However, this absence of any conflict with the British authorities renders the paper's editorial commentary no less worthy of examination and certainly no less interesting. Indeed it is not unreasonable to suggest that the lead articles in the *Tuam Herald* between 1914 and 1921 represent an example of a nationalist viewpoint that much of the historiography of the period has overlooked. Nonetheless, at the start of this period the *Herald's* editorials indicated little that distinguished its nationalism as substantially different to that of the four Leinster titles considered in the previous chapter.

Such a trait was particularly evident in the *Tuam Herald's* attitude towards the Ulster Unionists. The paper expressed its utter disdain at how 'the Covenanters are allowed to organise, drill, and march, to possess arms, to act as if they were part of the armed forces of the Crown' and how 'their leaders preach the doctrines of revolt' and 'can with impunity resort to any extreme of lawlessness'.²⁶ The Larne gun-running in April 1914 was described as 'the most audacious series of illegal acts ever perpetrated in a country which was not in a state of war'.²⁷ For the greater part of 1914 the *Tuam Herald* differed little from the *Kilkenny People* or the *Enniscorthy Echo* in that it was unambiguous in expressing its confidence in John Redmond as the leader of nationalist Ireland. Redmond was considered the 'trusted leader of the Irish people' and his 'statesmanlike instinct' was lauded when he pledged Irish support for the British war effort.²⁸ It was the *Herald's* attitude to World War I, and the attendant issues it provoked, however, that began to cast the paper in a different light to other nationalist titles.

Without any equivocation the *Herald* considered Ireland a part of the Empire and accordingly had a contribution to make in fighting 'German barbarism'.²⁹ Consequently the paper wholeheartedly promoted enlistment in the British Army and in January 1915 it proudly declared that Ireland was 'contributing more men to the fighting line than is England in proportion to its teeming population of capable adults'.³⁰ Recruitment advertisements appeared regularly during the first half of 1915 and the appeal of the Lord Lieutenant in November 1915 for 50,000 new recruits was regarded as a 'reasonable

²⁶ Ibid, 24 Jan. 1914

²⁷ Ibid, 2 May 1914

²⁸ Ibid, 11 Apr. 1914, 10 Oct. 1914;

²⁹ Ibid, 12 Sept. 1914, 3 Oct. 1914;

³⁰ Ibid, 16 Jan. 1915

demand'.³¹ This 'reasonable demand' also included the publication, in December 1915, of a letter from the Lord Lieutenant appealing for recruits. The editorial of the same date expressed the hope that the 'appeal of the Lord Lieutenant to the manhood of Ireland would not fall upon deaf and unreceptive ears but, as far as possible, meet with a response which the merits of the case and the necessities of the situation require'.³² Almost a year later the paper cited the Easter Rising as the reason 'Ireland has failed in its duty' to supply recruits and was thus 'deliberately guilty of a dishonourable and discreditable breach of agreement'.³³

Even though the *Herald* was an unstinting advocate of recruitment it vehemently opposed any suggestion of conscription. As early as January 1916 it sternly warned that 'coercion, in any shape or for any purpose never did succeed in Ireland' and that nothing was more likely to hinder recruitment in Ireland than a 'foolish attempt to push it or rush it and to force it unwillingly upon the Irish people'.³⁴ The introduction of conscription over two years later drew an uncharacteristically stinging reaction from this relatively staid organ that possibly indicates the depth of resentment to the move amongst a variety of political persuasions. The *Herald* unambiguously censured the decision that the government sought to enforce 'against the wishes of the representatives of the Irish people' while 'a solemn undertaking, four years ago entered into to give this country self-government, is still in suspense'.³⁵ It was a decision, the paper feared, that would rouse 'young hot blood' and lead to 'loss of life and general disorder'.³⁶

By this stage the ultimately irreversible shift to the Sinn Féin party was well established. Nonetheless, the party had come under the radar of the *Tuam Herald* well before this shift had commenced. The enmity that R.J. Kelly held for the party was quite apparent in several editorials leading up to Easter 1916. During April 1916 Sinn Féin and their advocates were variously referred to as 'degenerates amongst us who affect to be democrats', 'young men of misguided views and imperfect knowledge', 'every form of crank and discontent' while those supporting the party from abroad were 'under the

³¹ Ibid, 6 Nov. 1915; This appeal formed part of the campaign that included the gathering of newspaper editors at the Viceregal Lodge referred to at the start of the last chapter.

³² Ibid, 4 Dec. 1915

³³ Ibid, 7 Oct. 1916

³⁴ Ibid, 15 Jan. 1916

³⁵ Ibid, 13 Apr. 1918

³⁶ Ibid, 20 Apr. 1918

banner of the German War Lord'.³⁷ In the aftermath of the rebellion the *Herald*, in line with much of the broader print media, had little hesitation in labelling it the "Sinn Féin' rebellion" ('the lunacy of the Sinn Féiners') but even went a little further as this editorial from May 1916 illustrates:

The Germans it is clear, organised this insurrection. They cleverly financed it in town and country, their agents in America, aided by some deluded Irishmen there, were active in bringing it to a head. Their complicity in it is undeniable and will we trust be fully and quickly exposed. Their ships with munitions, money and officers were on the high seas on Easter Monday, prepared to come to Ireland's aid, and forty-eight hours before the actual rising at home it was suspiciously announced in New York as about to take place.

The same editorial claimed that it did not wish to 'disparage the dead' but categorically stated that 'the ring leaders have properly been executed'.³⁸ The paper continued the theme of alleged German collaboration in a later editorial when it was asserted that the 'Irish revolt formed part of Germany's 'low game of treachery, trickery and intrigue' and that 'Ireland was to be its playground now as were Turkey, Bulgaria, South Africa, and the United States'.³⁹ With the benefit of hindsight it is quite easy to dismiss such statements as absurdities and even an insult to the subsequently lionised men of 1916. Yet such editorial commentary can serve a valuable historical purpose in that it may well convey the dismay and anger at the rebellion felt among certain sections of the population and also the extent to which Germany was believed to be the manifestation of supreme evil.

The distrust of Sinn Féin and its policies notwithstanding the *Herald* clearly realised that a new force in nationalist politics was emerging. The initial Sinn Féin by-election victories in early 1917 in North Roscommon and South Longford did not merit editorial comment but the Irish Parliamentary Party was defended as not being 'a perfect organisation' but could 'boast of achievement and it can claim success' while 'other roads leads certainly to dissension and disaster'.⁴⁰ The East Clare by-election of July 1917, however, did not escape editorial attention. Victory for Sinn Féin, it was claimed, would mean 'a wrench'

³⁷ Ibid, 1 Apr. 1916, 15 Apr. 1916;

³⁸ Ibid, 13 May 1916

³⁹ Ibid, 20 May, 1916

⁴⁰ Ibid, 10 Mar. 1917; Sinn Féin were not actually mentioned in this editorial so the reference seems to have been implied.

for constitutional politics ‘which may be disastrous’.⁴¹ Yet Eamon de Valera’s victory was attributed to a county that was never ‘very constitutionally inclined’ plus ‘the lawless spirit that is abroad’ combined with ‘the unsettleness of the public mind’.⁴²

The inexorable rise of Sinn Féin provoked a response from the *Tuam Herald* that was somewhat tinged with desperation. Its defence of the Irish Parliamentary Party appeared to be constantly qualified by an acceptance that the party had erred in the past but was still the political organisation best equipped to deliver on nationalist aspirations. Also, throughout 1917 considerable editorial attention was devoted to the ill-fated Irish Convention. Yet its editorial comment prior to the East Cavan by-election of June 1918 (won by Arthur Griffith) was perhaps the best indication of how out of touch the paper was with the broader electorate. The lead article referred to Griffith’s pamphlet, ‘The Resurrection of Hungary’ (already out of print as the paper acknowledged) and cited events from Austria and Hungary over half a century previously.⁴³ Its argument may well have been historically sound but in the world of practical politics a lesson in European history was hardly likely to have much effect on voters in East Cavan. Griffith’s victory and the onward march of Sinn Féin did not deter the *Tuam Herald* in the prelude to the general election of December 1918. Sinn Féin’s abstentionist policy was described as ‘politically suicidal and patriotically disastrous’ resulting in the country ‘rushing madly along a certain road to political ruin’.⁴⁴

Sinn Féin’s resounding victory brought about a considerable alteration in the *Herald’s* opinion of that party. The first post-election editorial described it as ‘a compact, homogenous body of active and intelligent young men, sincerely honest and unpurchaseably patriotic’ who may yet become the means and be the medium of bringing to this country the fullest measure of self-government’.⁴⁵ This apparent *volte face* was certainly not the signal for the *Tuam Herald* to become a pro-Sinn Féin organ but editorial criticism of the party all but disappeared from this time onwards.⁴⁶ The principal editorial concern

⁴¹ Ibid, 7 Jul. 1917

⁴² Ibid, 14 Jul. 1917

⁴³ Ibid, 11 May 1918

⁴⁴ Ibid, 12 Oct. 1918, 7 Dec. 1918;

⁴⁵ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1919

⁴⁶ Ibid, 7 Jun. 1919; The only editorial that could possibly be interpreted as criticism of Sinn Féin appeared in June 1919 in reference to the Peace Conference when the folly of what would be regarded ‘as a hostile attack on England’ by the other three Allied Powers, France, Italy, and America, was highlighted, However,

ultimately became the increasingly violent situation prevailing in the country. The paper was particularly concerned with the plight of the RIC which it described as 'the finest police force in the world' and whose members were 'true Irishmen in every sense of the word'.⁴⁷ Attacks on RIC barracks were labelled 'ruffian raids' and 'an onslaught on the ordinary machinery of law and order' that were 'a hindrance to the realisation of the aspirations of the true nationalist'.⁴⁸ Significantly though such attacks were not ascribed to any specific movement and the haste with which the events of Easter 1916 were attributed to Sinn Féin was markedly absent. Indeed as hostilities intensified during 1920 the *Herald* was careful not to criticise either warring party. Even the police reprisals in Tuam itself in July 1920 met with quite a restrained editorial response. It was simply stated that some of the police had 'committed great havoc' but only after being 'goaded by the dastardly murder of their comrades on the way home to Dunmore'.⁴⁹

From around this time until the end of the War of Independence the predominant tone in the editorials of the *Tuam Herald* was one of despair and dismay. Following the events in Tuam an almost equal sense of repulsion was expressed at similar occurrences in Templemore, Galway, Balbriggan, and Clifden.⁵⁰ Condemnation of such violence was rarely punctuated by criticism of either side in the conflict. The only notable exception came in April 1921 when the British Government was severely criticised for its 'perverse persistency in the wrong course they are taking'.⁵¹ Yet the *Herald* was rather unique amongst local newspapers upon the calling of a truce in July 1921 when it applauded the British Prime Minister's act of 'characteristic boldness' and 'real statesmanship'.⁵² Similar praise for David Lloyd George was one of the most notable features of its reaction to the Anglo-Irish Treaty. In the first editorial following the

the tone of the editorial was certainly not condemnatory and Sinn Féin were not specifically mentioned.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 20 Sept. 1919

⁴⁸ Ibid, 17 Jan. 1920

⁴⁹ Ibid, 24 Jul. 1920; *Daily News*, 21 Jul. 1920; These reprisals received significant coverage in the British broadsheet press as did many of the actions of the Crown Forces during 1920. The highly restrained nature of the *Herald's* editorial response is perhaps best illustrated by contrasting it to the report in the *Daily News* of London that described Tuam as resembling 'some of the ruined Belgian and French town' following the police actions.

⁵⁰ *Tuam Herald*, 21 Aug., 25 Sept. 1920; 26 Mar. 1921;

⁵¹ Ibid, 2 Apr. 1921

⁵² Ibid, 2 Jul. 1921

conclusion of the talks in London the paper stressed the need to acknowledge Lloyd George's contribution, without whom 'there would never have been an Irish settlement'.⁵³

Reaction to the Treaty was almost as enthusiastic as the response to the ending of the military conflict five months earlier.⁵⁴ The work of the Irish negotiators was warmly praised but special mention was reserved for the role of Arthur Griffith.⁵⁵ No person stood 'higher in the public esteem' than the Sinn Féin founder who 'defended its policy in the dark days' and 'who never swerved from devotion to the cause'.⁵⁶ This was a far cry from only three years earlier when such a cause was labelled 'fatuous folly' and a 'suicidal course'.⁵⁷ The wholehearted approval of the Treaty was matched by an equal lack of tolerance for the emerging opposition. The agreement 'must be accepted in its entirety' the final editorial of 1921 claimed and those who took a different view 'must be prepared to take the consequences of our rejection'.⁵⁸

Conclusion

In common with newspapers such as the *Dundalk Democrat* and *Enniscorthy Echo* the curious situation existed at the *Tuam Herald* that the two conflicting strands of Irish nationalism were represented within its senior ranks. Editor-proprietor R.J. Kelly was a staunch supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party while manager John Burke was an elected Sinn Féin representative from a very early stage. Ultimately it was, of course, Kelly who decided editorial policy which, until the general election of 1918, was notable for the vehemence of its opposition to Sinn Féin. This opposition subsided almost completely thereafter, and indeed by late 1921 the paper was highly positive in its regard for the party. This belated endorsement of the Sinn Féin movement could possibly be regarded as a cynical move that was simply

⁵³ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

⁵⁴ Ibid, 23 Jul., 10 Dec. 1921; In addition to being described as 'eminently creditable to all parties concerned' the ending of hostilities in July 1921 was considered 'beyond all praise' and 'simply marvellous. The news of agreement being reached in London in early December constituted 'glad tidings of a great joy' at which the nation 'first exalted itself and gave thanks to God'.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 22 Oct. , 10 Dec. 1921; Even before the talks in London had ended confidence was expressed in the Sinn Féin representatives who, it was asserted, had handled the country's affairs 'in many respects with extraordinary skill and success'. Upon the conclusion of negotiations the Irish plenipotentiaries were lauded for how 'they acquitted themselves like true statesmen and born diplomatists' and 'how ably and skilfully they did their work'.

⁵⁶ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

⁵⁷ Ibid, 5 Oct. 1918

⁵⁸ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921

following public opinion in an attempt to avoid being left out in the cold amongst nationalist titles. Alternatively it could be interpreted as an honest acknowledgement of an overly hasty judgement of a political movement still in its infancy. The actual reason for such a change was most likely a combination of both. Regardless of what prompted the shift, by the time of the Anglo-Irish Treaty the *Tuam Herald*, like so many other nationalist titles, was quite supportive of Sinn Féin. Its journey to such a point simply started considerably later and was not disrupted by unwanted attention from either side in the conflict.

Tuam Herald – Timeline

1837: founded by Richard Kelly.

1884: R.J. Kelly assumes ownership.

1901: John Burke joins paper.

1884-1930: R.J. Kelly, editor-proprietor.

1930: R.J. Kelly sells paper

1931: death of R.J. Kelly, John Burke acquires paper.

4.4 Case Study 2: *Roscommon Herald*

In the previous chapter the almost inextricable nature of the link between some editors and their particular newspaper was highlighted. Possibly no one epitomised this aspect of the Irish provincial press more than Jasper Tully of the *Roscommon Herald*. Tully's personality simply towered over the Boyle-based publication to such an extent that the paper's origins and even its editorial commentary appear as almost of secondary importance. This is perhaps understandable for a man who controlled the paper from 1881 until 1938, was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol at the same time as Charles Stewart Parnell, served as MP for South Leitrim from 1892 to 1906, stood for election (unsuccessfully) against Count Plunkett of Sinn Féin in the North Roscommon by-election of 1917, suffered an attempt on his life

in 1927, and was for a considerable period, according to Michael Wheatley, ‘an influential figure in the region’s politics’ but also ‘obsessive, quarrelsome, and litigious’.⁵⁹

Jasper Tully

Jasper Tully was born in 1858, a year prior to the birth of the *Roscommon Herald*. It was launched as a ‘Liberal weekly newspaper’ by his father George who was also the paper’s first editor. George Tully died at quite a young age leaving his wife, Honoria, to run the paper until her two sons, Jasper and George (junior), came of age. Having spent a few years in America Jasper returned to join the staff of the *Herald* and took over as managing-director upon the death of his mother while his brother, George, served as a director until his death in 1921.⁶⁰ Jasper Tully married Mary Ellen Monson, whose family owned the Royal Hotel in Boyle, but the union was far from a happy one. Both were of such a single-minded and strong-willed temperament that they had a very acrimonious relationship and consequently lived apart for years.⁶¹ The aggravated nature of Tully’s marital relationship was mirrored during the course of his journalistic and political career.

Despite his membership of the Irish Parliamentary Party and election as an MP Tully’s relationship with the party was fraught to say the least. He was unreservedly anti-Parnellite but continued to be at the centre of much internal dissension even after the party reunited under John Redmond in 1900.⁶² Tully’s combative personality and penchant for controversy were hardly conducive to a unified and disciplined party. Even Tully’s obituary acknowledged that he was the ‘*enfant terrible*’ of the Irish Parliamentary Party and that his retirement from the party in 1904 was greeted with much relief.⁶³ Thereafter Tully

⁵⁹ Oram, op. cit., p.164; Wheatley, op. cit., p.99;

⁶⁰ *Roscommon Herald: Centenary Supplement* (5 December 1959)

⁶¹ Ibid; Oram, op. cit., pp 165-6; The centenary issue of the *Roscommon Herald* stated that the couple lived their separate lives for years ‘until frayed tempers cooled, and a reconciliation took place which lasted until her death’. Oram notes more bluntly that ‘after his wife’s death, Tully used to readdress letters to her with the legend “not known at this address – try Hell”’.

⁶² Frank Callanan, *The Parnell split 1890-91* (Cork, 1992), p.162; Wheatley, op. cit., pp 99-104; Callanan describes the denigration of ‘Parnell’s physical aspect and demeanour’ in ‘Jasper Tully’s fiercely anti-Parnellite *Roscommon Herald*’. Wheatley outlines Tully’s numerous clashes and controversies including a court case to overturn local election results, allegations that he provided information ‘on the grazier connections’ of senior officials of the United Irish League (UIL) to Dublin Castle, prosecution ‘on charges of publishing incitements to boycott’, and attacks on the profligacy of Roscommon County Council.

⁶³ *Roscommon Herald: Centenary Supplement* (5 December 1959); A year previously Tully had been the cause of much embarrassment when he moved the writ for a by-election in Cork against the wishes of the party.

became ‘an unremitting enemy of the Irish Party’ and this was certainly evident in his editorials during the period covered by this study.⁶⁴ His abrasive nature resulted in his inheritance of ‘the family dislike of the Haydens’, a prominent nationalist family in the region that included J.P. Hayden of the *Westmeath Examiner* and his brothers, Luke and Joseph. All three brothers in turn were proprietors of the *Roscommon Messenger*. The origins of this family feud are not entirely clear though Wheatley describes it as ‘bitter and protracted’ and it lasted from the early 1880s until Tully’s death in 1938.⁶⁵

The difficult and obstinate nature of Tully’s character is clearly decipherable from the recollection of those who worked with him. Cahir Healy, later a director of the *Irish News* and a nationalist member of the Northern Ireland parliament, worked as a reporter at the *Roscommon Herald* around the turn of the twentieth century. Healy admitted that ‘we had not a few rows in the office arising out of his impetuosity and his inability to bear even the wise gladly’. According to Healy ‘Jasper liked or disliked people – there was no middle way with him’. Martin F. Coffey, who worked at the paper from the early 1920s until 1936, described the ‘absolute ruthlessness’ of Tully’s ‘attitude towards those he deemed his enemies’. Coffey also noted the ‘extraordinary Jekyll and Hyde-like traits in his character’ with little evidence of a sense of humour.⁶⁶

Coffey’s first encounter with Tully was as an election worker with Sinn Féin during the North Roscommon by-election campaign in early 1917 and says much about Tully’s impulsive nature. Coffey was a junior member of a Sinn Féin delegation that visited Tully seeking the paper’s support for the candidacy of Count Plunkett. According to Coffey the delegation was received ‘most cordially’ and Tully ‘promised the co-operation of the *Herald*’ only then to casually announce ‘that, of course, he would be a candidate himself’.⁶⁷ Tully may well have found the temptation to run against the other two candidates, who he personally disliked, simply too much to resist. He had dismissed Plunkett as ‘an amiable old Whig’ while the Irish Parliamentary candidate was ‘his old Boyle enemy T.J. Devine’, who had previously been a target of Tully’s litigiousness.⁶⁸ Whatever his motivation for standing for election it was a hasty

⁶⁴ Wheatley, op. cit., p.15

⁶⁵ Ibid, p.15, p.99; The feud may have been further fuelled by both families taking different sides during the Parnell split.

⁶⁶ *Roscommon Herald: Centenary Supplement* (5 December 1959)

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ Wheatley, op. cit., p.113; *Roscommon Herald*, 27 Jan. 1917; Tully had indicated that he ‘would always stand down in favour of a real Sinn Féiner ‘such as Eoin MacNeill’. In 1905 Devine had been prevented from

and ill-advised decision. There were only eleven days remaining prior to polling day and he appeared to have no proper campaign in place. He did not undertake any real canvas of the constituency, rarely appeared on election platforms, and seemed to be relying solely on his reputation.⁶⁹ All these factors ultimately told on him as he finished a poor third and Count Plunkett won Sinn Féin's first parliamentary seat.⁷⁰

This marked Tully's final attempt for election to public office.⁷¹ A few years before his death he appointed Thomas J. McDermott to succeed him as editor. McDermott had been with the *Roscommon Herald* since 1913 having previously worked at the *Western Nationalist*.⁷² Despite Tully's rather unique personality there were a number of aspects to his career that closely resembled those of other editor-proprietors of his day. In common with James Daly of the *Connaught Telegraph* his early journalistic career was noted for his involvement in land agitation and endured a prison sentence for his involvement, similar to William Hastings of the *Western News*.⁷³ He also served as a nationalist MP at Westminster as did P.A. McHugh of the *Sligo Champion*, J.P. Farrell of the *Longford Leader*, J.L. Carew of the *Leinster Leader*, and J.P. Hayden of the *Westmeath Examiner*. Notably Tully was also an enthusiastic supporter of the GAA. In addition to lending the paper's support to the nascent body he also served as chairman of Roscommon County Board.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, with the possible exception of E.T. Keane of the *Kilkenny People* (co-incidentally a close friend of Tully), there were few editors of such an individualistic nature as Jasper Tully.⁷⁵ With such a character penning the leading articles the editorials of the *Roscommon Herald* could hardly fail to prove compelling reading.

standing for the County Council following a court action taken by Tully.

⁶⁹ Shane Reynolds, 'Fr Michael O'Flanagan and the North-Roscommon by-election of 1917: sowing the seeds of republican constitutionalism', (M.A. thesis, St Patricks College, 2010), pp 41-2

⁷⁰ Cyril Mattimoe, *North Roscommon: its people and past* (Boyle, 1992), pp 190-1

⁷¹ Wheatley, op. cit., p.99; In 1905 Tully became a county councillor after bringing a court challenge to the result of an election he had narrowly lost. However, he failed to be re-elected three years later.

⁷² *Roscommon Herald*, 23 Dec. 1939

⁷³ Mattimoe, op. cit., p.177; Mattimoe notes that when Tully was imprisoned in Kilmainham in 1881 with Parnell he 'was given a great send-off from Boyle' where 'a large crowd assembled at the station'. He was also given 'a tumultuous reception' on his release.

⁷⁴ M. O'Callaghan, 'The GAA in County Roscommon' in Martin F. Coffey (ed.), *Roscommon, past present* (Dublin, 1961), p.87

⁷⁵ *Roscommon Herald: Centenary Supplement* (5 December 1959)

Editorial comment 1914-1921

Unlike many of its provincial peers the *Roscommon Herald* mostly remained at a constant eight pages between 1914 and 1921. Unusually it was normally divided into ten columns per page which was quite a deviation from the normal standard in addition to being a strain on the eyesight of its readers. Nonetheless, the number of columns was reduced to at certain times during these years. The appended title of *Leitrim, Longford, Sligo, and Mayo News* may well have assisted the paper in securing advertising not only from businesses in its base of Boyle but also in towns such as Sligo, Carrick-on-Shannon, and Longford. The *Roscommon Herald* differed from most other provincial papers at the time in displaying a minimal amount of adverts for alcohol and tobacco related products. Agriculture, however, featured even more prominently in its advertising sections. This was illustrated by a high frequency of ads for items such as seeds, fertilisers, harrows, tractors, drills, harvesting machinery, animal medications and vaccinations, and even shotgun cartridges. Amongst the other items to appear regularly in the same sections were 'Raleigh' bicycles, 'Paisley' flour, 'Dixon's' soap, 'Laurence's' hair dye, 'Rathborne's' Irish-made altar candles, and 'Veno's' cough cure.

With a personality as combative as Tully at the helm the *Roscommon Herald* would have seemed destined for clashes with the authorities. Yet this was only the case to quite a limited extent during the 1914-1921 period. In October 1914 an RIC report noted that 'the tone of the provincial press is satisfactory' with the exception of the *Roscommon Herald* amongst others.⁷⁶ Apart from this rather innocuous observation there is little evidence of the paper attracting further attention from the authorities. Nonetheless, both Hugh Oram and the paper's centenary issue claim that Tully was visited by Crown Forces at some stage during the War of Independence and warned to 'tone down his comments about the Black and Tan atrocities'. According to Oram the soldiers 'received such a tongue lashing from Tully that they fled'. The paper's centenary edition claimed that Tully 'informed them of his firm intention to write to their superiors in Dublin'.⁷⁷ The alleged incident seems somewhat far-fetched or perhaps the stuff of urban legend considering that neither press censorship reports nor police reports

⁷⁶ Inspector General's and County Inspectors' monthly confidential reports, October 1914, CO904/94/414

⁷⁷ Oram, op. cit., p.165; *Roscommon Herald: Centenary Supplement* (5 December 1959); The centenary supplement also claimed that Tully told Crown Forces that he would write 'to Lloyd George, then British Prime Minister, and a personal friend of Mr Tully's' which seems unlikely to say the least given the paper's comments regarding the British Prime Minister during the course of the War of Independence..

from the time indicate any matters of contention with the *Roscommon Herald*. Indeed police reports for County Roscommon during the War of Independence single out the *Irish Independent* and the *Freeman's Journal* as being 'the chief sources of sedition and disaffection' in the county and make no mention whatever of the *Roscommon Herald*.⁷⁸

Regardless of the question marks over Tully's encounters with the Crown Forces there is still an abundance of material within the pages of his paper to justify detailed historical scrutiny. The *Roscommon Herald* was rather unique within the Irish provincial press in that it featured photographs, cartoons (frequently caricatures), sketches, maps, and diagrams to a much greater extent than most other local newspapers. Quite often the cartoons ridiculed those who had incurred Tully's wrath while sketches and maps regularly featured in the paper's coverage of World War I. Unlike the *Tuam Herald* it was non-committal as regards Ireland's commitment to the British war effort but carried recruitment advertisements throughout 1915.⁷⁹ Once the war had started the editorials of the *Roscommon Herald* dealt predominantly with its progress and tended to be quite lengthy. The concentration on military developments most likely stemmed from Tully's interest in Napoleon. Cahir Healy recalled the numerous books about Napoleon owned by Tully and described him as 'a lover of the little Corsican'.⁸⁰ The editorial emphasis on the prosecution of the war did not waver until the armistice in 1918. However, the obvious fascination with the war seemed to bring out one of the more distasteful elements in Tully's character.

Jasper Tully was never one to have any reluctance in denigrating individuals but the contemptuous dismissal of entire countries or religions was quite a different matter. This most unappealing attribute was clearly evident upon the outbreak of war in 1914 when the *Roscommon Herald* editorial declared that 'Servia [Serbia] is one of the most contemptible nations on God's earth' and that 'Austria is right in taking vengeance on this cowardly clan'.⁸¹ Six months later those of the Jewish persuasion were the target of the *Herald's* leading article. In commenting on Romania's entry into the war as an ally of Britain

⁷⁸ Inspector General's and County Inspectors' monthly confidential reports, July 1920, CO904/112-284, June 1921, CO904/115-719

⁷⁹ *Roscommon Herald*, 3, 13, 20 Mar., 3, 10 Apr., 19 Jun., 4 Sept., 6, 13 Nov. 1915; The paper actually published more recruitment advertisements than the *Tuam Herald* during 1915 which was the year that witnessed the biggest push for recruits.

⁸⁰ *Roscommon Herald: Centenary Supplement* (5 December 1959)

⁸¹ *Roscommon Herald*, 1 Aug. 1914

it was stated that their soldiers had a 'good fighting reputation' though 'the country itself is the most Jew-ridden place in the world'.⁸² What can only be regarded as anti-Semitic traits were again evident in the months following the end of World War I. It was alleged that it was 'the Jews who are the Bolsheviks in Russia' who 'have plundered and crucified that unfortunate country'. The same editorial stated that 'the international Jew put all his money in German investments before the war' and was now 'moving heaven and earth to save the Kaiser and to save the Germans from having to pay up'.⁸³ Later editorials variously asserted that 'theatrical outbreaks in Berlin and other German towns are the handiwork of German Jews', 'international Jews' would 'free the Germans from the burden of a war indemnity', 'the international Jew is working against old Catholic Poland', the hands of the 'Jew Bolsheviks' were 'dripping with the blood of the Czar', 'international finance, which is mainly Jewish, has been very kind to the Germans', and that 'a gang of international Jews' had seized power in Russia and 'plundered all that French money'.⁸⁴

The editorial fascination with matters beyond Ireland's shores continued after the war had ended. Leading articles throughout 1919 dealt overwhelmingly with the Peace Conference and its aftermath while similarly in 1920 and the first half of 1921 foreign affairs or British domestic politics predominated. Accordingly Irish affairs did not garner the same editorial attention as was the case in many other provincial titles but it does not render the *Herald's* commentary on this period of Irish history any less fascinating. Initially the paper mirrored the views of many other nationalist publications in expressing its dismay at the notion of partition, anger at the unhindered operation of the Larne gun-running, and its enthusiastic endorsement of the Irish Volunteers.⁸⁵ The Easter Rising provoked an editorial response that resembled that of the *Tuam Herald* in that it articulated some decidedly far-fetched notions:

It was an act of lunatics spurred on by clever intriguers paid by Germany. Very few people have seen gold during the last twelve months, yet in a village in Galway wrecked by shell fire, £600 in sovereigns was found by the police in a modest house, and in the pockets of Sinn Féiners sums such as £100 and £30 were found in gold. In other parts of the country there have been instances of newly rich people, whose new found wealth could not be easily accounted for. It

⁸² Ibid, 30 Jan. 1915

⁸³ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1919

⁸⁴ Ibid, 18 Jan., 25 Jan., 1 Feb., 6 Sept., 15 Nov. 1919

⁸⁵ Ibid, 14 Mar., 2 May, 6 Jun. 1914

paid Germany to make this expenditure to produce this disaster for Ireland at this moment, and little the Kaiser and his agents reck the red ruin they have brought on Dublin and on thousands of their dupes.

Nonetheless, similar to several other provincial organs, the paper identified the seeds of the rebellion being sown when 'the Asquith Cabinet allowed the Carson armed volunteers to be formed in Ulster'. However, the overall attitude to the Easter Rising was condemnatory, the leaders being 'men blinded by the lust of conquest' who wished to pursue 'the alliance with Germany'.⁸⁶

Although the rebellion and its leaders were roundly vilified it may well have sparked a realisation that the days of the Irish Parliamentary Party were numbered. Some months later the paper castigated the Irish representatives who 'sold themselves to the Government and did the Government's fetch and carry work for ten years'.⁸⁷ It cannot be categorically stated that this sense of the Irish Parliamentary Party's impending demise was a factor that motivated Tully to stand in the North Roscommon by-election. His motivations notwithstanding, the editorial columns of the Roscommon Herald were not employed to promote his election campaign and the aforementioned dismissal of Count Plunkett appeared elsewhere in the paper. The subsequent Sinn Féin victory was interpreted as the first death-blow to the Irish Parliamentary Party resulting from its 'failure to win anything for Ireland in the midst of golden opportunities'.⁸⁸

Michael Wheatley comments that following the North Roscommon by-election the *Roscommon Herald* became 'the leading campaigning paper for Sinn Féin in Counties Roscommon, Leitrim, and Longford' but this is not entirely the case from an editorial perspective.⁸⁹ The paper was certainly supportive of Sinn Féin in the next by-election in South Longford but its editorial policy was more anti-Irish Parliamentary Party than pro-Sinn Féin.⁹⁰ The ensuing Sinn Féin victory prompted the response that 'the present Irish Party no longer represents Ireland' and that 'the next general election will see the end of

⁸⁶ Ibid, 6 May, 13 May 1916

⁸⁷ Ibid, 21 Oct. 1916

⁸⁸ Ibid, 10 Feb. 1917; The same editorial stated that the Irish Parliamentary Party 'must be promptly consigned to the scrap heap'.

⁸⁹ Wheatley, op. cit., p.113

⁹⁰ *Roscommon Herald*, 25 Apr. 1917; Prior to the South Longford by-election the paper carried a photograph of the Sinn Féin candidate, Joe McGuinness, under the heading 'The man for South Longford'.

them'.⁹¹ With increasing frequency during the remainder of 1917 the Irish Parliamentary Party leaders were ridiculed in front page cartoons while John Dillon was similarly derided on an almost weekly basis in the months leading up to the general election in December 1918. Even before the results of the poll were declared the *Herald* confidently predicted that it would 'mark the passing of a rotten and corrupt phase in Irish politics'.⁹²

With the mortal blows administered to the Irish Parliamentary Party the *Herald* then shifted its ire in the direction of Lloyd George and his government. Possibly due to concerns over official censure, criticism of the British Government was not marked by the same ferocity to which the Irish Parliamentary Party had been treated. Nonetheless, this did not prevent the paper from publishing a cartoon in September 1920 with a caption referring to the 'regime of military frightfulness instituted by Lloyd George's cabinet'.⁹³ Later editorials accused the British Prime Minister of having an attitude of 'brazen hypocrisy' towards Ireland and of being the 'inspirer and instigator' of the reprisals campaign.⁹⁴ In complete contrast to the *Tuam Herald* the truce of July 1921 was greeted with extreme scepticism. According to the *Roscommon Herald* 'no one trusts his [Lloyd George's] promises' and his 'peace trap' was 'designed to put de Valera in the wrong before the other peoples of the world'.⁹⁵

The most remarkable aspect of the paper's coverage of the Anglo-Irish Treaty was that it reported de Valera's opposition a week before almost all other provincial papers. Following the conclusion of the negotiations in London the first issue of the vast majority of such publications was on Saturday 10 December 1921. On this date most provincial papers published details of the agreement and their reaction to it but the *Roscommon Herald* appeared to have a "scoop" in reporting de Valera's rejection. It was acknowledged that only limited information was available at that stage but it was also conceded that 'theoretically de Valera is right'. However, the paper surmised that 'Sir Thomas Moore built his famous Republic of Utopia on theory' but 'Utopia has not yet arrived on earth'.⁹⁶ This injection of

⁹¹ Ibid, 12 May 1917

⁹² Ibid, 14 Dec. 1918; Under the heading 'Imbecile leadership' the paper based its prediction on the concession of twenty-five uncontested seats to Sinn Féin and labelled John Dillon 'an utterly incompetent, worthless leader, even from the standpoint of his own narrow interests'.

⁹³ Ibid, 4 Sept. 1920

⁹⁴ Ibid, 11 Sept., 2 Oct. 1920;

⁹⁵ Ibid, 2 Jul. 1921

⁹⁶ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

political realism was an indicator of the *Herald's* subsequent pro-Treaty stance. It was a case of 'fire and sword' being 'loosed on our people' if the Treaty was rejected 'or whether peace with all it denotes will fall on our parched soil like the gentle rain from heaven'.⁹⁷ The paper also accentuated the positives of the Treaty such as the departure of Crown Forces, the establishment of an Irish Army, and the operation of a Free State Parliament in Dublin.⁹⁸ Ultimately, and perhaps even with a little foresight, the *Herald* predicted that once ratified, the country was tied to the Treaty only as 'long as it serves Ireland's material interests'.⁹⁹

Conclusion

By December 1921 the *Roscommon Herald* did not differ from the majority of Irish provincial newspapers in expressing its fairly solid support for the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Yet most of the other characteristics of this paper set it apart from its counterparts within the broader print media. Its use of cartoons, caricatures, sketches, and maps was a most unique feature as was the volume of editorial focus on the prosecution of the war, and international politics thereafter. This level of attention to affairs outside the country meant that substantially less editorial space was devoted to matters in Ireland than in many other provincial titles (though such matters were certainly not ignored in the remainder of the paper). Yet even this reduced amount of editorial coverage of Irish affairs still proved intriguing and was particularly noted initially for its stinging criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and latterly for its damning indictment of Lloyd George and his government. These distinguishing traits of the *Roscommon Herald* were almost undoubtedly attributable to the personality of editor-proprietor, Jasper Tully. Frequently prone to personal animosities and given to highly prejudicial views, Tully was inarguably one of the most colourful characters in the ranks of the Irish provincial press in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Roscommon Herald – Timeline

1859: founded by George Tully.

1881: Jasper Tully inherits ownership.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 17 Dec. 1921

⁹⁸ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

⁹⁹ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921

1892-1906: Tully serves as Irish Parliamentary Party MP for South Leitrim

1917: Tully unsuccessfully contests North Roscommon by-election

1881-1938: Jasper Tully, editor-proprietor though Tully resigns editorship a few years prior to his death in 1938.

4.5 Case Study 3: *Mayo News*

The two brothers

The history of the Irish provincial press in this period is distinguished by individual figures who were synonymous with specific publications, Jasper Tully (*Roscommon Herald*), J.P. Farrell (*Longford Leader*), and J.P. Hayden (*Westmeath Examiner*) being some of the prime examples. In the case of the *Mayo News* such a distinction actually falls to two people, brothers William and Patrick J. (P.J.) Doris. The two brothers established the paper in 1892 as an indisputably nationalist organ reflecting the ideals of its co-founders. Both had been centrally involved in the activities of the nascent Land League and were closely associated with Michael Davitt. In its early years the paper continued to push for land reform in addition to becoming a persistent critic of British Government policies in Ireland. William Doris subsequently embarked on a political career that resulted in the brothers taking opposite sides in the emerging split within Irish nationalism in the first two decades of the twentieth century. This was the cause of an estrangement between the two brothers that was not resolved within their lifetimes.¹⁰⁰

William Doris, the elder of the two brothers, had already gained considerable experience of the print media prior to the establishment of the *Mayo News*. He began his journalistic career at the age of eighteen with James Daly's *Connaught Telegraph*. Around this time he commenced his Land League activities that ultimately resulted in six months imprisonment in Dundalk Gaol.¹⁰¹ On his release he moved to Dublin, joining the parliamentary staff of the *Freeman's Journal*. Subsequently he worked on the staff of the *Leinster Leader* (Naas) and the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* (Carlow). William Doris's

¹⁰⁰ *Mayo News: Centenary Supplement* (2 March 1994)

¹⁰¹ *Connaught Telegraph*, 18 Sept. 1926; William Doris had taken part in the "no rent manifesto" and had actually spent a few months "on the run" after the warrant for his arrest had been issued.

political career began in 1898 when he was elected to the inaugural Mayo County Council. In the same year he was a founding member of the United Irish League (UIL), an organisation established by William O'Brien MP, to address the depressed state of agriculture and which was principally concerned with the redistribution of large estates.¹⁰² In 1910 he stood as the Irish Parliamentary Party candidate in West Mayo and was elected as an MP, defeating O'Brien who had held the seat as an independent nationalist. He was re-elected in 1915 but lost his seat to Joseph MacBride of Sinn Féin in the general election of 1918.¹⁰³

Like so many other provincial editors and proprietors P.J. Doris held a deep Catholic faith. He also shared his brothers' zeal for land reform. His obituary described him as having 'devoted his life to the cause of land reform'. However, on the national question, he became a convert to the more separatist ideals of Sinn Féin. As his obituary also noted, P.J. Doris 'was a personal friend and keen follower of Arthur Griffith' and propagated Sinn Féin principles in the pages of the *Mayo News*.¹⁰⁴ The conflicting nationalist principles formed the basis of a life-long rift between the two brothers. The paper's centenary issue pinpoints the split becoming permanent upon William's election as an MP and his subsequent move to London to attend Westminster.¹⁰⁵ Thereafter P.J. Doris assumed more or less sole control of the paper resulting in it ultimately being considered a pro-Sinn Féin organ. Accordingly in the 1918 general election campaign the *Mayo News* lent its support to Joseph MacBride of Sinn Féin in his contest against its own co-founder. However, prior to polling day William's name was rarely mentioned, most of the criticism was reserved for the increasingly emasculated Irish Parliamentary Party.¹⁰⁶ William Doris died eight years later in 1926 while P.J. passed away in 1937. The depth of the rift between them is perhaps illustrated by the fact that P.J. did not attend his older brother's funeral.¹⁰⁷ The estrangement was not detrimental to the survival of the *Mayo News* despite the fact that P.J. Doris, like his brother

¹⁰² *Connaught Telegraph*, 18 Sept. 1926; Hickey et al, op. cit., p.494;

¹⁰³ *Ibid*; *Mayo News: Centenary Supplement* (2 March 1994);

¹⁰⁴ *Mayo News*, 6 Mar. 1937

¹⁰⁵ *Mayo News: Centenary Supplement* (2 March 1994)

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁷ *Connaught Telegraph*, *Mayo News*, *Irish Times*, 18 Sept. 1926; *Irish Independent*, 22 May 1951; The death of William Doris received little attention in the *Mayo News* but simply quoted comments from the Dublin papers. P.J. Doris was not listed among the mourners though their younger brother, John P. (J.P) did attend. J.P. Doris was also a journalist, having begun his career with the *Mayo News* and also worked at the *Wexford People*, *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, *Westmeath Independent*, and *Irish Independent*.

before him, was imprisoned for several months in the aftermath of the Easter Rising whilst the paper was additionally suppressed for five weeks during 1918.

Incarceration and suppression

P.J. Doris was arrested at his home in Westport on 12 May 1916. The official report of his arrest acknowledged that he had not played any part in the rebellion but that his 'writings in the *Mayo News*' had 'encouraged preparations for the rebellion'.¹⁰⁸ Unlike the *Enniscorthy Echo*, however, the *Mayo News* was not forced to suspend publication as P.J. Doris was the only member of staff to be arrested. About a month after his arrest an editorial appeared in the paper that was severely critical of 'the continued imprisonment of Mr P.J. Doris, editor and proprietor of this paper, for now five weeks without any charge being made against him'. Nevertheless, the most fascinating aspect of the editorial was the description of an incident that allegedly preceded the arrest of P.J. Doris:

The editor of this paper was arrested on Friday morning 12th May. Now it so happened that four days previously he was taking his customary morning's walk on the Mall, when the Redmondite MP for West Mayo came down the Mall by the Ulster Bank. The MP stood at the corner of the middle bridge, and the editor of this paper heard him shouting some remarks down the Mall towards him, at the same time pointing him out with his hand. There were crowds on the streets at the time, amongst them the District Inspector of Police. The MP then proceeded to the opposite side of the river in front of the chapel, and walking up and down by the river wall he continued to shout vigorously, and went on with this performance for some time. The editor of this paper discovered immediately afterwards what the substance of his remarks had been, and was astonished to learn that he had been called a Sinn Féiner who had carried on a Sinn Féin campaign.¹⁰⁹

The most remarkable aspect of this report is not even the suggestion that an Irish Parliamentary Party MP was complicit in the arrest of P.J. Doris but that the 'Redmondite MP for West Mayo' was, of course,

¹⁰⁸ Personalities (P.J. Doris), CO904/200/14-9; The same report stated that he had fallen out with his brother three years earlier and adopted a Sinn Féin policy.

¹⁰⁹ *Mayo News*, 17 Jun. 1916

William Doris, his older brother. The same editorial claimed that P.J. Doris ‘had never been a Sinn Féiner, and was not a member of any organisation of any sort or kind in the country, but had always maintained an independent point of view’.¹¹⁰ Regardless of P.J. Doris’s affiliation or otherwise to any particular organisation he was arrested and eventually transferred to Reading Gaol. Five months later a *Mayo News* editorial reported that, in response to a parliamentary question, Mr Flavin of the Irish Parliamentary Party had been informed that P.J. Doris was arrested for being ‘reasonably suspected of aiding and abetting the recent rebellion’. In addition to utilising the opportunity to castigate the Irish Parliamentary Party for what the paper perceived as its belated concern for those arrested in the aftermath of Easter 1916, the paper also dubbed the House of Commons the ‘place in which the highest citizen in the Empire can lie with impunity’.¹¹¹

By this stage P.J. Doris’s case had been raised with the Chief Secretary’s office by John Chartres, a British patent lawyer.¹¹² English-born Chartres had spent his early years in Ireland due to his father’s position as a staff surgeon in the British Army. His involvement in Irish politics dates from 1917 when he first met Arthur Griffith and he eventually served as second secretary to the Irish treaty delegation.¹¹³ It is not clear why Chartres took up Doris’s case as he acknowledged in his correspondence with the Chief Secretary’s office that he had never met nor was he acquainted with P.J. Doris, but had heard about his case on a recent visit to the West of Ireland. Chartres pointed out that Doris ‘took no part in the volunteer movement and was opposed to the policy of physical force’. It was accepted that the *Mayo News* had refused to publish recruiting advertisements but that this provided no basis for his imprisonment.¹¹⁴

Following some initial correspondence it was proposed that P.J. Doris could be released upon the provision of an undertaking to keep the peace and a bond ‘in the sum of £100’.¹¹⁵ It was an offer that

¹¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹¹ Ibid, 4 Nov. 1916

¹¹² Francis Costello, *The Irish revolution and its aftermath, 1916-1923: years of revolt* (Dublin, 2003), p.247; Costello describes Chartres as ‘a little-known British patent lawyer, but nonetheless someone who had proved an invaluable intelligence source to [Michael] Collins in Britain.

¹¹³ Pauric J. Dempsey and Richard Hawkins, ‘Chartres, John Smith’ in McGuire et al (eds.)

¹¹⁴ Personalities (P.J. Doris), CO904/200/14-22,31; In his correspondence Chartres asserted that ‘large numbers of persons in the West of Ireland are convinced that the imprisonment of Mr Doris is a tyrannical act for which no justification of any kind exists’.

¹¹⁵ Personalities (P.J. Doris), CO904/200/14-24

was not appreciated by Chartres and certainly cut no ice with P.J. Doris. Chartres described it as an 'attempt to make it appear that an innocent man is in the wrong and so to inflict further undeserved ignominy upon him'.¹¹⁶ P.J. Doris meanwhile, responding to the proposal via a letter to the Governor of Reading Gaol, stated uncompromisingly that it added 'insult to the irreparable injury which has been done me'. He was particularly irked that the requested undertaking for 'future good behaviour' implied that he had not previously been of 'good behaviour'. Doris concluded his letter by demanding that he either be charged or released.¹¹⁷ P.J. Doris was eventually released in December 1916 at the same time as many others who had been interned following the Easter Rising. In the final *Mayo News* editorial of 1916 P.J. Doris thanked readers, advertisers, and contributors for their 'wholehearted support' during his 'eight months of brutal imprisonment'. The same editorial surmised that 'the incidents of 1916' had, 'in great part, cleared the air' and that 'the struggle for the uplifting of Ireland will be continued until her rights to nationhood be restored to her'.¹¹⁸ From around this time onwards the paper began to assume an unambiguously pro-Sinn Féin stance and within less than eighteen months had attracted the unwanted attention of the authorities once more.¹¹⁹

On 1 April 1918, in execution of the appropriate warrant, police entered the premises of the *Mayo News* and seized the paper's plant and machinery and suppressed the paper. The police action resulted from the publication of a number of items in the edition of 23 March to which the Press Censor and the Dublin Castle administration took offence. The offending items included an editorial that referred, *inter alia*, to Ireland's 'opportunity to rid her of the cursed influence which has ground her down for 700 years'. Notably the same editorial declared that this end could be achieved 'without any recourse to physical force'. One of the other articles reported, in fairly glowing terms, on a St Patrick's Day Sinn Féin parade in Westport and asserted that 'Ireland will soon have crushed its last binding reptile'. The remaining articles were severely critical of the recent behaviour of the police in Westport, accusing them of carrying out unprovoked baton charges and labelling them 'an infuriated imported police mob'.¹²⁰ In his letter to the Chief Secretary, the Press Censor, Lord Decies, described the items as 'likely

¹¹⁶ Personalities (P.J. Doris), CO904/200/14-15

¹¹⁷ Personalities (P.J. Doris), CO904/200/14-24; P.J. Doris also accused the authorities of attempting to ruin 'my paper without suppressing it directly'.

¹¹⁸ *Mayo News*, 30 Dec. 1916

¹¹⁹ McGee (Doris, William), op. cit.

¹²⁰ *Mayo News*, 23 Mar. 1918

to cause disaffection' and stated that 'the tone of the *Mayo News* has been bad for a long time, and has a large circulation'.¹²¹

Two days after the police had entered his premises P.J. Doris travelled to Dublin in an attempt to have the suppression lifted. While waiting in Dublin Castle in the hope of securing an interview with the Under-Secretary, Doris composed a letter to him protesting at the enforced closure of his business and claiming that he was 'quite unconscious of any reason why I should be suppressed'.¹²² Doris's visit to Dublin proved to no avail and he was merely advised that the action taken 'was caused by the publication in the *Mayo News* of reports and statements which were grave infringements of the Defence of the Realm regulations'.¹²³ Crucially though he was not informed of which specific 'reports and statements' had infringed the regulations. Doris continued to protest at what he perceived as the injustice of his case but received little sympathy.¹²⁴

The *Mayo News* eventually resumed publication on 11 May 1918 though there is no real evidence as to why the suppression was lifted at this stage. The editorial of that date stated that 'we have not been informed why we were suppressed' and that 'we resume publication with our views on Irish affairs absolutely unaltered'.¹²⁵ Although the paper was not suppressed again during this period its tribulations were not at an end. In February 1921 the Black and Tans raided the offices of the paper and occupied the house of P.J. Doris for a brief period. As a consequence he spent some time on the run similar to his older brother some forty years before.¹²⁶ However, this did not lead to the non-publication of the *Mayo News* which continued to provide compelling editorial comment, as it had done since early 1914.

¹²¹ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/5

¹²² Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/5; In the same letter Doris claimed that 'since the censorship was established the Censor has constantly sent me circulars of instruction and on all such instructions I have always acted to the letter, and he never complained that I did not do so'.

¹²³ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/5

¹²⁴ Seditious literature, censorship, publication of offensive articles, CO904/160/5; Doris again wrote to the Under-Secretary on 17 April 1918 claiming that he had still not been given any clear reason for the suppression of his paper.

¹²⁵ *Mayo News*, 11 May 1918; The same editorial articulated that censorship was reasonable in time of war 'to prevent the publication of matter which might be of use to "the enemy"' but that 'we are not conscious of having at any time published matter which could have been by any stretch of the imagination of use to the enemy'.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 6 Mar. 1937; McGee (Doris, William), *op. cit.*;

Editorial comment 1914-1921

In the months leading up to the start of World War I the *Mayo News* generally consisted of eight pages, divided into seven columns, though the number of pages dropped to four over the course of the succeeding years. Underneath the masthead a list of between fifty and sixty towns and villages in County Mayo appeared in which the paper claimed circulation. By 1918 this had been revised to the far more concise claim that the paper circulated 'in every town and village in Mayo'. Similar to many other titles the front page was fully taken up with advertisements though the overall proportion of advertising was noticeably less than papers such as the *Kilkenny People* and *Enniscorthy Echo*. Nonetheless, the promotion of local businesses, various types of foodstuffs, and medications were just as much an attribute of the *Mayo News* as most other provincial titles. Agricultural items such as fertilisers, seeds, sacks, and tarpaulins also appeared regularly in the paper's advertising columns. Other items to make similarly frequent appearances were a variety of flours ('Summit', 'Spillers', 'Millocrat', 'Portia'), 'Rudge-Whitworth' bicycles, and 'Golden-Spangled' cigarettes. By 1918 an increasing amount of Sinn Féin announcements plus notices of Gaelic Football matches were appearing in these columns.

One of the most striking features of the editorial comment of the *Mayo News* from the very start of this period was its clear indication that it regarded Home Rule as only a stepping stone towards full independence. As early as the first week of January 1914, it unambiguously articulated that it believed the Home Rule bill to be 'the best that can be hoped for at present' and only 'a first step – much impeded – on the road to complete and practical self-government'.¹²⁷ The paper shared the same disdain for the demands of the Ulster Unionists as most other nationalist titles in the provinces and recoiled at any notion of partition, which it considered 'an outrage to our nationhood'.¹²⁸ However, if the paper did not voice open support for Sinn Féin until after Easter 1916 (as noted in the previous section) criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party was discernible from a much earlier stage.

Even two months prior to the outbreak of World War I and John Redmond's call to Irishmen to enlist in the British Army, the *Mayo News* dubbed the Home Rule movement 'a pawn to be used in the dirty

¹²⁷ *Mayo News*, 3 Jan. 1914

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, 11, 25 Apr. 1914; The paper did, however, indicate some understanding of the unionist mind-set when stating that 'the belief that a parliament consisting mainly of Catholics would endeavour to injure and oppress them is very strong and deep-rooted in the mind of the average Ulster Unionist, and is not to be readily displaced'.

game of British politics'.¹²⁹ If this was the regard in which the Irish Parliamentary Party was held before the outbreak of war it is scarcely surprising that the criticism intensified as the war dragged on. By the autumn of 1915 the paper was accusing the party of having 'gone on lowering the flag bit by bit until a policy of downright sycophancy has been reached'.¹³⁰ Unlike the *Tuam Herald* and *Roscommon Herald* in neighbouring Galway and Roscommon the *Mayo News* did not carry any recruitment advertisements. P.J. Doris's obituary claimed that he 'vigorously opposed recruitment in Ireland' as 'he doubted the sincerity of England's solicitude in the interests of "small nations", while she herself continued to oppress one of the oldest and smallest of them'.¹³¹ An understandable consequence of such sentiments was the vilification of such a senior member of the Irish Parliamentary Party as John Dillon, for calling on Irishmen to enlist in the British Army:

Has Mr Dillon sent his son, or sons, into the firing line? If he has not done so, is it not a piece of audacious impudence on his part to call on our people to do so.¹³²

From late 1916 onwards stinging criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party was accompanied by the espousal of the Sinn Féin agenda. The editorial response to the Rising itself was actually rather muted, quite possibly due to the enforced absence of P.J. Doris. Nonetheless, the *Mayo News* echoed the response of many other provincial titles when it stated that 'the root and foundation of all the trouble was permitting armed forces to be formed in the north of Ireland for the open and avowed purpose of resisting Ireland's constitutional demands'.¹³³ Seven months later, with P.J. Doris back in the editorial chair following his imprisonment, a far more assertive view of the Rising was articulated. 'The tragedy of Easter Week', its first lead article of 1917 claimed, and 'the horrors which accompanied its suppression, the shootings, the lootings, the indiscriminate arrest and ill-treatment of innocent men' had ultimately provided 'a much needed stimulant which made the blackest incidents of 1916 blessings in disguise for our oppressed country'.¹³⁴ This re-appraisal of Easter 1916 preceded a period in which support for Sinn Féin was expressed more openly and castigation of the Irish Parliamentary continued apace.

¹²⁹ Ibid, 20 Jun. 1914

¹³⁰ Ibid, 11 Sept. 1915

¹³¹ Ibid, 6 Mar. 1937

¹³² Ibid, 8 Jan. 1916

¹³³ Ibid, 13 May 1916

¹³⁴ Ibid, 6 Jan. 1917

The electorate of North Roscommon, where Sinn Féin won its first by-election victory, was lauded for the 'noble blow you have struck for Irish freedom'. The same editorial presciently observed that the result 'spells the end of Redmond's misrepresentation of Irish feeling' while it also believed that it was an expression 'of the disgust which prevails in every part of Ireland with the inept and craven policy by which her so-called representatives have disgraced our country in the last decade'.¹³⁵ The second Sinn Féin by-election victory in South Longford in May 1917 was similarly greeted as 'a glorious victory for Ireland's freedom' and a 'magnificent triumph of pure and unselfish patriotism over the worst elements of political corruption and chicanery'.¹³⁶ The growing appeal of Sinn Féin to the Irish electorate was outlined in fairly concise terms in June 1917:

Hitherto Sinn Féin was regarded as the ideal band of dreamers, and by some as a physical force movement, but gradually the efficiency of Sinn Féin as a policy is impressing itself on the popular mind and the youth of Ireland have begun to recognise in it the most powerful weapon yet devised for the attainment of Ireland's national aspirations.¹³⁷

Editorial reaction to subsequent Sinn Féin by-election victories in East Clare, Kilkenny City, and East Cavan followed a similar pattern. However, it was Sinn Féin's only defeat in a by-election outside Ulster prior to the 1918 general election that gave rise to the most interesting editorial response. This occurred in March 1918 when Captain William Redmond won the seat for the Irish Parliamentary Party in Waterford City. The *Mayo News* promptly dubbed it a 'British victory' and suggested that any 'Irish city capable of such a choice is not worthy of the franchise which it prostitutes in such a fashion'.¹³⁸ This indictment of the Waterford electorate for exercising its democratic choice echoed the reaction of the *Meath Chronicle* which had lambasted the result as 'just what one would expect from a city whose escutcheon for seven hundred years has never been stained by any disloyalty to England'.¹³⁹

The Waterford by-election immediately preceded the five week suppression of the *Mayo News*. On its return from suppression in May 1918 the paper unequivocally re-stated its advocacy of the policy of

¹³⁵ Ibid, 10 Feb. 1917

¹³⁶ Ibid, 12 May 1917

¹³⁷ Ibid, 30 Jun. 1917

¹³⁸ Ibid, 30 Mar. 1918

¹³⁹ *Meath Chronicle*, 30 Mar. 1918

Sinn Féin.¹⁴⁰ One of the defining features of such pro-Sinn Féin provincial organs was the promotion of the Irish language and in this respect the *Mayo News* was no exception. The Irish language, the paper declared, 'is a mirror and reflex of the Irish mind' that 'enshrines and preserves the religion and piety of our people' and 'is the guardian and bulwark of Ireland's nationality'.¹⁴¹ Nonetheless, the paper's view of the language was not entirely romanticised as it warned that if 'we lose our language we cease to be a nation' and questioned the sincerity of those claiming to be patriots but 'make no effort to revive the language of Patrick and Brigid'.¹⁴² The rapidly changing situation that began to evolve, however, from early 1919 onwards meant that on-going events took precedence over any discussion of the Irish language.

With the Irish Parliamentary Party no longer a threat following the general election of 1918 the *Mayo News* shifted its attention to the attainment of Sinn Féin objectives. From an early stage, however, it was suspected that US assistance could not be relied upon. President Wilson may 'be another political hypocrite of the Lloyd George type' the paper editorialised and it feared that Irish representatives would be excluded from the Paris Peace Conference.¹⁴³ When the paper's fears were realised only two months later it accused the US President of being 'struck dumb' in the face of 'the abandonment of all that was best in his historic fourteen points'.¹⁴⁴ Once it became clear that a hearing at the Peace Conference was most unlikely the focus of attention was shifted to the increasingly hostile situation within the country. The *Mayo News* was rather unique in that it was one of the few provincial papers outside County Tipperary to pass editorial comment on the killing of two RIC men at Soloheadbeg in January 1919, an attack regarded by historians as marking the start of the Irish War of Independence. The paper compared the incident to 'the class of crime which became quite the rule in Ireland in the early eighties when Parnell and over 2,000 of the Land League leaders were locked up in Irish jails'. Responsibility for such crimes, it added, rested with 'the Executive which provokes them and which aims at destroying the influences which are a check on the extremist elements in our midst'.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ *Mayo News*, 11 May 1918

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, 18 Mar. 1916

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 22 Apr. 1916

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 4 Jan. 1919

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 1 Mar. 1919

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 1 Feb. 1919

The depiction of the incident at Soloheadbeg as a “crime” was indicative of the attitude of the *Mayo News* towards the use of physical force in achieving nationalist objectives. The shooting dead of Resident Magistrate J.C. Milling (while putting his clock forward to British Summertime) at Westport in March 1919 was a further case in point.¹⁴⁶ The first editorial to appear following the killing had no hesitation in deeming it a ‘foul crime’ and a ‘vile outrage’ that should arouse ‘the indignation of the community’.¹⁴⁷ Even the IRA attack at Fermoy, County Cork in September 1919, that preceded what is regarded as the first reprisal of the War of Independence, was strongly censured. The *Mayo News* editorialised that the success of the attack on a group of fourteen soldiers attending the Wesleyan church in the town relied ‘largely on the helplessness of the military party who were arched out in full war kit without ammunition’.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, by the following year criticism of IRA activities was wholly replaced by outright castigation of the British authorities, brought about by the campaign of “reprisals” first witnessed in the aftermath of the IRA attack at Fermoy.

The Irish Administration in Dublin Castle was initially accused of ‘brutal coercion methods’ but the British Government itself soon became the target of the paper’s editorial outrage.¹⁴⁹ In September 1920 it concluded that the British Government had ‘at last adopted a settled policy’ in Ireland. ‘That policy’, it continued, ‘was one of reprisal’ inspired by ‘Sir Hamar Greenwood’s Cromwellianism’.¹⁵⁰ This set the editorial tone as the violence continued with Lloyd George in particular incurring the wrath of the *Mayo News*. ‘Not since 1798’ it was declared, had a ‘British Cabinet been so successful in sowing the seeds of hate in Ireland’ until ‘this vile campaign’ initiated by Mr Lloyd George.¹⁵¹ Given such contempt for Lloyd George and his government it was only to be expected that the initiation of peace negotiations in July 1921 was regarded with outright cynicism.

Lloyd George’s offer of peace negotiations was dubiously considered as part of the ‘olive branch and sword tactics’ of an ‘arch-political trickster’ who could have no cause for complaint if the invitation was

¹⁴⁶ Hopkinson, op. cit., p.133; Hopkinson suggests that the shooting ‘was probably carried out by the ‘Young Turks’ in the IRB and meant to pressurise senior Volunteer officers to initiate action in West Mayo’.

¹⁴⁷ *Mayo News*, 5 Apr. 1919

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 20 Sept. 1919; Hopkinson, op. cit., p.108;

¹⁴⁹ *Mayo News*, 3 Apr. 1920

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 11 Sept. 1920

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 13 Nov. 1920

‘received with suspicion and contempt’.¹⁵² The prospect of Sir Hamar Greenwood’s inclusion on the British negotiating team provoked similar feelings of mistrust. Greenwood’s ‘infamies in Ireland rank him with Cromwell for brutality without any of Cromwell’s redeeming characteristics’, the paper bluntly stated, mirroring the sentiments of the *Kilkenny People*.¹⁵³ Yet the *Mayo News* warmly welcomed the Treaty agreement of December 1921. Its reaction may not have been as effusive as other recognised pro-Sinn Féin titles such as the *Meath Chronicle* and *Enniscorthy Echo* but it still regarded the agreement as ‘the crowning victory of the Sinn Féin movement’.¹⁵⁴ As possible difficulties with Dáil ratification began to surface the paper somewhat echoed its views on the Home Rule bill eight years previously in describing the Treaty as ‘a very substantial step’ that could ‘materially advance the interests of the country’ even if it was ‘not free from defects’. The opposition of Mr de Valera and others was accepted as genuine and an illustration of ‘the depth of the sincerity of their desire to secure for their people the fullest possible measure of liberty’.¹⁵⁵

The *Mayo News* was one of the few provincial newspapers to acknowledge the partition of the country as one of the Treaty’s main defects. Nonetheless, it simultaneously demonstrated a distinct lack of foresight in deeming partition ‘an evil for which the Irish people can easily find a remedy’. In the short term, however, the paper voiced a similar opinion to many other provincial newspapers, whether with Sinn Féin affiliations or otherwise. It predicted that ‘the people of Ireland would accept the Treaty by an overwhelming majority’ and vehemently asserted that precious little was to be gained by rejection other than ‘a return to the dreadful conditions which prevailed in Ireland twelve months ago’.¹⁵⁶ The notion that most of the populace was in favour of the Treaty and the fear that rejection could bring about a return to war-like conditions were sentiments that had appeared to take hold amongst large sections of the provincial print media.

Conclusion

Although the *Mayo News* provided fascinating editorial commentary between 1914 and 1921 the rift between William Doris and P.J. Doris, the two brothers who co-founded the paper, is undoubtedly the

¹⁵² Ibid, 2 Jul. 1921

¹⁵³ Ibid, 8 Oct. 1921

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 17 Dec. 1921

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

most abiding (and unfortunate) feature of the paper's history. The diverging paths of Irish nationalism that they separately followed ultimately led to their estrangement. Yet they shared much in common: their involvement in agitation for land reform, their pursuance of the goal of Irish self-government (albeit by different routes), and indeed the fact that both endured terms of imprisonment in pursuit of these aspirations. The election of William Doris, the older of the two brothers, to Westminster in 1910 most likely marked the point at which the rift between them became more or less irreversible. Thereafter P.J. Doris assumed almost total control of the *Mayo News*.

The paper did not come to be regarded as a pro-Sinn Féin organ until after Easter 1916 but there were signs well beforehand that it favoured a more advanced form of nationalism. This was particularly evident in its attitude to the Home Rule bill of 1914 and in its criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party even before the outbreak of World War I. Such an editorial tone may possibly have contributed to the prolonged detention of P.J. Doris after the 1916 Rising. Regardless of what prompted his arrest and detention, his release almost seven months later saw his paper adopting a stance that was openly supportive of Sinn Féin. The editorial reaction to that party's by-election victories during 1917 and 1918 provides clear evidence of such support. The stinging criticism of the British Government, and Lloyd George and Sir Hamar Greenwood in particular, suggest that the paper's five week suppression in 1918 did little to restrain the tone of the *Mayo News*. By the end of 1921, however, the paper did not differ greatly from even some of the more conservative provincial titles in regarding the Anglo-Irish Treaty as a hugely beneficial step forward and a considerable achievement for those who negotiated it.

Mayo News – Timeline

1892: founded by brothers William and P.J. Doris.

1898: William Doris elected to Mayo County Council.

1910: William Doris elected Irish Parliamentary MP for West Mayo marking permanent estrangement with P.J. who ultimately supports Sinn Féin.

1910-1918: William Doris serves as MP for West Mayo.

1916: P.J. Doris arrested following Easter Rising and detained in Reading Gaol until December.

1918: paper suppressed from early April until mid-May.

1926: death of William Doris.

1937: death of P.J. Doris.

1910-1937: P.J. Doris, editor-proprietor.

4.6 Case Study 4: *Leitrim Observer*

Origins and ownership

The *Leitrim Observer* was founded by the Mulvey family from Ballinaglera, County Leitrim, in 1890. However, like so many other Irish provincial newspapers it came to be associated with one dominant personality. In the case of the *Leitrim Observer* that personality was Patrick Dunne, who took ownership of the paper in the first decade of the twentieth century. There is a slight degree of uncertainty as to Dunne's acquisition of the *Leitrim Observer*. Hugh Oram states that he bought it for £5 in 1910 but the centenary issue of the *Observer* credits Dunne with purchasing the paper in 1904 for a sum thought to be around £150.¹⁵⁷ Regardless of the specific date of Dunne's assumption of ownership and the amount he paid, he remained at the helm of the paper for almost sixty years, his tenure as editor-proprietor only ceasing upon his death in 1968.

Patrick Dunne was born in Carrick-on-Shannon in 1879. Upon leaving school he became an apprentice printer at the *Leitrim Observer* that was then owned by Frank Mulvey, a member of the family that originally established the paper. In order to gain further experience of the printing trade Dunne left the *Observer* to work at both the *Longford Leader* and *Roscommon Herald* where he served under J.P. Farrell and Jasper Tully respectively. He later returned to the *Leitrim Observer* and purchased the paper upon the retirement of Frank Mulvey.¹⁵⁸ Oram describes Dunne as 'an extraordinary character' and 'the Jasper Tully of County Leitrim'.¹⁵⁹ There is little available evidence to discern what would merit such a label, but a description of Dunne as a 'colourful' character and someone whose 'adversaries, or those perceived as

¹⁵⁷ *Leitrim Observer: 1890-1990 – One hundred years of history in the making* (28 November 1990);

Oram, op. cit., pp 146-7;

¹⁵⁸ *Leitrim Observer*, 30 Nov. 1968

¹⁵⁹ Oram, op. cit., pp 146-7

such played no part in Pat's life or newspaper', makes the comparison somewhat more comprehensible.¹⁶⁰

Dunne differed from Tully though in that he was never elected to public office. Nonetheless, it was certainly not the case that he had any less interest in the national question. In fact Dunne's nationalism was of a significantly more militant nature than the editor-proprietor of the *Roscommon Herald*. He joined the Irish Volunteers at an early stage and was subsequently a member of the South Leitrim Brigade of the IRA. He facilitated clandestine meetings of like-minded nationalists by making his premises available for such a purpose.¹⁶¹ It is not certain whether such activities, or the sentiments expressed in his paper, attracted the attention of the military authorities but in November 1920 Crown Forces paid the offices of the paper an unwelcome visit.

Closure and incarceration

On 10 November 1920 Crown Forces raided the premises of the *Leitrim Observer* and caused damage that was to keep the paper out of print for over two years. At the time the *Irish Times* reported that Patrick Dunne and his sister Eliza were held at gunpoint and within a few hours 'the machinery and plant were a mass of wreckage' while 'the type and type frames were scattered about'. It was also stated that the printing office was 'set on fire in two places' and as a consequence a large staff was 'thrown out of employment'.¹⁶² The Dáil Éireann newssheet, the *Irish Bulletin*, reported that the offices and works of the *Leitrim Observer* and the residence of the proprietor had been 'wrecked and fired by constabulary' while shop windows in Carrick-on-Shannon had also been smashed.¹⁶³ Within days Patrick Dunne lodged a claim for £12,000 for the destruction of his plant and machinery but three weeks later he was arrested.¹⁶⁴ He was interned at Ballykinlar camp in County Down where numbered among his fellow-prisoners were Seán Lemass, and Peadar Kearney, composer of the Irish national anthem.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ *Leitrim Observer: 1890-1990 – One hundred years of history in the making* (28 November 1990)

¹⁶¹ *Leitrim Observer*, 30 Nov. 1968; *Irish Times*, 26 Nov. 1968

¹⁶² *Irish Times*, 11 Nov. 1920

¹⁶³ *Irish Bulletin*, 2 Dec. 1920

¹⁶⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 13 Nov. 1920; *Irish Independent*, 7 Dec. 1920;

¹⁶⁵ *Leitrim Observer: 1890-1990 – One hundred years of history in the making* (28 November 1990)

It is not clear why the *Observer* was targeted nor why Patrick Dunne was arrested. The office of the Press Censor was no longer in existence at that stage but even prior to its enforced closure there was little to indicate that the *Leitrim Observer* had attracted the attention of the authorities. Dunne's obituary claimed that his paper was such a powerful 'medium to imbue the national spirit into the people of Leitrim that the Black and Tans, on arrival in the county went first to the office, destroyed the plant and burned the premises'.¹⁶⁶ While such obituaries can be prone to overstatement it is possible that the tone of the paper at the time may have incurred the disapproval of the authorities. Nonetheless, although the paper was highly critical of British Government policy in Ireland, its editorial tone (as outlined in the next section) was scarcely more excessive than many other nationalist titles. Whatever the reasons for targeting the *Leitrim Observer*, it remained out of print until January 1923. On its return it stated that 'in the past we endeavoured to sustain the faith and courage of the people during the blackest days of the war, and accordingly we were singled out for ruthless treatment and the attempted extermination of our paper and our livelihood'.¹⁶⁷ Although this provides no further clue as to why the paper was specifically targeted it does provoke a certain curiosity as to the editorial message being articulated in the paper.

Pars and points: editorial comment 1914-1921¹⁶⁸

The *Leitrim Observer* bore the appended title of *Roscommon, Longford, Cavan, and Sligo News* and was usually comprised of eight pages, divided into seven columns, with the front page containing only advertisements. The number of pages dropped as low as four at certain times between 1918 and 1920. The paper contained a variety of weekly articles whose theme was self-evident from the title. Such articles included 'Garden Gossip', 'Home Hints', 'Dress of the Day', 'Field and Farm', and 'Woman's Corner'. An almost equally regular feature was the advertisement for the *Observer's* own printing works which could supply posters, handbills, billheads, memos, circulars and programmes. In a similar vein to most other provincial titles the considerable rural readership was evidenced by the amount of farming related adverts. 'Eckford's' high grade manures, 'Richardson & Fletcher's' fertilisers, 'Fordson' tractors, and 'Drummond's' seeds were just a few of the agricultural items to appear in the advertising sections.

¹⁶⁶ *Leitrim Observer*, 30 Nov. 1968

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 6 Jan. 1923

¹⁶⁸ Editorial columns in the *Leitrim Observer* were headed 'Pars and Points'.

A broad array of other items were also advertised such as ‘Neave’s’ baby food, ‘Austin’ motor cars, ‘Savar’s’ instant toothache remedy, and the ubiquitous ‘Raleigh’ bicycles.

By far the most striking feature of the editorial columns of the *Leitrim Observer* between 1914 and 1921 is that quite frequently there were simply no opinion pieces. Instead they regularly only consisted of brief local announcements, sometimes no more than two or three sentences. This makes it all the more surprising as to why the paper ultimately attracted the undesired attention of the Crown Forces. Nonetheless, this rather unique characteristic of its editorial columns was as much in evidence in 1914 as it was at the height of the War of Independence in 1919 and 1920. Such an editorial trait contrasted hugely to organs such as the *Tuam Herald*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, and *Kilkenny People* whose leading articles were almost without exception quite lengthy and dealt with both national and international affairs. In this respect the *Observer* most resembled the *Midland Tribune* which often featured only brief local announcements in its editorial columns though not with the same frequency. Yet when its lead articles did turn their attention to national issues it did not fail to provide compelling reading.

This was most evident in the opening months of World War I. In response to the German destruction of the Belgian city of Louvain the paper asked ‘how many Louvains were destroyed in Ireland?’ In an unequivocal manner it additionally claimed that ‘the same England that is hypocritically wringing its hands in horror at German atrocities today’ was responsible for ‘destroying our priceless treasure’ and had also ‘destroyed our language and laid waste this beautiful island’.¹⁶⁹ It was further asserted that Britain’s involvement in the war was a totally self-serving exercise. ‘The great mills and factories of England’ were, the paper editorialised, ‘taking on men daily in order to cope with the rush of trade they expect to capture from Germany’.¹⁷⁰ Even allowing for the vehemence of such sentiments the *Observer’s* response to Lord Kitchener’s call for more Irish recruits was still quite remarkable:

Why does he not make an appeal to all the “swanky” tennis players, golfers, and cricketers in “‘appy Hengland” [sic] to join his new army? Those English “Joonies” who sing Rule Britannia in time of peace, and who read novels and play cricket in war time when Irishmen are fighting their

¹⁶⁹ *Leitrim Observer*, 12 Sept. 1914

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 26 Sept. 1914

battles, they should be compelled to enlist. Certainly the average Englishman is only a coward. He is good for nothing only eating beef, drinking beer and sleeping.¹⁷¹

Quite remarkably such open antagonism to enlistment in the British Army did not attract the attention of the authorities. However, perhaps even more remarkable was the fact that the editorials in the *Leitrim Observer* did not turn their attention to either national or international matters for about another eighteen months. Also, the paper did not carry any recruitment advertisements except on two occasions following the gathering of newspaper editors at the Viceregal Lodge in the Phoenix Park in October 1915 though the *Observer* did not send any representatives to the meeting.¹⁷² Even the 1916 Rising provoked only a minimal response from the paper. Events in Dublin were reported but the only editorial comment appeared well over a month after the rebellion when it was simply referred to as ‘a sad and regrettable affair’.¹⁷³ The introduction of conscription in April 1918 similarly drew no editorial response. Such silence was highly strange considering the extreme nature of the anti-enlistment messages articulated in the opening months of the war. Nevertheless, a distinctly pro-Sinn Féin outlook was detectable, if not clearly obvious, from 1917 onwards.

The first Sinn Féin by-election success in North Roscommon in February 1917 was not greeted with the same enthusiasm expressed by the *Mayo News*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, or *Meath Chronicle*. Instead, Count Plunkett’s victory was simply described as ‘a timely warning to the Irish Party that they must awaken to their duty’.¹⁷⁴ By June 1918, however, the *Observer* hailed Arthur Griffith’s by-election victory in East Cavan as ‘historic and a great setback to all opposed to the cause of Sinn Féin’. Significantly the paper was keen to point out that the widespread celebrations of Griffith’s victory held in County Leitrim ‘passed off quietly and without a single untoward incident occurring’.¹⁷⁵ Support for Sinn Féin, if somewhat understated, was not all that surprising as notices for meetings of Sinn Féin clubs had begun to appear in the *Observer* from around September 1917. Any tentativeness in displaying pro-Sinn Féin sentiment had all but disappeared by the time of the campaign for the general election of December 1918. Prior to the poll the paper published a photograph of the Sinn Féin candidate for Leitrim, James N.

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 19 Sept. 1914

¹⁷² *Irish Times*, 29 Oct 1915

¹⁷³ *Leitrim Observer*, 10 Jun. 1916

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 10 Feb. 1917

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 29 Jun. 1918

Dolan (then interned) under the sub-heading ‘a well-known and popular Manorhamilton Gael’ and described him as ‘an ardent Gaelic Leaguer, highly educated and a powerful and leading orator’.¹⁷⁶ Sinn Féin’s subsequent victory, not only in Leitrim but across the country, was described in the first editorial of 1919 as one that ‘speaks in the highest for the good men in charge of Sinn Féin, which is the respected and universal policy of the great masses of the people of Ireland’.¹⁷⁷

In its own unique fashion the *Leitrim Observer* editorial columns then reverted to the more familiar terrain of local issues and announcements. This remained the case for quite some time and it was only around May 1920, when hostilities in Ireland were intensifying, that the editorial focus reverted to national issues with any degree of regularity. The paper accused the British Cabinet of attempting to choke ‘republicanism out of us’ and despite ‘the most intense period of repression in modern times’ Ireland was ‘still under the sentence of death’.¹⁷⁸ The condemnation of the British Government during the summer of 1920 was probably as strong, if not as frequent, as many other nationalist organs. British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George, was accused of implementing a strategy of ‘shooting on sight, the sacking of towns, midnight incendiarism, and the bombing of houses occupied by women and children’. The paper caustically suggested that the only tactic not yet employed was a ‘house to house slaughter’.¹⁷⁹ Editorial indictment of the actions of Crown Forces in Ireland, however, only reached its zenith in August 1920:

The officers of the Army of Occupation are to have the power of life and death over Irish civilians. They may arrest and imprison without trial any persons whom they suspect of hostility to them in thought, word, or deed. They may impose savage sentences for offences such as the doing of acts calculated to promote the objects of the Gaelic League, an “unlawful association”. They may use the starvation blockade against every or any district in Ireland. They can shoot down Irish civilians without provocation and then hold a court of inquiry themselves and

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 12 Oct. 1918; The paper also promoted Dolan’s candidacy by reminding readers that his brother, Charles, had been the first ever Sinn Féin parliamentary candidate in 1908. Charles Dolan had originally been elected in 1906 as an Irish Parliamentary Party MP for North Leitrim but resigned his seat after transferring his allegiance to Sinn Féin. He contested the subsequent by-election on behalf of Sinn Féin but was defeated by UIL candidate, Francis Meehan.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1919

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 1 May 1920

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, 31 Jul. 1920

pronounce themselves justified. No such terrible weapons have been used to break a peoples will since the Tsar of Russia was forced to abdicate.¹⁸⁰

It is not really possible to surmise whether such unrestrained criticism was a factor that led Crown Forces to the offices of the *Leitrim Observer* less than three months later. The difficulty in identifying a reason for the actions of the military is compounded by the fact that in the two months prior to the raid on the *Observer* editorial comment had been largely confined to more mundane local matters. Regardless of what prompted the unwelcome visit, it unfortunately leaves it as a matter of speculation as to how Patrick Dunne and his newspaper would have reacted to the truce of July 1921 and the Anglo-Irish Treaty six months later.

Conclusion

The case of the *Leitrim Observer* is rather unique among the ranks of the provincial print media between 1914 and 1921. Although unquestionably pro-Sinn Féin in sympathy from around 1917 onwards, its editorials dealt predominantly with local matters both before and after this time. Even when leading articles turned their attention to national issues its tone was rather understated. This was perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the *Observer* did not engage in the damning criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party that was a hallmark of papers such as the *Kilkenny People* and *Roscommon Herald*. Nonetheless, there were exceptions to the rather reserved editorial tone. This was most evident in its anti-enlistment proclamations in the early months of World War I and even more so in its castigation of Lloyd George and his government during the summer of 1920. In the latter instance the paper certainly did not hold back in its vilification of the actions of Crown Forces in Ireland but its commentary was hardly more severe than many other nationalist titles. Yet the *Leitrim Observer* suffered a fate far worse than most other provincial papers in having its plant and machinery destroyed and being forced out of print for over two years. While the reason that the *Observer* was targeted by Crown Forces is somewhat perplexing it is perhaps best to regard it as a salient example of the extremely difficult circumstances under which newspapers had to operate during these years.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid, 28 Aug. 1920

Leitrim Observer – Timeline

1890: founded by Mulvey family.

1904/1910: Patrick Dunne acquires paper.

1920: premises attacked and destroyed by Crown Forces in November, forcing paper out of publication until January 1923. Patrick Dunne subsequently arrested and detained.

1904/1910-1968: Patrick Dunne, editor-proprietor.

4.7 Connacht newspapers – Thematic analysis

The history of provincial titles in Connacht during these years displays many of the characteristics that were common to newspapers in other provinces. Nonetheless, it similarly displays certain factors that were rather unique to the province. The common characteristics include the undoubted sense of continuity and longevity within many publications, the sense of affiliation and allegiance to institutions such as the Catholic Church and the GAA, and not least the suppressions and enforced closures of several newspapers accompanied by the imprisonment of their editor-proprietors. Aspects of the history of the provincial press that were not replicated to any great extent elsewhere include the singularly individual personality of Jasper Tully of the *Roscommon Herald*, the irrevocable fraternal split between William and P.J. Doris of the *Mayo News*, and the takeover of certain newspapers by Sinn Féin interests.

The sense of continuity and longevity was evident in a variety of publications in the province. The ownership of the *Tuam Herald* has been shared between two families over its entire lifespan since its birth in 1837. Richard C. Gillespie's takeover of the *Connaught Telegraph* in 1892 marked the start of over a century of ownership by the same family. The sense of longevity in the provincial press is exemplified by figures such as Thomas J.W. Kenny, editor-proprietor of the *Connacht Tribune* for over thirty years, and also by Terence Devere who was centrally involved in the foundation of the *Western People* in Ballina in 1883 and remained with paper until his death in 1941. This longevity is even further exemplified by William David Peebles, who spent almost half a century at the *Sligo Independent*, the majority of that time as editor-proprietor, and to an even greater extent by Jasper Tully and Patrick

Dunne, editor-proprietors of the *Roscommon Herald* and *Leitrim Observer* respectively for close on sixty years.

Tully also provided an example of the strong support for the GAA within the senior ranks of the provincial print media. The aforementioned Terence Devere equally displayed this trait as evidenced by his involvement in the foundation of the Ballina Stephenites club. J.J. Collins of the *Mayoman* further reinforced this strong connection as demonstrated by his service on the Connacht Council of the GAA. The *Mayoman* also provided an example of the considerable links between provincial newspapers and the Catholic Church with its publication of the edicts of Archbishop of Tuam. This close relationship is further illustrated by the staunch Catholicism of James Daly of the *Connaught Telegraph* and the strong clerical involvement in the establishment of the *Western People*.

Connacht newspapers also sustained their share of suppression and enforced closures not to mention imprisonment of editor-proprietors. The unfortunate experience of the *Leitrim Observer* mirrored that of the *Westmeath Independent* while its owner, Patrick Dunne, was imprisoned in common with William Sears of the *Enniscorthy Echo* and P.J. Doris of the *Mayo News*. At least the *Mayo News* did not suffer the destruction of its plant and machinery as was the case with the *Leitrim Observer* and *Galway Express* but it was subjected to a relatively lengthy suppression that compared somewhat to the experience of the *Kilkenny People*. The case of the *Ballina Herald*, suppressed in 1918 despite historically being considered a unionist paper, showed that suppression could befall even the most unlikely of candidates. Nevertheless, while many Connacht newspapers shared both the traits and experiences of those in other provinces there were other discernible features that were not replicated to any great extent elsewhere.

Although it was not solely restricted to the province one of the most notable features was the takeover of two titles in the Sinn Féin interests. The acquisition of the *Sligo Nationalist* and its subsequent relaunch as the *Connachtman*, plus the purchase of the *Galway Express* clearly demonstrated the desire of the Sinn Féin party possess its own organs within the provincial print media. Nevertheless, an arguably more unique feature of the print media in Connacht during this time was the personalities associated with a number of papers and their attendant stories. The political and journalistic career of Jasper Tully of the *Roscommon Herald* could provide sufficient material for a historical study in its own right. The

experiences and ultimate estrangement of brothers William and P.J. Doris, co-founders of the *Mayo News*, is not only an intriguing narrative but illustrates in microcosm, the split that occurred in Irish nationalism in the early twentieth century. With such a backdrop the editorial comment of these two papers was always likely to prove interesting, but this was just as much the case with the other two titles considered in this chapter, the *Tuam Herald* and *Leitrim Observer*.

Indeed from an editorial perspective all four titles proved quite distinctive in their own right. The *Tuam Herald* was unambiguously supportive of the British war effort, a wholehearted advocate of Irish enlistment in the British Army, and a persistent critic of Sinn Féin prior to the 1918 general election. This criticism dissipated almost completely after that election and the *Tuam Herald* not only strongly supported the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 but was fulsome in its praise of Sinn Féin for securing such a settlement. The *Roscommon Herald* was not entirely supportive of Sinn Féin but was almost virulent in its castigation of the Irish Parliamentary Party, though this was perhaps more as a result of Jasper Tully's chequered relationship with that party than with ideological differences. Its editorial concentration, possibly even fascination, with the progress of the war and subsequently with British and international affairs set it clearly apart from the other three newspapers. Editorially the *Mayo News* was initially most notable for its view of Home Rule as only a stepping stone to greater independence. Such a stance allied with its stinging criticism of the Irish Parliamentary Party from a very early stage meant that its more open support for Sinn Féin after Easter 1916 came as no great surprise. The *Leitrim Observer* was the least editorially vocal of these four titles yet ended up having its plant and machinery destroyed by Crown Forces. Unfortunately this prevented the paper from passing opinion on the Treaty of December 1921.

The other three publications all backed the settlement though some, particularly the *Tuam Herald*, more enthusiastically than others. As these were all nationalist titles a certain degree of uniformity of opinion was to be expected at some stages between 1914 and 1921. However, in order to provide a broad portrayal of the Irish provincial press during this period it is necessary to closely scrutinise titles other than those with clear nationalist sympathies. Accordingly a considered study and analysis of provincial organs regarded as independent and indeed unionist is required, such a requirement is fulfilled in the next two chapters.

Chapter 5 – Munster

Munster newspapers 1914-1921			
<u>County</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Place of publication</u>	<u>Political leaning/orientation</u>
Clare	<i>Clare Champion</i>	Ennis	Nationalist
	<i>Clare Journal/Saturday Record</i>	Ennis	Unstated
	<i>Kilrush Herald</i>	Kilrush	Independent
Cork	<i>Cork Constitution</i>	Cork	Unionist
	<i>Cork Weekly News</i>	Cork	Unstated
	<i>Skibbereen Eagle</i>	Skibbereen	Independent
	<i>Southern Star</i>	Skibbereen	Nationalist
Kerry	<i>Kerry Advocate</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Kerry Evening Post</i>	Tralee	Unionist
	<i>Kerryman/Liberator</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Kerry News</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Kerry People</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Kerry Press</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Kerry Sentinel</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Kerry Weekly Reporter</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
	<i>Killarney Echo</i>	Tralee	Nationalist
Limerick	<i>Limerick Chronicle</i>	Limerick	Unionist
	<i>Limerick Echo</i>	Limerick	Nationalist
	<i>Limerick Leader</i>	Limerick	Nationalist
	<i>Munster News</i>	Limerick	Nationalist
	<i>Weekly Observer</i>	Newcastle West	Nationalist
Tipperary	<i>Clonmel Chronicle</i>	Clonmel	Independent
	<i>Clonmel Nationalist</i>	Clonmel	Nationalist
	<i>Nenagh Guardian</i>	Nenagh	Unionist up to 1916
	<i>Nenagh News</i>	Nenagh	Nationalist
	<i>Tipperary People/Tipperaryman</i>	Nenagh/Tipperary town	Nationalist
Waterford	<i>Tipperary Star</i>	Thurles	Nationalist
	<i>Dungarvan Observer</i>	Dungarvan	Unstated
	<i>Munster Express</i>	Waterford	Nationalist
	<i>Waterford News</i>	Waterford	Nationalist
	<i>Waterford Standard</i>	Waterford	Unionist
	<i>Waterford Star</i>	Waterford	Nationalist

5.1 Introduction

With a land area of 24,675 square kilometres Munster is the largest of the four Irish provinces. At the time of the 1911 census it had the third-largest population at just over 1.03 million. Cork city accounted for 76,673 of that total while Limerick city (38,518), and Waterford city (27,464) were the other main population centres. County Waterford was, however, the least populous (83,966) of the six Munster counties. Even with the aforementioned population of Cork city excluded County Cork had a population of just over 315,000 which was by far the largest in the province.¹

A total of thirty-two provincial titles operated in Munster during the 1914-21 period and five of them are examined in this chapter. Three were based in Cork, the most populous county. One of these, the *Cork Constitution*, was based in the city, while the other two, the *Skibbereen Eagle* and the *Southern Star* were based in Skibbereen. The unionist *Cork Constitution* most likely drew a significant amount of its readers from the 11% of Cork city's populace that were of the Protestant denomination though it is equally likely that it also attracted readers from across the province. Outside Cork city Skibbereen was the only town in the county in which any newspapers were published. Curiously though it was not the most populous town as its population of just over 3,000 was exceeded by Fermoy (6,863), Youghal (5,648), and also by Mallow and Kinsale which both had populations of just over 4,000. County Cork's considerable population outside the city was just over 91% Catholic.

The two other titles examined in this chapter, the *Kerryman* and the *Clonmel Chronicle*, were published in some of the largest centres of population outside the cities of Cork, Limerick, and Waterford. Tralee, where the *Kerryman* was published, boasted a population of 10,300 making it the most highly populated urban centre outside the province's three cities. Between 1914 and 1921 the *Kerryman* competed with as many as eight other newspapers published in Tralee all of which were nationalist with the exception of the unionist *Kerry Evening Post*. Such a relatively large number of titles endeavoured to attract readers from County Kerry's population of just under 160,000 of which 97% was Catholic. Clonmel had a population of just over 10,000 but was slightly less than that of Tralee. In the town the *Clonmel Chronicle* faced competition from the *Clonmel Nationalist* while its main rivals within the county were

¹ Vaughan et al, pp 3-68; All the demographical statistics and information provided in this section are based on the 1911 census and are cited from Vaughan and Fitzpatrick's work.

based in Nenagh (*Nenagh Guardian* and *Nenagh News*) and Thurles (*Tipperary Star*). At the time County Tipperary's population amounted to just over 152,000 pf which almost 95% was Catholic.

5.2 Munster newspapers – an overview

Amongst the papers closely examined in this chapter are three titles based in the same county, the *Cork Constitution*, *Skibbereen Eagle*, and *Southern Star*, published in County Cork, with the latter two publications actually located in the same town. The *Cork Constitution* was an unambiguously unionist organ while the *Skibbereen Eagle* has occasionally been referred to also as a unionist organ but it would be more accurate to classify it as independent. Consequently this slight deviation from a sense of geographical balance facilitates the consideration of an alternative journalistic perspective that is required in order to present a broader portrayal of the Irish provincial press that was referred to at the end of the last chapter. With this in mind, another independent or non-aligned publication, the *Clonmel Chronicle* in County Tipperary, is also briefly examined. However, this chapter also examines two indisputably nationalist papers, the *Southern Star* and the *Kerryman*. Both endured terms of enforced closure between 1916 and 1921 as well as the imprisonment of either their editor or proprietor while the *Southern Star* also underwent a highly significant change of ownership. Consequently their experiences simply demand inclusion in any detailed study of the Irish provincial press during this period. However, in order to appreciate the journalistic environment in which all the aforementioned titles operated, it is firstly necessary to briefly examine the main titles that served the province of Munster at this time.²

Many of these titles displayed a variety of the characteristics that were a marked feature of the print media in both Leinster and Connacht. The lengthy proprietorial and editorial tenures and the prolonged family associations with individual newspapers that were such distinctive traits of the provincial press in these two provinces were equally prevalent in Munster. Similarly several Munster newspapers were notable for the deep Catholic faith of their owners or editors while support for both the GAA and the Gaelic League was also a recurring theme.

The principal newspaper in County Clare, the *Clare Champion*, encapsulated a number of these traits. This was a nationalist organ that was founded by Tom Galvin in 1903. Tom Galvin died only six months

² See Appendix F for a more comprehensive overview of Munster newspapers.

after the paper's launch though the Galvin family were still in control of the paper a century later. Following the death of Tom Galvin ownership of the *Clare Champion* passed to his sister, Josephine Maguire, and her husband, Sarsfield Maguire.³ Josephine Maguire was a devout Catholic and her deep religious faith was articulated through the pages of the *Clare Champion*.⁴ The editorial longevity that pervaded the Irish provincial press was again evident at the paper where Sarsfield Maguire occupied the position for close on forty years. Initially the paper supported the Irish Parliamentary Party but its allegiance transferred to Sinn Féin after the 1916 Rising and it was subsequently suppressed for a six month period during 1918.⁵

A number of nationalist newspapers in neighbouring County Limerick also experienced suppression during this period. Amongst them was the *Weekly Observer* based in Newcastle West, which was suppressed at the same time as the *Clare Champion* but was allowed to resume publication a month later.⁶ The three titles based in Limerick city, the *Munster News*, *Limerick Echo*, and *Limerick Leader* were all suppressed during September 1919 for publishing the prospectus for the Dáil Éireann loan.⁷ The *Weekly Observer*, *Munster News*, and *Limerick Echo* all ceased publication within the first half of the twentieth century but the *Limerick Leader* proved to have considerably greater staying power. It was established in 1889 and the main driving force behind the paper in its formative years was Jeremiah Buckley.⁸ Its editor from 1910 until 1960 was Cornelius Cregan. In addition to displaying impressive editorial longevity Cregan also shared the strong Catholic faith of many of his fellow editors.⁹

The acquisition of the *Munster Express* in Waterford by Edward Walsh in 1908 marked the commencement of over one hundred years of family ownership. The paper was supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party with Walsh serving as a local councillor for that party.¹⁰ The *Waterford Star* was similarly a supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Its editor was Cornelius O'Mahony (not to be confused with the journalist of the same name who worked at the *Midland Tribune*) whose father, John

³ *Clare Champion*, 28 Mar. 2003

⁴ *Ibid*, 20 Feb. 1937

⁵ *Irish Independent*, 30 Sept. 1918; *Irish Times*, 6 Apr. 1918, 26 Jul. 1945;

⁶ *Meath Chronicle*, 11 May 1918; *Connacht Tribune*, 18 May 1918;

⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Bulletin*, 24 Sept. 1919;

⁸ *Limerick Leader*, 30 Sept. 1989

⁹ *Ibid*, 2 Jul. 1966

¹⁰ *Munster Express: Waterford through the ages, 1860-2010* (8 October 2010); *Munster Express*, 12 Jul. 1946;

E. O'Mahony, had established the paper in 1891.¹¹ The *Waterford News* provided something of a contrast to the former two titles. It was purchased by Edmund Downey in 1907 and began to adopt a pro-Sinn Féin stance in the wake of Easter 1916.¹² In February 1919 the *Waterford News* was suppressed for three months arising out of criticism of the RIC that had appeared in the paper.¹³

The *Nenagh Guardian* in County Tipperary was one of the few unionist titles in the province at the start of World War I but a change of ownership in 1916 resulted in the paper becoming a nationalist organ.¹⁴ One of the main instigators of the acquisition of the paper was Jeremiah Ryan, who subsequently became the first editor under the new proprietorship.¹⁵ Strong support for the GAA and the Gaelic League was a notable attribute of one of County Tipperary's other main titles, the Thurles based *Tipperary Star*. The paper was established in 1909 by Edward Long who remained at the helm of the paper until his death in 1925.¹⁶ Long was succeeded as editor by William Myles, who provided yet another example of editorial longevity by serving as editor from 1925 until 1975.¹⁷ Myles had commenced his journalistic career at another highly significant title in the county, the *Clonmel Nationalist*. This paper was founded by a group of local businessmen in 1890.¹⁸ Its first editor was James J. Long who was succeeded in 1909 by his son Brandon J. Long. Both men were Gaelic League enthusiasts and strong supporters of the GAA.¹⁹

In County Kerry the *Killarney Echo* was one of several newspapers in the county to be attacked by Crown Forces. The paper ceased publication following the attack in August 1920.²⁰ The *Kerry Advocate*, *Kerry Evening Post*, *Kerry Press*, and *Kerry Sentinel* which had served the county at the start of World War I did not survive to witness the foundation of the Irish Free State though the Anglo-Irish conflict was not a

¹¹ *Waterford Star*, 7 Nov. 1941

¹² *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 12 Feb. 1937;

¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1919; *Ulster Herald*, 17 May 1919; *Waterford News & Star: 150th Anniversary Supplement* (6 November 1998);

¹⁴ Joseph C. Hayes, *Guide to Tipperary newspapers 1770-1989* (Tipperary, 1989), p.8; *Nenagh Guardian*, 16 Dec. 1916;

¹⁵ *Nenagh Guardian*, 24 Nov. 1928

¹⁶ *Tipperary Star*, 7 Nov. 1925

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 25 Sept. 1976

¹⁸ *The Nationalist – Centenary Supplement 1890-1990* (29 December 1990)

¹⁹ Seán O'Donnell, *Clonmel 1900-1932: a history* (Clonmel, 2010), p.243; *Clonmel Nationalist*, 20 Apr. 1938;

²⁰ *Irish Times*, 16 Aug. 1920

factor that led to their cessation of publication.²¹ The principal newspaper in County Cork was the nationalist *Cork Examiner* which was targeted by both sides during the War of Independence. The paper had a broad readership across Munster and in 1892 its owner, Thomas Crosbie, launched the *Cork Evening Echo* which served Cork city.²² Three other titles served County Cork at the time, the *Cork Constitution*, *Skibbereen Eagle*, and *Southern Star* and these three newspapers are closely examined in the first three case studies in this chapter.

5.3 Case Study 1: *Cork Constitution*

Background

The *Cork Constitution* first appeared in June 1822 as a bi-weekly publication and became a daily in 1867. For many years the paper was owned by the Savage family but in 1882 it was purchased by Henry Lawrence (H.L.) Tivy for the sum of £5,310.²³ In 1897 he was joined at the paper by one of his sons, Henry Francis (H.F.) and in 1915 they both purchased the Dublin *Evening Mail*.²⁴ Another of H.L. Tivy's sons, George L.W. Tivy became a director of the *Cork Constitution* and also served with the Royal Artillery during World War I.²⁵ The paper's editor for approximately forty years from around the time of the Land War was William J. Ludgate but records indicate that he may have retired due to ill-health at some stage before 1920 at which point H.L. Tivy assumed editorial control.²⁶

The *Cork Constitution* was rather unique among newspapers in the south of Ireland not simply because of its staunchly unionist sympathies but also because it unashamedly claimed to possess a decidedly more well-heeled readership than almost all other papers. It was described as circulating 'most

²¹ See Appendix D

²² Ian Kenneally, *The paper wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland 1919-1921* (Cork, 2008), p.119; Oram, op. cit., p.58

²³ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989); *Irish Independent*, 30 Jun. 1929; Tim Cadogan and Jeremiah Falvey, *A biographical dictionary of Cork* (Dublin, 2001), p.326;

²⁴ *Irish Times*, 13 Oct. 1960; The *Evening Mail* was acquired by the *Irish Times* in 1960.

²⁵ *Ibid*, 7 Feb. 1961; George L.W. Tivy also served as a director of the *Evening Mail*.

²⁶ *Cork Examiner*, *Irish Independent*, 26 Nov. 1935; Kenneally 2008, op. cit., p.67; Ludgate's obituary stated he served as editor of the *Cork Constitution* for forty years but did not indicate the precise dates though the 1911 census records him as still being a working journalist. Kenneally refers to H.L. Tivy fulfilling the editorial role around 1920.

extensively among all the nobility, gentry, landed proprietors, and mercantile classes in the city and county of Cork and generally through the counties of Kerry, Limerick, Waterford, and Tipperary'.²⁷ Such a description easily explains why the *Constitution's* leading articles were frequently preceded by the claim that it was 'read daily and exclusively by people representing a greater purchasing power than the readers of all the other papers published in Munster'.²⁸ Evidence of this apparently affluent readership could possibly be discerned from a cursory perusal of the paper during this period. Normally eight pages in length, three were usually devoted to advertisements that regularly featured travel on cruise liners, motor cars, women's clothes shops, and concerts at the Cork Opera House. Allied to the regular listing of prices on the London Stock Exchange this seemed to strongly add substance to the claim to circulation amongst a somewhat wealthier cohort of people.

With its circulation drawn from a wealthier section of the local population and its strongly unionist tradition it might reasonably be concluded that the *Constitution* was unlikely to have any great influence over the majority of nationalists. This clearly seemed to be the conclusion arrived at by the IRA in 1921. While categorising the paper as 'openly hostile' it was also acknowledged that it was doing neither harm nor good to the organisation as it circulated only 'to confirmed unionists'.²⁹ Despite the recognition that the *Constitution* was no real hindrance to the republican movement the paper was still targeted. During the course of the War of Independence the presses of the *Constitution* were wrecked by the IRA while H.L. Tivy was ordered out of the country. Obviously a newspaperman of some integrity Tivy refused and the paper managed to continue publication throughout the Anglo-Irish conflict.³⁰

Although it survived the hostilities between 1919 and 1921 the paper's centenary year of 1922 marked the beginning of the end for the *Constitution*. In July of that year it suspended publication in the face of attempts by anti-Treaty forces to enforce military censorship on the entire Cork Press. The following month, with the Civil War becoming more protracted, its plant and machinery were destroyed by republican forces in the city. The paper's unionist tradition most likely did not prompt this action,

²⁷ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.210

²⁸ This wording appeared at the top of most editorial columns but appears to have been discontinued from around 1919 onwards.

²⁹ Schedule No.I - Newspapers, MS31,208; The exact same conclusion was drawn in respect of the *Irish Times*.

³⁰ John Borgonovo, *Spies, informers and the 'Anti-Sinn Féin Society': the intelligence war in Cork city, 1919-1921* (Dublin, 2007), p.93; Kenneally 2008, op. cit., p.67;

however, as the *Cork Examiner* suffered a similar fate.³¹ Nevertheless, it proved a fatal blow to the *Constitution* and although it remained in publication for another two years (by which time it had been reduced to a single sheet) the demise of the century-old newspaper finally arrived in 1924.³²

According to the *Constitution*: editorial comment 1914-1921

The *Cork Constitution* can reasonably be considered one of the principal journalistic fatalities during this period. Other provincial papers endured the tribulations of suppression, imprisonment of staff, destruction of their premises, and enforced closure for long periods arising out of the events that took place between 1914 and 1921. However, most of them resumed publication sooner or later but the *Cork Constitution*, one of the longest established newspapers in the country at the start of the twentieth century, failed to emerge from this turbulent period. Accordingly, a detailed analysis of its lead articles during these years is all the more relevant in order to ascertain what may have offended republican sensibilities but more importantly to determine how such a solidly unionist organ dealt with such dramatic developments as they unfolded.

The *Cork Constitution* was a daily paper and consequently its editorial output was far greater than almost all other papers in Munster (aside from the *Cork Examiner*). For most of 1914 such editorial output was dominated by the Home Rule issue. The paper vehemently objected to the imposition of Home Rule upon Ulster which it considered to be the perpetration of a 'great crime'.³³ Unlike most of its nationalist counterparts the *Constitution* frequently referred to the possibility of Civil War in the northern province even before the Larne gun-running had taken place in April 1914. Home Rule, the paper claimed on more than one occasion, was the result of a 'corrupt bargain' between the Irish Parliamentary Party and Asquith's government.³⁴

Following the landing of arms at Larne and other ports in Ulster a form of veiled approval was articulated when it was stated that the government may have been within its rights if they arrested Sir Edward Carson and other unionist leaders just as it may have been 'justified in using British troops to

³¹ *Irish Independent*, 24 Jul., 12 Aug. 1922; Cadogan et al, op. cit., p.326;

³² Oram, op. cit., p.152

³³ *Cork Constitution*, 17 Jan. 1914

³⁴ *Ibid*, 9 Feb. 1914, 16 Jul. 1914;

shoot down British people for insisting on remaining British'.³⁵ The militant opposition to Home Rule continued to be voiced throughout the summer of 1914: Home Rule, it stated, would provoke 'the armed resistance of the determined and efficient Ulster Volunteers'.³⁶ Despite its unambiguous support for the Ulster Volunteers, the *Constitution* did not really clarify if it was proposing that the entire island of Ireland should remain in the Union, quite an omission for the only unionist daily paper outside Ulster (apart from the *Irish Times*). From August 1914, however, Home Rule took a back seat to the paper's war coverage.

Unlike most nationalist titles support for the British war effort was never likely to present a dilemma for the solidly unionist *Cork Constitution*. Recruitment advertisements regularly appeared in the paper from an early stage of the war and throughout 1915. At the same time the nationalist community was criticised for what the *Constitution* claimed to be its failure to supply recruits in any substantial numbers. As early as September 1914 the Irish Volunteers were accused of showing 'no inclination to follow the example of their countrymen in Ulster, who unconditionally placed themselves at the service of their country'.³⁷ Even after John Redmond's call to Irishmen to enlist in the British Army, it claimed that 'nationalist Ireland' had yet to adopt his advice and abandon 'the disloyal counsels of the irreconcilables who seek to perpetuate ancient feuds'.³⁸ This theme of disloyalty was one that surfaced a number of times as the war progressed and was unsurprisingly a significant feature of the paper's reaction to the Easter Rising.

In a similar manner to the *Tuam Herald*, the Sinn Féin party attracted a significant amount of editorial attention even before Easter 1916. In a slightly derisive tone the *Constitution* claimed it had 'no quarrel whatever with the Sinn Féin party as a political organisation' as 'the more factions there are in the Nationalist Party the better we like it'.³⁹ Nevertheless, the attitude towards Sinn Féin changed significantly in a relatively short space of time. Barely a month prior to the rebellion the paper berated the Irish Executive for assuming a position of 'benevolent neutrality' in respect of a movement that 'openly and secretly obstruct efforts being made to stimulate recruiting for the Army' and additionally

³⁵ Ibid, 29 Apr. 1914

³⁶ Ibid, 19 Jun. 1914

³⁷ Ibid, 17 Sept., 1914

³⁸ Ibid, 14 Nov. 1914

³⁹ Ibid, 29 Feb. 1916

plays 'the part of Germany's agents in Ireland'.⁴⁰ Accordingly, one of the earliest editorials in the aftermath of the events of Easter Week welcomed the resignation of the Chief Secretary, Augustine Birrell, 'who is mainly responsible for the shocking state of Ireland today'.⁴¹ Although a unionist organ the *Cork Constitution's* editorial reaction to the Rising was quite similar to that of nationalist titles such as the *Tuam Herald* and *Roscommon Herald*. Labelling the events of Easter Week 'the Irish-German insurrection' the paper claimed that 'these Irish republicans' had 'laid their plans to facilitate a Prussian invasion of Ireland, and that these preparations were of such a widespread and determined character that they went within measureable distance of succeeding'.⁴²

The rise of the Sinn Féin party in the wake of Easter 1916 was met by the *Constitution* with grave warnings that another rebellion was imminent. Sinn Féin were accused of 'urging their followers to avail of every opportunity to perfect their military training' so 'that they may be ready to strike when the order reaches them to do so'.⁴³ Such a mind-set combined with the aforementioned conviction of German involvement in the Easter Rising meant that the *Constitution* was quite willing to fully accept the veracity of the later discredited 'German plot' during 1918. The paper gladly accepted 'that the Government had the clearest evidence in their possession that the Sinn Féin organisation is, and has been, in alliance with Germany'.⁴⁴ The prospect of an election later the same year was greeted by the warning that it promised to excel in violence anything hitherto experienced, even in Irish parliamentary contests'.⁴⁵ Following Sinn Féin's subsequent landslide victory the Irish electorate was censured for having 'deliberately disenfranchised themselves'.⁴⁶

The first meeting of Dáil Éireann in January 1919 was described as 'theatrical protestations against British rule' while Sinn Féin was also accused of complicity in the 'cold-blooded murder' of the two policemen at Soloheadbeg, County Tipperary on the same day.⁴⁷ This might give the understandable impression that the *Cork Constitution* was quite content to link Sinn Féin to all the violence that followed

⁴⁰ Ibid, 22 Mar. 1916

⁴¹ Ibid, 1 May 1916

⁴² Ibid, 13 May 1916

⁴³ Ibid, 28 Nov. 1917; Editorials dated 2 Aug. 1917 and 18 Jan. 1918 also claimed that plans were in place for another rebellion.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 20 May 1918

⁴⁵ Ibid, 19 Sept. 1918

⁴⁶ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1918

⁴⁷ Ibid, 23 Jan. 1919

and condemn the party accordingly. Yet, quite remarkably, this was not the case. Gerard Murphy contends, that for a staunch unionist newspaper, the *Cork Constitution's* coverage of events during the War of Independence was 'surprisingly even-handed' and there is quite a degree of accuracy in this assertion.⁴⁸ Indeed there is much evidence to suggest that even before this time the *Constitution* demonstrated a particular understanding of Irish nationalist politics that was noticeably absent from a number of nationalist titles.

Even as early as May 1914 the *Constitution* recognised that 'by consenting to a temporary exclusion' of Ulster from Home Rule the Irish Parliamentary Party 'have already strained the loyalty of their followers to breaking point'.⁴⁹ Despite its outright condemnation of the Easter Rising the paper was still perceptive enough to observe that many nationalists believed 'that the rising has done more to arouse English statesmen to a sense of the need of a speedy settlement of the Home Rule question than twenty years of parliamentary action'.⁵⁰ The *Cork Constitution* was also quicker than several nationalist titles to foresee the irreversible shift in nationalist sentiment. Following Sinn Féin's first by-election victory in February 1917 the paper declared that the Irish Parliamentary Party 'now realise that the political ground is disappearing from beneath their feet' and shortly afterwards it predicted that Sinn Féin would win 53 seats if a general election was held at that time.⁵¹

While the *Constitution* initially had few qualms about linking Sinn Féin to instances of violence it later conceded that the party 'may in at least some instances be more sinned against than sinning' as extreme elements, the paper contended, had almost always managed to exert some degree of control over popular political movements in Ireland.⁵² It was also acknowledged that republican courts had 'a disposition to deal out impartial justice' and possessed the ability to give effect to their decisions 'in many parts of the country' where 'the King's writ has ceased to run'.⁵³ There were even echoes of the criticism of the British Government so common in nationalist newspapers when, in January 1921, Sir

⁴⁸ Gerard Murphy, *The year of disappearances: political killings in Cork, 1920-1921* (Dublin, 2010), pp 251-2

⁴⁹ *Cork Constitution*, 2 May 1914

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 19 Jun. 1916

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 12 Feb. 1917, 18 Apr. 1917;

⁵² *Ibid*, 27 Apr. 1920

⁵³ *Ibid*, 2 Jul. 1920

Hamar Greenwood was accused of refusing 'to take the Irish Republican Party seriously' in the vain hope that a more moderate element of Irish nationalism would once again assert itself.⁵⁴

Both the truce of July 1921 and the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December of the same year were warmly welcomed by the *Cork Constitution*.⁵⁵ However, the paper also displayed a considerable degree of perception when it identified the likelihood of Eamon de Valera's estrangement from his erstwhile colleagues a full three months before the signing of the Treaty.⁵⁶ In voicing its approval of the Treaty the *Constitution* cited US newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst (described as 'the pro-Sinn Féin and anti-British newspaper proprietor') who had supported 'de Valera's propaganda in [the] USA' but had declared firmly in favour of the London agreement.⁵⁷ By contrast de Valera was decried for his 'irreconcilable attitude'.⁵⁸

One issue that was noticeably absent from the *Cork Constitution's* editorial discussion of the Treaty was that of partition. Indeed the paper's stance on this particular issue was quite puzzling throughout the 1914-1921 period. Despite its quite vocal support for the Ulster Unionists the notion of partition was often mentioned in decidedly unflattering terms in the editorial columns. At the height of the Home Rule crisis in 1914 it was referred to as having the potential to 'accentuate racial and religious differences' that were already at a heightened state.⁵⁹ Six years later this attitude had not changed as the paper asserted that all Irishmen were 'in full agreement that a partition scheme is the most objectionable that could be devised'.⁶⁰ Such vehement opposition to partition combined with such enthusiastic endorsement of the Ulster Unionist cause makes the editorial policy of the *Cork Constitution* in this regard rather difficult to understand. Possibly the paper felt that the strength of Ulster opposition to Irish self-government could save all of Ireland from any severance of the union but unfortunately this can only be a matter of speculation. Nonetheless, as late as June 1921 the paper's

⁵⁴ Ibid, 8 Jan. 1921

⁵⁵ Ibid, 11 Jul., 7 Dec. 1921;

⁵⁶ Ibid, 31 Aug. 1921; The paper suggested that de Valera had 'lost some of the confidence of his party' and that the Parnell split of 1891 seem 'almost parochial'. Nonetheless, its prediction that the likely 'division of the country into moderate and extremist elements', that would result in 'decades of warfare', was rather overstated.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 14 Dec., 16 Dec. 1921

⁵⁸ Ibid, 20 Dec. 1921

⁵⁹ Ibid, 2 May 1914

⁶⁰ Ibid, 1 Apr. 1920

distaste for partition even seemed to be tinged with bitterness. Referring to the Government of Ireland Act as the 'ill-advised partition act' the British Government was roundly criticised for 'having sundered the six counties from the rest of the country' while Ulster Unionists now appeared to be classified as 'northern secessionists'.⁶¹ By late December 1921 the *Cork Constitution* hardly differed at all from its nationalist counterparts in making little or no mention of partition.

Conclusion

In order to provide a balanced portrayal of the Irish provincial press between 1914 and 1921 it would be quite remiss to overlook a publication such as the *Cork Constitution*. Not only was it one of the principal unionist organs outside Ulster but it was also one of the oldest titles across the other three provinces. In many ways the *Constitution* displayed the characteristics that might be expected of a staunchly unionist newspaper. Unequivocal opposition to Home Rule was followed by unqualified support for the British war effort. Outright condemnation of the Easter Rising was succeeded by an apparent conviction that another rebellion was imminent. The rise of Sinn Féin was met with grave warnings as to that party's aims and the means by which it hoped to achieve them. However, the *Cork Constitution* was catering for an affluent unionist readership that had virtually no influence on nationalist opinion.

Despite the fact that republican ideals were hardly ever likely to find favour amongst the readership of the *Constitution* the IRA still saw fit to issue threats against the newspaper. Such action further illustrates how both warring factions desired to influence and control the output of the print media and equally it also clearly demonstrates that both sides in the conflict had a rather ambivalent attitude towards the freedom of the press. As it happened, the *Cork Constitution*, despite its staunchly unionist background, displayed a comprehension of nationalist politics and sentiment that was not always replicated in newspapers with indisputably nationalist sympathies. Ultimately, however, the *Constitution* echoed the views of many nationalist titles in accentuating the practical benefits of the Anglo-Irish Treaty while remaining silent on the thorny question of partition.

Cork Constitution – Timeline

1822: launched as a bi-weekly paper, becoming a daily in 1867.

⁶¹ Ibid, 14 Jun. 1921

1882: purchased by H.L. Tivy from the Savage family who had owned the paper for several years.

1879-1919: edited by William J. Ludgate

1919-1921: Presses attacked by IRA, threats issued to H.L. Tivy.

1920: H.L. Tivy assumes editorial control.

1922: machinery wrecked by anti-Treaty forces, publication suspended.

1924: ceases publication for good.

5.4 Case Study 2: *Skibbereen Eagle*

Origins

Despite only enjoying a relatively brief lifespan (1858-1922) the *Skibbereen Eagle* has attained an unlikely fame within the annals of Irish journalistic history. This derives from an editorial that appeared in the paper in November 1898 that famously declared that it was keeping its eye on the Tsar of Russia. At the time the Tsar of Russia was one of the world's most powerful and most autocratic rulers, and the incident, as Matthew Potter points out, 'has resulted in the phrase entering the English language as an example either of absurd self-importance or plucky courage and plain speaking'.⁶² It has proven a popular point of reference ever since. Potter further notes an allusion to the episode in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, while in 1946 it formed the basis of a cartoon in the satirical journal, *Dublin Opinion* that lampooned a recent meeting between Eamon de Valera and Joseph Stalin.⁶³ Even as recently as July 2014 veteran RTE sports presenter, Bill O'Herlihy, referenced the incident in his farewell address to viewers prior to his retirement.⁶⁴

⁶² Matthew Potter, 'Keeping an eye on the Tsar: Frederick Potter and the *Skibbereen Eagle*' in Rafter (ed.), p.49

⁶³ Ibid; One of the characters in *Ulysses*, J.J. O'Molloy, refers to 'our watchful friend, the *Skibbereen Eagle*' while in the *Dublin Opinion* cartoon Joseph Stalin is depicted as explaining the Soviet Union's vetoing of Ireland's application for United Nations membership by saying to de Valera: "Between ourselves, Dev, Russia has never quite forgotten that article in the *Skibbereen Eagle*".

⁶⁴ 'Bill O'Herlihy bids farewell after 40 years', RTE World Cup Final coverage, 13 July 2014, available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEYBSz79ZJM> [Accessed 3 November 2014]

The person responsible for the warning to the Russian monarch that he was being closely monitored from West Cork was the paper's editor-proprietor, Frederick Peel Eldon Potter, more commonly known as Fred Potter. The *Eagle* was established in 1858 by Fred Potter's father, John William Potter. Originally from Pembrokeshire in Wales, John William Potter's family already had significant connections to the newspaper trade before he moved to Ireland in the mid-1820s. The *Skibbereen and West Carbery Eagle*, as the paper was titled upon its launch, was initially only a single sheet monthly publication containing a column of local advertisements and a minimal amount of local news. By the early 1870s it had developed into quite a successful weekly organ, due in no small part to the efforts of Fred Potter who had followed his father into the business. In 1874 Fred Potter was left in complete control of the paper following the death of his father.⁶⁵

By this stage the paper had been re-named the *West Cork Eagle* which was one of a number of name changes it experienced during its lifetime. Indeed it was never officially titled the *Skibbereen Eagle* but over time it has come to be known by this name and is referred to accordingly in this work. In addition to such name changes, Fred Potter's tenure as editor-proprietor was marked by a number of other developments. A price reduction from two pence to one penny allied to considerably more attention being devoted to Irish and local news resulted, according to Fred Potter, in the paper achieving a considerable increase in circulation. Possibly buoyed by such progress Potter launched a daily newspaper in 1871, the *Irish Daily Telegraph and Southern Reporter*, but the venture was not successful and barely lasted two years. Although a Protestant of British extraction, the developments in nationalist politics that took place from the 1870s onwards did not prove any great hindrance to Fred Potter who 'was a born newspaperman and entrepreneur'.⁶⁶ Fred Potter died in September 1906 by which time the paper was officially titled, the *Cork County Eagle*, the name it retained for the remaining sixteen years of its publication.

The *Eagle* in the twentieth century

Following Fred Potter's death in 1906 the paper was inherited by his son, Eldon. However, this effectively marked the end of the Potter family's involvement in the newspaper as Eldon Potter had

⁶⁵ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

⁶⁶ Potter, op. cit., p.52

already embarked on a legal career and did not share his father's passion for the newspaper business. From early 1908 the proprietors were listed as 'Eagle Ltd' and although Eldon Potter was the largest shareholder he did not hold a controlling interest. The two other principal shareholders were also engaged in the legal profession, R.W. Doherty from Bandon and Jasper Travers Wolfe from Skibbereen.⁶⁷ Although he was not really a newspaperman and was described as 'minimally qualified' for the newspaper trade it was Wolfe who was mostly associated with the proprietorship of the *Eagle* for the rest of its lifetime.⁶⁸

A member of the Methodist Church, Wolfe was born in Skibbereen and qualified as a solicitor in 1893. He served as Crown Solicitor for Cork City from 1916 to 1923 and was elected to Dáil Éireann as TD for West Cork on three occasions between 1927 and 1933 but did not seek re-election to the eighth Dáil in 1933.⁶⁹ Other people such as R.W. Greenfield, John Topping, and James O'Driscoll were more closely involved in the daily administration of the paper but the most influential figure was Patrick Sheehy who was appointed editor in August 1915.⁷⁰ Sheehy, like Jasper Wolfe, was a qualified solicitor but was also a strong supporter of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party.⁷¹ However, unlike many other provincial newspapermen Sheehy did not switch his allegiance to Sinn Féin and his criticism of republican strategy was to land both him and his newspaper in trouble.

In September 1917 there was a break-in at offices of the *Eagle* during which the printing machinery was vandalised.⁷² Interestingly the pro-Sinn Féin *Kerryman* newspaper published a rather restrained account of the incident, reporting merely that printing parts had been 'stolen' after being 'skilfully removed'. The *Kerryman* did acknowledge, nonetheless, that the raid was probably politically motivated as the *Eagle* had 'advocated a vigorous policy of anti-Sinn Féinism'.⁷³ Subsequent to this the *Eagle* was not only boycotted but its editor, Patrick Sheehy, was also attacked. In May 1920 a group of about twelve armed men broke into his home and bound him with ropes following which he was kicked and tarred. Contemporary newspaper reports indicated that the attack resulted from Sheehy's consistent stance as

⁶⁷ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

⁶⁸ Jasper Ungoed-Thomas, *Jasper Wolfe of Skibbereen* (Cork, 2008), p.211

⁶⁹ *Southern Star*, 30 Aug. 1952; Cadogan et al, op. cit., p.344

⁷⁰ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

⁷¹ *Southern Star*, 21 Sept. 1940

⁷² *Anglo-Celt*, 29 Sept. 1917; *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989);

⁷³ *Kerryman*, 29 Sept. 1917

‘a vigorous adverse critic of Sinn Féin in the columns of the *Eagle*’.⁷⁴ This series of incidents was to sound the death knell of the *Skibbereen Eagle* and it ceased publication in 1922, two years before the *Cork Constitution* was to suffer the same fate.⁷⁵

The experience of the *Skibbereen Eagle* and more particularly the manner in which it met its end illustrates once again that Irish republicans were not reluctant to adopt heavy-handed tactics against newspapers that saw fit to criticise Sinn Féin or the IRA. Just as the British authorities demonstrated little hesitancy in suppressing publications that criticised its administration in Ireland, the IRA displayed a similar lack of tolerance towards those organs that expressed opposition to its policies or tactics. Ultimately both sides had a rather selective attitude towards the maintenance of a free press. Yet in targeting the *Eagle* the IRA was directing its ire at a paper that was broadly nationalist in its sympathies. Hugh Oram describes it as a unionist organ but this is quite misleading.⁷⁶ Mathew Potter provides a more accurate indicator of the *Eagle*’s political disposition when he states that the paper was supportive of Home Rule from the movement’s infancy in the 1870s.⁷⁷ Indeed, as Gerard Murphy notes, Jasper Wolfe and his brother Willie campaigned enthusiastically for Home Rule between 1910 and 1912 while Patrick Sheehy was an unwavering supporter of constitutional nationalism.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, to fully comprehend the political sympathies of the *Skibbereen Eagle* it is necessary to closely examine its editorial comment.

The outlook from the *Eagle* watchtower: editorial comment 1914-1921⁷⁹

Unlike the city-based *Cork Constitution* the *Skibbereen Eagle* was a weekly publication. It was normally eight pages in length containing seven columns each though the number of pages sometimes dropped during World War I, most likely due to paper shortages. The ‘Eagle’ of the title was positioned in the masthead and towered over the front page in a manner that distinguished it from most other provincial

⁷⁴ *Irish Times*, 14 May 1920; *Freeman’s Journal*, 17 May 1920;

⁷⁵ Potter, op. cit., p.58; Ungood-Thomas, op. cit., p.211; *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989); Although the paper ceased publication the ‘Eagle Ltd’ remained in existence until 1929. At that stage Wolfe was apparently the only remaining shareholder and the sale of the company to the *Southern Star* was agreed on amicable terms.

⁷⁶ Oram, op. cit., p.131

⁷⁷ Potter, op. cit., pp58-9

⁷⁸ Murphy, op. cit., p.237; *Southern Star*, 21 Sept. 1940;

⁷⁹ This was the wording that appeared above all the *Eagle*’s editorials.

publications. It carried a similar amount of advertising space to other provincial papers, nonetheless, promoting items such as medications, drapery stores (mostly directed at women), and some agricultural products. Other adverts, however, appeared to indicate a slightly more affluent readership such as those for auctioneer services, holidays, and travel on Cunard liners. While this may have intimated a similar cohort of readers to that of the *Cork Constitution* the editorial comment of the *Skibbereen Eagle* suggested otherwise.

From early 1914 the *Skibbereen Eagle's* displayed an unequivocally nationalist outlook as the paper contemplated the passing of the Home Rule bill. The prospect of 'our country enjoying a satisfactory measure of self-government' was eagerly anticipated while unionist opposition was afforded little credibility. Ulster was described as 'menacingly disloyal' as the paper claimed that the real reason for unionist objections to Home Rule was 'the old spirit of ascendancy, and not any fear of ill-treatment or opposition at the hands of their Catholic fellow-countrymen'.⁸⁰ The *Eagle* echoed most other nationalist titles in expressing its utter disdain at any suggestion of Ulster's exclusion from Home Rule. The paper angrily declared that such a move 'would merely create another Orange Free State, and would set up a new Act of Disunion in Ireland'.⁸¹ Although solidly supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party, its leader, John Redmond, was censured for his 'bungling and treachery' in agreeing to Ulster's temporary exclusion from Home Rule that had resulted in the country 'being rapidly turned into two hostile armed camps'.⁸²

The outbreak of war in August 1914 gave rise to a new set of editorial priorities. In many respects the response of the *Skibbereen Eagle* to World War I was very similar to that of the *Tuam Herald*. Ireland was considered 'an integral part of the United Kingdom' and by consequence was 'one of the component parts of the Allies'.⁸³ The proposal, articulated in a number of other provincial newspapers, that the Irish Volunteers should be reserved for home defence in case of invasion received short shrift in the 'Eagle watchtower'. The suggestion was dismissed as 'sickly twaddle' and indeed it was quite reasonably explained that the Irish Volunteers was comprised of a body of men who were 'unskilled in the use of arms, untrained, and unacquainted with the profession of the soldier – defending their

⁸⁰ *Skibbereen Eagle*, 3 Jan. 1914

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 14 Mar. 1914

⁸² *Ibid*, 27 Jun. 1914

⁸³ *Ibid*, 17 Oct. 1914

country'.⁸⁴ The criticism of John Redmond that had been voiced before the outbreak of war was replaced by fulsome praise for his call to Irishmen to enlist in the British Army. 'No man', the paper declared, 'will merit a more splendid panegyric – no figure will stand out in greater or more dignified relief than that of the distinguished Irishman'.⁸⁵

Despite the *Eagle's* wholehearted support for the war effort its reaction to the 1916 Rising was far from condemnatory and even quite considered. Although it labelled the events of Easter Week 'insane folly' it did not refer to the insurrection as the 'Sinn Féin rebellion' nor did it allege German involvement. The paper articulated similar sentiments to many nationalist titles in asserting that the seeds of rebellion were sown 'on the day when Sir Edward Carson called his northern "braves" into existence'.⁸⁶ The Rising, however, did not signal a shift in the paper's political allegiance. Sinn Féin's electoral successes the following year were greeted with a mixture of frustration and resignation. Unlike the *Cork Constitution*, the *Eagle* initially failed to acknowledge the enormity of the shift in the electoral mood and passed off the Sinn Féin by-election victory in South Longford in May 1917 as 'purely the result of disinclination for warfare'.⁸⁷ Nonetheless, the Irish Parliamentary Party's defeat at the hands of Sinn Féin's William T. Cosgrave in the Kilkenny by-election in August 1917 appeared to bring about a far more realistic appraisal of political developments. In endeavouring to explain the decline in the fortunes of the Irish Parliamentary Party the paper recognised 'that when Mr John Redmond made his historic offer of Ireland's assistance to the Empire, he took, and probably knew he was taking a risk no Irish leader had yet undertaken'.⁸⁸

A series of by-election results early in 1918 appeared to convince the *Eagle* that the rise of Sinn Féin was slowly coming to a halt. The Irish Parliamentary Party's success in South Armagh in February 1918 was viewed as a 'clear indication that the fever of revolution is abating'.⁸⁹ Captain William Redmond's victory in Waterford the following month was cited as further evidence of a reversal in the fortunes of Sinn Féin

⁸⁴ Ibid, 2 Jan. 1915

⁸⁵ Ibid, 22 Jan. 1916

⁸⁶ Ibid, 6 May 1916; Significantly the *Eagle* differed from most other papers in proposing that the causes of the rebellion were 'by no means all political' but that 'the hideous social conditions of Dublin's underworld' was also a contributory factor.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 19 May 1917

⁸⁸ Ibid, 18 Aug. 1917

⁸⁹ Ibid, 9 Feb. 1918

that denoted ‘the close of an era’ and the ‘beginning of a new chapter in Irish history’.⁹⁰ As the general election approached later that year, however, the *Eagle* appeared to acknowledge its misreading of the situation. It reluctantly conceded ‘that thousands of young Irishmen will light-heartedly vote Sinn Féin’ but were somewhat deluded if they believed their vote would swiftly lead to an Irish Republic.⁹¹

Sinn Féin’s resounding victory at the general election was accepted as marking ‘the extinction, absolute and complete’, of the Irish Parliamentary Party though the first meeting of Dáil Éireann was described as a ‘farce’.⁹² Unlike the *Tuam Herald*, the attitude of the *Skibbereen Eagle* towards Sinn Féin did not soften following the general election. Yet the paper did not engage in any blanket denigration of the party and was even willing to accept that there were certain laudable aspects to its policies. Even though the *Eagle* reacted with dismay to the party’s initial electoral successes in 1917 it recognised the part Sinn Féin had played in ‘the awakening of intellectual Ireland’ and additionally that it had provided ‘an incentive to the study of our native language and the patronage of our home industries’.⁹³ In complete contrast to the *Cork Constitution*, the *Eagle* did not avail of the revelation of the ‘German plot’ in May 1918 to deride republicans. Indeed the paper was quite forthright in expressing its scepticism and categorically stated its refusal ‘to believe, until convinced by overwhelming evidence’, that Sinn Féin was guilty of soliciting assistance from Germany.⁹⁴

Although the paper remained a persistent critic of Sinn Féin until the truce of 1921 it did not tend to allege that the party was involved in the increasingly frequent instances of violence. Instead the *Eagle* concentrated on what it believed to be the unrealistic pursuit of an Irish Republic. As early as 1917 the paper poured cold water on the notion of an Irish delegation receiving a hearing at any post-war peace conference.⁹⁵ In the weeks prior to the general election of December 1918 it argued that the pursuit of a policy of abstention from Westminster while simultaneously ‘begging an Irish Republic off every power in the world from President Wilson to the Emperor of Japan’ posed little realistic chance of success.⁹⁶ As several of the pro-Sinn Féin provincial organs celebrated the general election result as the vindication of

⁹⁰ Ibid, 30 Mar. 1918

⁹¹ Ibid, 14 Sept. 1918

⁹² Ibid, 4 Jan., 1 Feb. 1919

⁹³ Ibid, 19 May 1917

⁹⁴ Ibid, 25 May 1918

⁹⁵ Ibid, 3 Nov. 1917

⁹⁶ Ibid, 23 Nov. 1918

the republican cause, the *Eagle's* response was more grounded in reality. It warned that the creation of an Irish Republic was 'no child's play' and pointedly commented that Sinn Féin was 'not as clear or definite on the means of attaining their ideal as on its necessity'.⁹⁷ Allied to its on-going criticism of Sinn Féin's abstentionist policy the paper continued to argue that the blunt demand for an Irish Republic was both fanciful and dangerous:

An Irish Republic, as the silliest Sinn Féiner must realise, means a "fight for it"; and a fight with the British Empire for it; nothing less will do. Now the most frenzied "Irish Republican" has common sense enough to know that, after such a fight there would be no Irish Republic; there would only be no Ireland; that is all.⁹⁸

Nonetheless, the relentless questioning of Sinn Féin strategy should not mask the fact that the *Skibbereen Eagle* was just as critical of the British Government as many more recognisably nationalist papers. In the aftermath of the 1918 general election the *Eagle* claimed that the attainment of an Irish Republic was even further complicated by the fact that the new British government would be led by David Lloyd George whose 'record on the Irish question is beyond cavil, a revelation of the British statesman at his worst'.⁹⁹ At the height of the War of Independence in 1920 the British Prime Minister was lambasted for 'his present method of ruling our country, which has 'no approval outside north-east Ulster' and 'has brought us to our present deplorable condition'. Accordingly, the *Eagle* angrily declared, he 'should either govern or clear out' while also accusing him of being a totally self-serving politician who 'thinks only of the dangers to his power or his ambition'.¹⁰⁰

The truce of July 1921 was greeted with neither relief nor joy. Instead, the paper reflected on 'all that might have been spared our unfortunate country' had John Redmond been sufficiently supported eight years earlier in his efforts 'to arrange with Ulster'. However, the same editorial also remarked with some degree of perception that, in agreeing to negotiations with the British Government, 'Mr de Valera must realise he leaves outside the door, every possible hope of the Irish Republic'.¹⁰¹ Even at this late stage,

⁹⁷ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1919

⁹⁸ Ibid, 29 Nov. 1919

⁹⁹ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1919

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 14 Aug., 18 Sept. 1920;

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 2 Jul. 1921

the *Eagle* continued to argue that Ireland would have been better served had it followed a constitutional and non-abstentionist path:

Given a powerful disciplined Irish Party in Westminster for the past five years, there would never have been an Ulster Parliament. The passing of the Partition Act against their opposition would simply have been impossible.¹⁰²

Nonetheless, the paper accepted the changed situation and gave 'unqualified support to the representatives of Southern Ireland' to achieve what it hoped would be 'a permanent and satisfactory Anglo-Irish agreement'.¹⁰³ The warm approval for the agreement reached in London in December 1921 was accompanied by fulsome praise for the Irish negotiators for doing 'a brave and a wonderful thing when they put their names to the Treaty'. The practical benefits of the agreement were articulated enthusiastically but a lack of foresight was evident on some issues. The *Eagle* confidently stated that 'the Irish Question, as it has been known to generations of Irishmen and Englishmen' has 'passed from the stage'. The consequences of partition were similarly underestimated. Ireland's 'one reluctant province', the paper reasoned, would soon yield 'to the pressure of economic laws' and throw in her lot with the Irish Free State.¹⁰⁴ In the face of the emerging opposition to the Treaty, the *Eagle's* final two editorials of 1921 continued to cite how much the country stood to gain from the agreement. Central to its argument was its endorsement of the leadership of Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith who were described as stamped 'with the mark of statesmanship'.¹⁰⁵ The *Skibbereen Eagle*, however, like Collins and Griffith, did not survive to witness even the first year of the Irish Free State.

Conclusion

The *Skibbereen Eagle* is best remembered for its warning to the Tsar of Russia but its experiences and also its editorial output between 1914 and 1921 arguably justify an equally significant place in the broader history of Irish newspapers. The paper's wholehearted support for Home Rule in conjunction with its sense of allegiance to Britain (which manifested itself in its unequivocal support for the war effort) is a combination that has defied conventional perceptions of Irish nationalism. Accordingly, any

¹⁰² Ibid, 23 Jul. 1921

¹⁰³ Ibid, 6 Aug. 1921

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921; The paper believed that 'everybody instinctively feels this severance is but temporary'.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

person or institution holding such a duality of views has been largely overlooked in the wider historiography of this period. In the case of the *Skibbereen Eagle* this is quite unfortunate as the paper's commentary on this period of Irish history was predominantly measured and fair. On occasion, like the *Cork Constitution*, it demonstrated a grasp of developments that eluded many more traditionally nationalist newspapers.

The sense of fairness was particularly evident in its response to the Easter Rising. Unlike the *Tuam Herald* and the *Roscommon Herald*, the *Skibbereen Eagle* did not engage in any sensationalist allegations of German intrigue but concentrated on identifying the factors that led to the rebellion. Equally the *Eagle's* criticism of Sinn Féin did not descend into insinuations of treasonable activities based on supposed collaboration with Germany. Nor did it carelessly link Sinn Féin to instances of violence. Instead it focussed on what it believed was the unrealistic nature of Sinn Féin's primary demand of an Irish Republic. Its warning to Eamon de Valera in July 1921 that agreeing to negotiate with the British Government effectively nullified any prospect of an Irish Republic was to prove prophetic. Despite the considered and reasoned nature of the *Eagle's* coverage it was still targeted by the IRA. Along with the *Cork Constitution*, *Cork Examiner*, and *Irish Independent*, the *Skibbereen Eagle* discovered that criticism of republican tactics or strategy would not be allowed to go unchecked. In the *Eagle's* case such attention marked the beginning of the end for the paper, and less than twenty-five years after it saw fit to issue a warning to the Tsar of Russia it disappeared from the Irish newspaper scene for good.

Skibbereen Eagle – Timeline

1858: founded by John William Potter.

1874: Fred Potter assumes full control.

1898: publication of editorial stating the paper was 'keeping its eye on the Tsar of Russia'.

1906: death of Fred Potter, paper inherited by Eldon Potter.

1908: Jasper Wolfe becomes director.

1915: Patrick Sheehy becomes editor.

1917: printing machinery vandalised following break-in at offices.

1920: Patrick Sheehy attacked in his home.

1922: ceases publication for good.

1858-1922: variously published as the *Skibbereen and West Carbery Eagle*, *West Cork Eagle*, and the *Cork County Eagle*.

5.5 Case Study 3: *Southern Star*

Origins

In his famed memoir of his experiences during the Irish War of Independence, the renowned IRA leader, Tom Barry, did not hold back in his disdain for the town of Skibbereen and its residents. According to Barry 'its inhabitants were a race apart from the sturdy people of West Cork' who 'with a few exceptions were spineless, slouching through life meek and tame, prepared to accept ruling and domination from any clique or country'. In his prolonged condemnation of the town he also remarked that the town posed no threat to the IRA as the citizens of Skibbereen 'lacked the energy and gumption to be actively hostile to anything'.¹⁰⁶ Whatever about the supposed indolence and docility of the town's populace, Skibbereen had at least shown an energy and enthusiasm for the newspaper trade that was not evident anywhere else in the county outside of the city of Cork. At the start of the twentieth century, Skibbereen, quite remarkably, was the only town in County Cork to have sustained a local press of any significance.¹⁰⁷ Indeed, by this time the town was served by two successful newspapers, the aforementioned *Skibbereen Eagle* and the *Southern Star*, which was first published in 1890.

According to Mathew Potter 'the perceived pro-British and Protestant tone of the *Eagle*' led to the establishment of 'the much more strongly nationalist *Southern Star*'.¹⁰⁸ The paper was founded by John O'Sullivan with the assistance of his brother Florence. Little is known of John O'Sullivan except that he was involved in the printing trade while Florence O'Sullivan was a qualified solicitor. However, the O'Sullivan brothers did not retain a controlling interest in the paper for very long. In 1892 the *Southern Star* was sold to a consortium led by Monsignor John O'Leary of Clonakilty. The consortium consisted of

¹⁰⁶ Tom Barry, *Guerilla days in Ireland* (Dublin, 1981), p.89

¹⁰⁷ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

¹⁰⁸ Potter, op. cit., p.53

ten shareholders, two of whom were also priests (Father Michael Cunningham and Father Daniel O'Brien), once again signifying the highly notable clerical involvement in Irish provincial newspapers during this period.¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, unlike many other provincial titles the *Southern Star* was not dominated by an individual personality as was the case at other newspapers such as the *Westmeath Examiner* (J.P. Hayden), *Kilkenny People* (E.T. Keane), and *Roscommon Herald* (Jasper Tully). Accordingly the paper experienced a rather high turnover of editors in the first two decades of its existence.

During this period the *Southern Star* appears to have had as many as six different editors. Florence O'Sullivan was succeeded by J.J. Comerford while others who edited the paper included Michael J. Flynn, Patrick O'Driscoll, and Seumas O'Kelly. Flynn later moved to the *Freeman's Journal* but ended his career at the *Brisbane Courier* in Australia, having emigrated there after his health became impaired.¹¹⁰ O'Driscoll's tenure as editor was quite brief, lasting only from 1901 until 1902. He then established the *West Cork People* in his home town of Clonakilty, one of the very few papers in the county to be established outside either Cork City or Skibbereen. The paper only lasted a few years, however, closing in 1907 due an expensive libel action. O'Driscoll was a brother-in-law of Michael Collins, having married his sister, Margaret. He later served on the editorial staff of the *Cork Free Press* as well as acting as Irish correspondent of the *Catholic Herald*.¹¹¹ O'Kelly became editor of the *Southern Star* around 1903 before moving on to the editorship of the *Leinster Leader* about three years later. He subsequently developed a close friendship with Arthur Griffith and even edited *Nationality* for brief spell during 1918 while Griffith was imprisoned. Seumas O'Kelly died suddenly in November 1918 after being taken ill at the Sinn Féin offices at Harcourt Street in Dublin.¹¹² However, the most celebrated editor of the *Southern Star* in its first twenty years of publication was Daniel David (D.D.) Sheehan. Originally from Kanturk, County Cork, D.D. Sheehan was a teacher prior to embarking on a journalistic career. He initially worked at the *Glasgow Observer* and the *Catholic News* of Preston while he also served on the staff of the *Cork Constitution*. His time in the editorial chair of the *Southern Star* was actually quite brief (1898-1901) as he resigned the post after being elected MP for Mid-Cork in 1900. He retained this seat until 1918, being

¹⁰⁹ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

¹¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 15 Oct. 1928

¹¹¹ *Southern Star*, 7 Sept. 1940; *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989);

¹¹² *Irish Independent*, 15 Nov. 1918; *Irish Times*, 6 Oct. 1969; Seumas O'Kelly is additionally remembered as a noted playwright and was also a brother of Michael O'Kelly, who succeeded him as editor of the *Leinster Leader* and was arrested after the Easter Rising as detailed in Appendix B.

returned unopposed on a number of occasions, but did not stand at the general election in December of that year.¹¹³

Suppression, takeover, suppression

Any disruption that the *Southern Star* may have experienced due to the high turnover of editors in its first twenty years pales into insignificance in comparison to the turbulent times it endured from around 1916 onwards. The first instance of such turbulence arrived on 13 November 1916 when police seized the paper's plant and machinery and duly suppressed the *Southern Star*. As tended to happen in such instances no specific reason was given for the action. Nonetheless, the *Irish Independent* reported that the *Star*'s editor believed the suppression was due to the publication of an article entitled "Masons and Mollies" that dealt with police agitation.¹¹⁴ At the time the editor was James Michael (J.M.) Burke who had been appointed shortly before the Easter Rising and was to have a long association with the paper.¹¹⁵ The matter of the paper's suppression was raised in the House of Commons by Joseph Devlin of the Irish Parliamentary Party. After questioning why such action was taken against the paper Devlin was brusquely informed by the Chief Secretary, Mr Duke, that the suppression was due to the publication of statements likely to cause disaffection.¹¹⁶ The *Southern Star* was permitted to resume publication just under a month later though little indication was forthcoming as to why it was allowed recommence operations at that stage.¹¹⁷ The curious aspect of the suppression was that at that time the paper had no real or perceived link to Sinn Féin, which was a factor common to the actions taken against other provincial newspapers in the months following the Easter Rising. The absence of such a republican link was to change dramatically just over a year later.

¹¹³ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989); *Irish Independent*, 29 Nov. 1948; *Southern Star*, 4 Dec. 1948; At the outbreak of World War I Sheehan joined the Munster Fusiliers while three of his sons also enlisted in the British Army, two of whom were killed in action. Along with William O'Brien he declared his support for Sinn Féin following the failure to implement Home Rule. He retired from active politics in 1918 and was engaged in journalism and business until his death in 1948.

¹¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 14 Nov. 1916

¹¹⁵ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

¹¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 18 Nov. 1916

¹¹⁷ *Cork Examiner*, 11 Dec. 1916

On 26 December 1917 the *Irish Independent* reported that the *Southern Star*, 'hitherto an advocate of the Irish Party, has been purchased by the Sinn Féin Party' for £570.¹¹⁸ Prior to the Sinn Féin acquisition the paper was still owned by the consortium assembled by Monsignor John O'Leary over twenty-five years earlier. One of the main facilitators of the takeover was Peadar O'Hourihane who was to play a significant role under the new ownership. Among the large group that constituted the new proprietorship were three men who were later to become TDs, Seán Buckley, Seán Hales, and Seán Hayes. Michael Collins (along with his brother John M. Collins) was listed as one of the early shareholders though Peter Hart further credits Collins with assisting in putting together the group of investors that bought the paper.¹¹⁹ Collins's enthusiasm for the project no doubt stemmed from what Tim Pat Coogan describes as his 'interest in newspapers which never left him' after he worked as a very young man at the *West Cork People*, the paper owned by his brother-in-law, the aforementioned Patrick J. O'Driscoll.¹²⁰ With such an overtly republican ownership in place it was highly unlikely that the paper would escape the attention of the British authorities for very long.

In total the *Southern Star* was suppressed three times between 1918 and 1919. The first of these took place in April 1918 when it was deemed by Lord Decies to be one of a number of newspapers whose tone was 'distinctly bad, and likely to cause disaffection'. The suppression lasted four weeks though some of the other titles suppressed at the same time, most notably the *Clare Champion*, were subjected to longer periods of enforced closure.¹²¹ The second suppression began in late August 1918 and turned out to be the lengthiest. The reason given for the police action in dismantling and removing the printing machinery was the increasingly standard line that the paper had published content 'likely to cause disaffection'.¹²² Local IRA commander Liam Deasy later claimed that the reason for the suppression was because the *Southern Star* had been the first newspaper to publish an account of an attempt by Crown Forces to capture Tom and William Hales, both brothers of Seán Hales. According to Deasy, the two

¹¹⁸ *Irish Independent*, 26 Dec. 1917

¹¹⁹ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989); Peter Hart, *Mick: the real Michael Collins* (London, 2005), p.121

¹²⁰ Tim Pat Coogan, *Michael Collins: a biography* (London, 1990), p.15; At the *West Cork People* Collins 'learnt to type, acted as a copyboy, and wrote up sporting events'.

¹²¹ Press Censorship Report, March 1918, CO904/166/2; The most notable of the other papers to be suppressed at the same time were the *Mayo News*, *Galway Express*, *Westmeath Independent*, and *Weekly Observer*.

¹²² *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 26 Aug. 1918;

brothers had been involved in 'hiding material that was intended for use in manufacturing shotgun bayonets'.¹²³ While this may have been a contributory factor, Michael Collins believed there may have been another reason. In a letter to a local Sinn Féin activist Collins indicated that the suppression may have been due to the alleged production of some handbills (possibly relating to the upcoming general election) at the *Southern Star* plant.¹²⁴

Whatever the reason for the action against the paper, it differed significantly from the enforced closure several months earlier in that it was not instigated by the Press Censor. This was confirmed by the paper's business manager, Seamus O'Brien, in a letter to Ernest Blythe, then editor of the paper but imprisoned at Belfast following his arrest in March 1918. O'Brien stated that 'Lord Decies knew nothing of the suppression and did not seem to like the idea of the military authorities taking the full power into their own hands'.¹²⁵ With the suppression well into its fifth month O'Brien decided to write to the national newspapers to publicise the *Star's* plight. In a letter to the *Irish Independent* he protested that no reason had been given for the banning of the paper, it had taken place without the knowledge of Lord Decies, and that requests to meet with the military authorities at Cork to try resolve the matter had not even merited a response.¹²⁶

The *Southern Star* was eventually permitted to resume publication in April 1919 though no specific reason was provided for the lengthy suppression or why the ban was lifted at that particular time.¹²⁷ In its first editorial upon its return the paper claimed that the only response to its many requests for information on the matter was that the 'action was taken under the Defence of the Realm regulations'.¹²⁸ The suppression of almost thirty weeks was one of the longest endured by any Irish provincial newspaper. However, It was not long before the authorities focussed its attention on the *Southern Star* once more. On 27 October 1919 a force of about a dozen policemen arrived at the paper's offices and duly dismantled and removed its printing machinery.¹²⁹ This third suppression resulted from

¹²³ Liam Deasy, *Towards Ireland free: the West Cork brigade in the War of Independence, 1917-1921* (Dublin, 1973), p.22

¹²⁴ Collins to Kelly, 18 Nov. 1918 (U.C.D., Irish Volunteers papers, P16)

¹²⁵ O'Brien to Blythe, 15 Jan. 1919 (U.C.D., Ernest Blythe papers, P24/1028)

¹²⁶ *Irish Independent*, 17 Jan. 1919

¹²⁷ *Ibid*, 31 Mar. 1919; *Irish Times*, 5 Apr. 1919;

¹²⁸ *Southern Star*, 5 Apr. 1919

¹²⁹ *Cork Examiner*, *Irish Independent*, 28 Oct. 1919; *Irish Times*, 1 Nov. 1919;

the publication of the Dáil Éireann loan prospectus.¹³⁰ Although a number of newspaper reports in January 1920 indicated that the ban had been lifted, this third suppression lasted until March 1920.¹³¹ In total the paper was banned for almost fifty-six weeks during the two year period from March 1918. Consequently the challenge faced by the new owners of the *Southern Star* was all the more difficult.

The people behind the *Star*

Many of those who owned, managed, or edited the *Southern Star* from the time of the Sinn Féin takeover in late 1917 until the end of the War of Independence could well justify substantive scrutiny in their own right. In the case of Michael Collins, a shareholder in the paper, such detailed scrutiny already exists in abundance. Nevertheless, it is both worthwhile and instructive to consider some of the other figures centrally involved in the paper during these years. Seán Hayes, a member of the group that acquired the *Southern Star* in 1917 and who also edited the paper for a time, fought in the GPO in Dublin during Easter Week 1916 and was subsequently imprisoned at Frongoch internment camp in Wales. He was elected MP for the West Cork constituency in December 1918, was re-elected in 1921 and took a pro-Treaty stance.¹³²

From about 1916 onwards Seán Buckley, another of those involved in the acquisition, was actively involved in Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers and was imprisoned at Belfast during 1918. He was a member of the West Cork brigade of the IRA from 1919 until the truce of July 1921. Buckley took the republican side following the Anglo-Irish Treaty and endured further terms of imprisonment at Cork, Mountjoy, Newbridge, and Kilmainham.¹³³ Seán Hales, also involved in the Sinn Féin takeover, had even stronger republican credentials. He joined the Irish Volunteers in 1915 and was imprisoned at Frongoch in Wales following the Easter Rising. He became a battalion commander in the West Cork brigade of the IRA and was involved in many operations during the Anglo-Irish conflict, most notably at Crossbarry in March 1921. Later that year he was elected to Dáil Éireann for the Cork mid, north, south, south-east,

¹³⁰ Inspector General's and County Inspectors' monthly confidential reports, October 1919, CO904/110-250

¹³¹ *Irish Independent*, 15 Jan. 1920; *Cork Examiner*, 15 Jan., 16 Jan., 19 Mar., 1920; *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Jan., 19 Mar. 1920; *Irish Times*, 27 Mar. 1920;

¹³² *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989); *Irish Independent*, 25 Jan. 1928; Hayes was also a close personal friend of Michael Collins and is not to be confused with Seán Hayes of the *Meath Chronicle* as detailed in chapter 3.

¹³³ *Irish Press*, 2 Dec. 1963; Buckley later represented Fianna Fáil in Dáil Éireann for the West Cork constituency from 1938 until 1948 and for South Cork from 1948 to 1954.

and west constituency and was the only IRA brigadier from Cork to support the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He was re-elected to Dáil Éireann in June 1922 but was shot dead by republican gunmen in Dublin in December of that year.¹³⁴

Buckley and Hales had little involvement in the on-going management of the *Southern Star* but the republican connections of those who played a more significant role were also quite considerable. The main instigator of the acquisition, Peadar O'Hourihane (or Peadar O'hAnnracháin as he preferred to be known) was a renowned Gaelic League organiser, which resulted in his activities being monitored by the RIC as early as June 1914.¹³⁵ An early Sinn Féin activist in his home town of Skibbereen he was imprisoned at Wakefield and Reading following the 1916 Rising and later took an active part in the War of Independence.¹³⁶ The aforementioned Seamus O'Brien, business manager at the paper for a time during this period, was arrested and imprisoned during the War of Independence and later married Nora Connolly, daughter of James Connolly.¹³⁷ Similarly Dick Connolly, who succeeded O'Brien as the paper's business manager during 1919, was a prominent IRA member and described as a 'War of Independence courier for Michael Collins'.¹³⁸ Connolly briefly edited the paper during 1920 and was one of a number of people to occupy the editorial chair between 1916 and 1921.¹³⁹

In all there appears to have been seven different editors of the *Southern Star* between 1916 and 1921. By mid-1920 the aforementioned J.M. Burke, Peadar O'Hourihane, Seán Hayes, and Dick Connolly had each edited the paper for relatively short spells. They were succeeded by Arthur Nix in late 1920 and subsequently by Eoin Sharkey, both of whom had similarly brief terms in the editorial chair. Nix ultimately took a legal action against the paper for wrongful dismissal in which, by coincidence, he was

¹³⁴ Maurice Cronin, 'Hales, Seán' in McGuire et al (eds.)

¹³⁵ Police Reports, June 1914, CO904/120/4-98, May 1915, CO904/120/6-134, November 1915, CO904/120/9-197, December 1915, CO904/120/10-214; Inspector General's and County Inspectors' monthly confidential reports, January 1917, CO904/102-13;

¹³⁶ *Southern Star* 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement (11 November 1989); *Irish Times*, 30 Mar. 1965; Peadar O'hAnnracháin also contributed to nationalist publications such as *An Claidheamh Soluis* and *Irish Freedom* and was a respected author in both Irish and English. His most noted work was *Fé bhrat an chonnartha*, a diary of his Gaelic League days.

¹³⁷ *Southern Star* 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement (11 November 1989)

¹³⁸ Ibid; Lawrence William White, 'O'Brien, Nora Connolly' in McGuire et al (eds.)

¹³⁹ *Cork Examiner*, 16 Jan. 1920; Connolly's term as editor seems to have been fairly brief but he signed himself as editor in a letter to the *Cork Examiner* in January 1920 to refute reports that the suppression of the *Southern Star* had been lifted.

represented by Jasper Wolfe of the *Skibbereen Eagle*.¹⁴⁰ The last of these seven editors also only enjoyed a brief tenure but was, nonetheless, the most famous figure to occupy the position. Ernest Blythe became editor of the *Southern Star* early in 1918, principally due to the influence of Peadar O’Hourihane.¹⁴¹ Blythe’s lengthy career is well documented; a member of the Gaelic League, the Irish Volunteers, the IRB, and Sinn Féin he was elected as an MP for North Monaghan in December 1918 and later held a number of different ministerial positions in the Free State Government. However, his time at the *Southern Star* was cut short when he was arrested in early March 1918 for contravening an undertaking to reside within a short distance of his father’s house in County Antrim.¹⁴²

The editorial instability only ended late in 1921 when J.M. Burke was re-appointed editor. Burke’s connection to the *Star* pre-dated the Sinn Féin acquisition, which he did not favour as he did not appear to hold republican sympathies. Indeed, even after his re-appointment as editor in 1921 Burke had a frequently fractious relationship with the directors of the paper. Like many of his predecessors he was elected to political office, being returned as a Cumann na nGaedhael TD for West Cork in the 1933 general election. Unlike most of his predecessors, J.M. Burke remained as editor for a sustained period, his tenure lasted almost fourteen years and provided the paper with a period of stability that had proved highly elusive during the first three decades of its existence.¹⁴³

Editorial comment 1914-1921

Even a cursory perusal of the contents of the *Southern Star* during these years provides some indication that it was catering to a slightly different readership than the other two Cork newspapers already profiled in this chapter. Normally comprised of eight pages the paper was generally divided into eight columns. Two or three pages were usually comprised of advertisements. Unlike the *Cork Constitution* and the *Skibbereen Eagle* adverts for motor cars and foreign travel were rare.¹⁴⁴ Amongst the most regular items being promoted were medications to deal with ailments such as backache, toothache, and

¹⁴⁰ *Freeman’s Journal*, 12 Apr. 1921

¹⁴¹ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

¹⁴² *Freeman’s Journal*, 5 Mar. 1918; Witness Statement, Ernest Blythe (B.M.H., WS939)

¹⁴³ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989); *Southern Star*, 12 Sept. 1936;

¹⁴⁴ Even though such notices were quite infrequent the paper occasionally featured adverts for sea travel with the Canadian Pacific Company accompanied by a note promising ‘special arrangements for the celebration of holy mass’.

sore throats. Also featuring prominently in the advertising sections were agricultural items such as farm implements, cart and rick covers, seeds, feedstuffs, and animal medications. Indeed the paper featured a farming column as well as a ladies column that mostly contained household and cookery tips. The outward appearance of the paper did not change significantly following the Sinn Féin takeover with the exception of the masthead, which was altered to display the paper's name in Irish, *Réalt a'Deiscirt*. Unsurprisingly, the content of the paper's editorial columns is somewhat more difficult to summarise.

The *Southern Star's* editorial comment is actually quite fragmented during this period, particularly from late 1916 onwards. This is principally due to the various suppressions that collectively meant that the paper lost just over a year of publication. The change of ownership in addition to the unusually high turnover of those occupying the editorial chair did little to help mitigate this situation. Nevertheless, at certain stages the leading articles of the *Star* displayed some similarities with those of its provincial counterparts. Even allowing for the considerably reduced amount of editorial output and its unambiguous affiliation to one side in the Anglo-Irish conflict, the *Star's* editorials still make for compelling scrutiny.

As 1914 dawned the *Southern Star* did not differ from so many other nationalist newspapers in anticipating the passing of Home Rule in an almost celebratory manner. It not only expressed its gratitude to 'John Redmond and his faithful, pledge-bound, and disciplined party' but also dismissed unionist opposition in the belief that 'the most bellicose covenanter of last year' was 'to become the most harmless lamb of 1914'.¹⁴⁵ Although this attitude changed with the arming of the Ulster Volunteers, the paper still doubted the resilience of Ulster opposition when the Home Rule bill was placed on the statute book nine months later. It accepted that the convening of a new parliament in Dublin was not feasible in wartime but also confidently predicted that 'many of the most influential unionists in Ulster are disinclined to offer further opposition to Home Rule once the bill has received the Royal Assent'.¹⁴⁶

The *Southern Star* differed from titles such as the *Tuam Herald* and *Skibbereen Eagle* by not articulating any specific allegiance to Britain or the Empire but there was little doubt that it supported the British

¹⁴⁵ *Southern Star*, 3 Jan. 1914

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 19 Sept. 1914

war effort. One of its more notable editorials in the early months of the war not only declared that 'this is Ireland's war as well as England's' but also excoriated Sinn Féin for its attitude to the war even though the party scarcely occupied any position of prominence at the time. In a prolonged editorial assault, Sinn Féin was accused of wishing to 'substitute Prussian militarism for British Government' and furthermore was willing to 'substitute the German language for the Irish'. The sustained attack also asserted that 'the Sinn Féiner is a political humbug whose sense of patriotism is generally confined to the depths of his own pocket'.¹⁴⁷ Despite the obvious contempt for Sinn Féin, the paper refrained from automatically linking the party to the Easter Rising as was the case with so many other newspapers.

Although it deplored 'this late, insane, and hopeless rising' the *Star's* editorial response was by no means condemnatory. In calling for an end to the executions of 'the vanquished and misguided insurgents' a considerable degree of admiration and respect was clearly evident. Without qualification the paper acknowledged the 'pluck, bravery, honesty of motive and high purposed endeavour' of the rebels and also recognised the fact that many of them were willing to make 'the supreme sacrifice of laying down their lives for a cause which they believed to be a just one'. Any anger that the Rising had engendered was reserved for Sir Edward Carson. It was Carson, the paper declared, who had 'preached open treason', 'defied the Government', and 'lunched with the Kaiser' and consequently was 'primarily responsible for the tragic rising'.¹⁴⁸

The shift in political sympathy that followed the Easter Rising at papers such as the *Kilkenny People* and *Mayo News* was not evident to any great extent at the *Southern Star*. The Sinn Féin by-election victories during 1917 were afforded scant editorial attention. Instead the paper focussed on the ill-fated Irish Convention, though there was obviously a realisation that Sinn Féin was an emerging force as the *Star* encouraged the party to participate.¹⁴⁹ Shortly before the change of ownership this realisation had developed into a grudging acceptance that most Sinn Féin members were 'patriotic Irishmen, sincerely

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 12 Dec. 1914

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 6 May 1916; In the same issue the paper also published a tribute to 'The Late P.H. Pearse' signed by 'A Friend'. In a moving testimonial the writer expressed disapproval for Pearse's actions but proceeded to describe him as being 'incapable of a mean act or an unworthy thought', 'a brilliant scholar, an attractive writer, a thorough gentleman' whose 'head may have gone wrong but his heart was right' and the motives that inspired him and his colleagues 'were genuine and pure'.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 23 Jun. 1917

interested in the advancement and betterment of their country'.¹⁵⁰ The suppression of the paper at various stages during 1918 and early 1919 meant that the *Star* was prevented from passing comment on landmark developments such as the 1918 general election results and the first meeting of Dáil Éireann. Nonetheless, it is not unreasonable to speculate that with a republican ownership in place the main thrust of its editorial output was unlikely to have differed substantially from other pro-Sinn Féin organs such as the *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Meath Chronicle*, or *Mayo News*. What is of significantly more value from a historical perspective is an examination of how a Sinn Féin organ such as the *Southern Star* responded to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

In this respect the *Southern Star* reflected the sentiments of the majority of other nationalist newspapers whether pro-Sinn Féin or otherwise. The Irish plenipotentiaries were praised as 'far-seeing statesmen that could not be bought or bullied, cajoled or coerced into a settlement'. The agreement they had secured 'may not be ideally perfect but this is a world of stern realities and disagreeable imperfections'.¹⁵¹ The Ulster question was not overlooked as it was by many other papers but, in common with the few titles that did see fit to consider the issue, the *Star* fell into the trap of assuming that Unionists would eventually come to their senses and throw in their lot with the Irish Free State:

The solution of the Ulster problem may not be wholly satisfactory, but the Orangemen are Mammon-worshippers and are sometimes wise in their generation. They have no more to expect from Westminster, in fortune and in name, by tradition and geographical necessity they are bound to the rest of Ireland and they may be as reluctant to leave an Irish Free State as they were slow to enter it.¹⁵²

As it became clear that not all republicans were willing to accept the Treaty's imperfections the *Southern Star* angrily dismissed any associated criticism of Michael Collins. 'No sane person', the paper asserted, 'would for a moment entertain the thought that Mr M. Collins would be a party to any lowering of the nation's honour'.¹⁵³ Yet it was clearly evident that it had no wish to encourage any division in republican ranks as it deemed de Valera 'a chivalrous, dauntless soldier'. Nevertheless, the suggestion of an

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 27 Oct. 1917

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

¹⁵² Ibid

¹⁵³ Ibid, 17 Dec. 1921

alternative oath of allegiance was considered excessively pedantic and a simple matter of ‘Tweedledum and Tweedledee’.¹⁵⁴ The paper’s final editorial of 1921 expressed the same fear and articulated sentiments akin to those of many other provincial titles. ‘What is the alternative proposal?’ the *Star* asked before stating bluntly that ‘the other alternative is hideous war, red ruin, destruction and desolation’.¹⁵⁵

Conclusion

The editorial comment of the *Southern Star* between 1914 and 1921 might almost seem of secondary importance when compared to the overall turbulence experienced by the paper in the first three decades or so of its existence. Between 1890 and 1921 the *Southern Star* had three different sets of owners, as many as thirteen different editors, and was suppressed on three separate occasions. Amongst the figures associated with the paper was one who was elected an MP (D.D. Sheehan), three who were elected both as MPs and TDs (Michael Collins, Ernest Blythe, and Seán Hayes), and three others who were also elected as TDs (Seán Buckley, Seán Hales, and J.M. Burke). The disruption caused by changes in ownership and editorship, plus the multitude of personalities that assumed roles in the paper, meant that it did not display some of the traits that were evident in so many other Irish provincial papers such as family ownership or a prolonged period under the guidance of a particular individual. Consequently the sense of continuity that was a mark of several of its counterparts was absent from the *Southern Star*. Nevertheless, the overall editorial comment between 1914 and 1921 displayed many similarities to that of other provincial organs. This is best illustrated by its support for the Allied war effort, criticism of Sir Edward Carson and the Ulster Unionists following the Easter Rising, and perhaps most pertinently its strong defence of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. Nonetheless, it is the *Southern Star*’s own particular history that is the most compelling and earns it such a prominent place in the broader history of the Irish provincial press.

Southern Star – Timeline

1890: founded by John O’Sullivan with the aid of his brother Florence O’Sullivan.

1892: acquired by consortium headed by Monsignor John O’Leary.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 24 Dec. 1921

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921

1890-1917: edited by several different journalists including Florence O’Sullivan, J.J. Comerford, Michael J. Flynn, Patrick O’Driscoll, Seumas O’Kelly, D.D. Sheehan, and J.M. Burke.

1916: printing machinery seized by police and paper suppressed for one month.

1917: purchased by Sinn Féin interests led by Peadar O’Hourihane and also including Michael Collins.

1918: Ernest Blythe appointed editor but arrested shortly afterwards.

1918-1919: suppressed on three separate occasions, lengthiest suppression lasting from August 1918 to April 1919.

1916-1921: editors during this time, in addition to Ernest Blythe, include Peadar O’Hourihane, Seán Hayes, Dick Connolly, Arthur Nix, Eoin Sharkey, and J.M. Burke (for the second time).

5.6 Case Study 4: *Clonmel Chronicle*

Origins

Joseph Napier Higgins was the main driving force behind the foundation of the *Clonmel Chronicle* in 1848. Higgins was a barrister and went on to amass a fortune in London as a recognised authority on joint-stock company law. The paper was printed by Edmond Woods who eventually assumed the role of sole proprietor and editor.¹⁵⁶ The *Chronicle* became an official organ of the Conservative Party but unlike many of its contemporaries it did not engage in personalised attacks and consequently steered clear of costly libel actions. Indeed the paper soon gained a reputation for accurate and reliable reporting.¹⁵⁷ Edmond Woods died in 1893 following which the *Chronicle* was acquired by David Montgomery and two other journalists who had been involved in the management of the paper along with Montgomery.¹⁵⁸ The paper ceased publication for two months during 1910 and on its return declared itself an independent organ. A new board of directors was also in place following the resumption of publication. The new directors were Thomas Morrissey, Thomas Skehan, James Reidy, Denis Lowry, and John

¹⁵⁶ William P. Burke, *History of Clonmel* (Kilkenny, 1983), p.356

¹⁵⁷ Hayes, op. cit., p.6

¹⁵⁸ O’Donnell, op. cit., pp 215-6

Mulcahy. All of them were prominent Clonmel businessmen and all were from a nationalist background.¹⁵⁹

The people behind the *Chronicle*

Despite the nationalist sympathies of those now controlling the *Clonmel Chronicle* the editor that was appointed under the new ownership was a northern Presbyterian with a solidly unionist background. Arthur Ross Burns was from Newry, County Armagh and a son of Joseph F. Burns who had founded the *Newry Reporter* in 1867. Following his father's death in 1900, Arthur Ross Burns sold the paper and moved on to edit the *Lisburn Standard*. He subsequently edited the tri-weekly *Derry Standard* but a difference of opinion with the proprietor, J.G. Glendenning, on the subject of Lloyd George's "People's Budget" of 1909, resulted in Burns parting company with the paper. It was at this stage that he moved south to Clonmel to take over as editor and manager of the *Clonmel Chronicle*. He remained at the helm of the paper until his death in 1927.¹⁶⁰

Information regarding other journalists who worked for the *Chronicle* is in fairly short supply though the same could be said for most other Irish provincial newspapers. Nonetheless, it is known that John Griffin, who succeeded Brandon J. Long as editor of the *Clonmel Nationalist*, worked as a reporter at the *Clonmel Chronicle* for about three years before moving on to the town's rival newspaper around 1919.¹⁶¹ Another journalist to follow a similar path was a more celebrated figure. Tommy O'Brien spent forty years as a broadcaster with RTÉ radio but as a young man in the early 1920s he was a cub reporter with the *Clonmel Chronicle* before moving to the *Clonmel Nationalist* which he later edited. O'Brien joined Fianna Éireann at the age of fifteen and was later a despatch rider for the South Tipperary Brigade of the IRA where he came into contact with both Dan Breen and Seamus Robinson.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p.216; Hayes, op. cit., p.6;

¹⁶⁰ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 12 Mar. 1927; *Newry Reporter*, 16 Nov. 1967;

¹⁶¹ *Clonmel Nationalist*, 7 Feb. 1942

¹⁶² *Irish Times*, 23 May 1987, 1 Jan., 25 Feb. 1988; Gus Smith, *Tommy O'Brien, good evening listeners* (Dublin, 1987), pp 8-9; Although O'Brien's obituary in the *Irish Times* credits him with being an IRA despatch rider while working as a cub reporter it seems more likely that his career in journalism started just after the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921.

Editorial comment 1914-1921

Rather unusually for a provincial newspaper the *Clonmel Chronicle* was published twice weekly. Appearing on Saturday and Wednesday it normally consisted of eight pages though this dropped to four for a period during 1918. Similar to so many other papers its first page was completely comprised of advertisements. Such advertisements and those on other pages were comprised of the standard fare of drapery stores and agricultural machinery though a significant amount of car adverts suggests a slightly more affluent readership. The *Clonmel Chronicle* also operated its own printing business that also featured prominently amongst the paper's adverts.

If the *Clonmel Chronicle's* advertising sections differed little from other provincial newspapers the same could certainly not be said of its editorial comment. This was not due to the paper's leading articles containing any sensational declarations; rather it was attributable to the simple fact that no editorial comment was passed on almost all of the major events that took place between 1914 and 1921. The Home Rule crisis, the outbreak and progress of World War I, the 1916 Rising, the rise of Sinn Féin, and the many violent incidents during the War of Independence all received a certain amount of coverage in the *Chronicle* but from an editorial perspective, the paper maintained a silence on all of these matters. Indeed for much of the 1914-1921 period the editorial columns merely consisted of a few brief local announcements under the heading 'local and general pars'. To a considerable extent the editorial policy of the *Chronicle* reflected that of the *Leitrim Observer* though the leading articles of the Carrick-on-Shannon based newspaper were more regularly interspersed with strong views on contemporary developments.

The editorial trend of featuring only brief local announcements began to change during 1920 and 1921. However, it was by no means a radical change. Actual leading articles rather than brief announcements began to appear but invariably they dealt solely with local matters. Editorial headings such as 'Clonmel's waterway', 'Street dangers in Clonmel', 'Sanitation in Clonmel', 'Support local industries', 'Clonmel mental hospital milk supply', and 'Clonmel town clerkship' more than adequately illustrate how the *Chronicle* obviously considered itself a local newspaper in every sense of the word.¹⁶³ Even the editorial response to the outbreak of war in 1914 confined itself to how it would affect local affairs such as the

¹⁶³ *Clonmel Chronicle*, 16 Oct., 3 Nov. 1920, 4 Jun., 27 Jul., 19 Oct., 10 Dec. 1921;

cancellation of a local cattle mart, the indefinite postponement of a local horse show, and the fact that 'it seems clear that Powerstown Park Races cannot now be held'.¹⁶⁴ The truce of July 1921 was warmly welcomed as was the Anglo-Irish Treaty several months later though the paper was extremely careful not to tread on any political sensibilities.¹⁶⁵

Conclusion

Editorially the *Clonmel Chronicle* assumed the role of a disinterested bystander during the 1914-1921 period. While the paper may have aspired to maintaining an appearance of absolute impartiality this unstated policy was still rather strange. After all County Tipperary was one of the most militant counties during this period and as Michael Hopkinson has noted, South Tipperary in particular has been most strongly identified with the War of Independence.¹⁶⁶ Accordingly the editorial silence of the *Chronicle*, one of South Tipperary's two newspapers at the time, with regard to on-going developments seems more like a disservice to its readers than a noble attempt to avoid any sense of bias. Possibly the paper's unionist editor, Arthur Ross Burns, disapproved of the militant nationalism that was asserting itself in his midst but felt that discretion was the better part of valour and that he could not vent such feelings in a catchment area that was predominantly nationalist. Unfortunately this is only speculation but what is known is that the *Chronicle* ultimately went the way of so many other Irish newspapers that had originally been established as solidly unionist organs. The *Clonmel Chronicle* ceased publication in 1935 when the company was purchased by the *Clonmel Nationalist*.¹⁶⁷

Clonmel Chronicle – Timeline

1848: founded by group headed by Joseph Napier Higgins and later acquired by Edmond Woods.

1893: acquired by trio of journalists led by David Montgomery.

1909: Arthur Ross Burns becomes editor.

1910: new board of directors appointed.

1909-1927: Arthur Ross Burns, editor.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 5 Aug. 1914

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, 30 Jul., 14, 17, 31 Dec. 1921;

¹⁶⁶ Hopkinson, op. cit., p.115

¹⁶⁷ *Cork Examiner, Irish Independent, Irish Press*, 30 Mar. 1935;

1935: ceased publication following acquisition by *Clonmel Nationalist*.

5.7 Case Study 5: *Kerryman*

Origins

Upon its establishment in 1904 the *Kerryman* joined a comparatively large group of newspapers serving County Kerry, all of which were published in Tralee. The new paper faced the very difficult task not only of remaining financially viable in a town that was already served by a comparatively large number of newspapers, but also of simply surviving in an extremely precarious journalistic environment. The clearly perilous nature of launching a newspaper in such conditions obviously did not discourage Maurice Griffin, and cousins Thomas and Daniel Nolan, the founding fathers of the *Kerryman*.¹⁶⁸ To compound such a hazardous venture Griffin was the only member of the triumvirate to have any previous experience in journalism, having worked as a legal correspondent at the *Kerry Weekly Reporter*. Originally from Dingle, Griffin spent eleven years working on the commercial staff of a building firm in Tralee, which was where he first came into contact with Thomas Nolan, the future co-founder of the paper.¹⁶⁹ The new publication demonstrated similar traits to many other provincial organs launched during this era such as strong support for 'Irish-Ireland' movements, most notably the Gaelic League and the GAA, and a keen Catholicism.¹⁷⁰ This was particularly exemplified by Daniel Nolan who in 1896 became secretary of the first branch of the Gaelic League in the county and was also a founder member of the Tralee Catholic Literary Society.¹⁷¹

One distinguishing feature of the *Kerryman* when it was launched in 1904 was that it did not carry advertisements on its front page, which certainly set it apart from almost all other newspapers. Its early issues were usually comprised of ten pages which was somewhat unusual for such a fledgling publication. By the outbreak of World War I ten years later, the *Kerryman* normally consisted of 10-12 pages though this dropped to six during 1916 and rose to eight following the end of the war. The

¹⁶⁸ *The Kerryman 1904-2004* (5 August 2004)

¹⁶⁹ *Kerryman*, 7 Apr. 1928

¹⁷⁰ *The Kerryman 1904-2004* (5 August 2004); *Kerryman*, 8 Apr. 1939;

¹⁷¹ *Kerryman*, 23 Apr. 1938

masthead contained the wording ‘all the news of interest to Kerry men’ above a front page that remained devoid of advertising. Those adverts that appeared within the paper were principally for clothing stores, household items, foodstuffs, agricultural machinery and supplies while there were occasional advertisements for cars, motorcycles, and bicycles. There were also frequent notices relating to farming matters in addition to similar announcements promoting Irish language events and GAA activities. However, what really set the *Kerryman* apart from most other provincial organs was its advocacy of the Sinn Féin cause from a very early stage.¹⁷²

Incarceration, suppression, and closure

Of the paper’s three co-founders Maurice Griffin personified this support for Sinn Féin to the greatest extent. Griffin, who was elected to Tralee Urban District Council in 1908, became a member of the party well before it started to gain any national popularity.¹⁷³ A deep-rooted antipathy developed between Griffin and Thomas O’Donnell, the Irish Parliamentary Party MP for West Kerry from 1900 to 1918. The hostility between the two men was not solely due to their divergent political loyalties. While contracted as an auditor to the Tralee and Dingle Railway, of which O’Donnell was Chief Executive, Griffin was highly critical of certain accounting practices at the company that led O’Donnell to dispense with his services.¹⁷⁴ The enmity between Griffin and O’Donnell was mirrored in exchanges between the *Kerryman* and the *Kerry Advocate*, the paper established by O’Donnell in conjunction with Maurice P. Ryle. Throughout the latter publication’s brief existence it excoriated Sinn Féin and its supporters while the *Kerryman* responded with similar severity in its criticism of O’Donnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party.¹⁷⁵

As the British authorities detained large numbers of Sinn Féin activists following the 1916 Rising Griffin was amongst those arrested. His detention, however, was considerably shorter than that of William

¹⁷² *Irish Times*, 21 Apr. 1938; *Kerryman*, 7 Apr. 1928, 8 Apr. 1939; Daniel Nolan’s obituary noted that the *Kerryman* ‘was an advocate of Sinn Féin almost from its foundation’ while the obituaries of Maurice Griffin and Thomas Nolan similarly noted the paper’s support for the party well before any significant electoral success had been secured.

¹⁷³ *Kerryman*, 8 Feb. 1908, 7 Apr. 1928; The *Kerryman* of 8 February 1908 records Griffin addressing a Sinn Féin meeting in Killorglin.

¹⁷⁴ J. Anthony Gaughan, *A political odyssey: Thomas O’Donnell, M.P. for West Kerry, 1900-1918* (Dublin, 1983), pp 117-8

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p.91

Sears (*Enniscorthy Echo*) and P.J. Doris (*Mayo News*) as he was released from Wakefield Prison after a few weeks.¹⁷⁶ Nevertheless, it was not long before the paper had another brush with the authorities. On 29 August 1916 the *Kerryman* was suppressed on the grounds that its evening edition, the *Liberator*, 'contained matter calculated to cause disaffection' in its issue of 19 August 1916. The *Irish Independent* intimated at the time that the 'matter' in question was a report that Listowel Guardians had passed a resolution concerning the execution of Sir Roger Casement.¹⁷⁷ The paper re-commenced publication in early October.

The *Kerryman* was again suppressed in October 1919 for a brief period following the publication of an advertisement for the Dáil Éireann loan. Its counterparts in Tralee, the *Kerry News*, *Kerry Weekly Reporter*, *Killarney Echo* (which was published in Tralee), and *Kerry People* were similarly censured at the same time.¹⁷⁸ The *Kerryman's* tribulations, however, did not end with this second suppression. The paper suspended publication for two weeks in November 1920 due to the extreme level of violent incidents in the Tralee area.¹⁷⁹ In March 1921 it was subjected to threats by the Anti-Sinn Féin Society, a highly secretive body that had first appeared in Cork in the summer of 1920 issuing threats against republican sympathisers.¹⁸⁰ However, this was only a prelude to even greater trauma. The following month the IRA shot dead Major John Alastair McKinnon at the golf links outside Tralee. In the aftermath, Crown Forces visited the offices of the *Kerryman* and demanded that its evening issue, the *Liberator*, be printed in black ruled mourning columns as a mark of respect to their dead colleague. The publishers decided not to print at all on that day. During the course of a series of aggravated reprisals the printing works and offices of the paper were completely destroyed.¹⁸¹ The *Irish Independent* reported at the time

¹⁷⁶ *Cork Examiner*, 30 Aug. 1916

¹⁷⁷ *Irish Independent*, 30 Aug. 1916; *The Kerryman 1904-2004* (5 August 2004); The *Kerryman's* centenary issue in 2004 suggested that the suppression stemmed from the publication of a letter congratulating Maurice Griffin on his release from prison. The same letter was also highly critical of the continued detention of Austin Stack.

¹⁷⁸ *Cork Examiner*, 16 Oct. 1919

¹⁷⁹ *Kerryman*, 20 Nov. 1920

¹⁸⁰ *Irish Independent*, 10, 11 Mar. 1921; *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Mar. 1921; Borgonovo, op. cit., p.179; Borgonovo details the appearance of this society in Cork city but states that there 'is no conclusive evidence that a pro-British civilian intelligence group' was actually in operation but suggests that 'it is plausible that such a network existed in Cork'. The *Kerryman* received a letter from the Anti-Sinn Féin Society warning against the publication of statements made at the Tralee Assizes regarding allegations that a man named John Houlihan had been murdered by Crown Forces.

¹⁸¹ *Irish Independent*, 21 Apr. 1938; *The Kerryman 1904-2004* (5 August 2004);

that the *Kerryman* was not expected to resume publication for six months.¹⁸² The paper actually remained out of print for over two years, only resuming publication in August 1923.

'All the news of interest to Kerry men': Editorial comment 1914-1921

As the passing of the Home Rule bill seemed imminent in early 1914 the *Kerryman* made the same mistake as several other Irish newspapers in grossly underestimating the desire and resolve of Ulster Unionists. The 'doleful prophecies of the Orange leaders are absolutely without foundation' the paper asserted and added that 'when the Ulster trouble has disappeared' the pending legislation would 'make it a real state of independence'.¹⁸³ However, the paper differed from many other provincial titles by assuming a decidedly guarded stance in anticipation of the implementation of a measure of Irish self-government. Such wariness was also very much in evidence at the start of World War I as it questioned whether Ireland's "loyalty" to England would reap any genuine benefit.¹⁸⁴ By October 1914 the *Kerryman* declared itself 'not in favour of sending Irishmen wholesale to be butchered on the continent – just at present'.¹⁸⁵

The reluctance to enthusiastically embrace the Home Rule settlement and the unwillingness to wholly support the British war effort developed into unconcealed hostility towards the Irish Parliamentary Party by the following year. The party's failure to secure a satisfactory settlement for nationalists drew sarcastic praise for the 'marvellous patience' it had shown though it had 'valuable incentive to persevere in the "hoping-on" process by the receipt of a salary of £400 a year each'.¹⁸⁶ Even though John Redmond's party had expressed its opposition to any form of conscription it was still 'wobbling and weak-kneed' and most likely to do 'what their English superiors command'.¹⁸⁷ Unlike most other provincial organs the *Kerryman* passed little editorial comment on the Easter Rising except to cite it as a by-product of the Irish Parliamentary Party's inaction in addressing nationalist grievances.¹⁸⁸ As early as

¹⁸² *Irish Independent*, 21 Apr. 1921

¹⁸³ *Kerryman*, 3 Jan. 1914

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 8 Aug. 1914

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 10 Oct. 1914

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 26 Jun. 1915

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 25 Sept. 1915

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 13 May 1916

July 1916 the paper called on John Redmond 'and his lieutenants' to resign as a consequence of throwing away 'countless chances for securing Irish legislative independence'.¹⁸⁹

Castigation of John Redmond and his party continued apace into 1917 as the paper confidently predicted its demise following by-election defeats at the hands of Sinn Féin. The results of the by-elections in North Roscommon and South Longford were viewed respectively as deliverance from 'English Whiggery' and proof of the 'patriotic integrity of the people' in the face of 'bribery, misrepresentation and intimidation'.¹⁹⁰ Subsequent Sinn Féin victories in East Clare and Kilkenny provoked similar editorial comment as the paper now focussed its ire on the Irish Convention. Seven months after its commencement and with no indication of any concrete result emerging, the *Kerryman* derisively remarked that the assembly was 'going great guns' and showing 'no sign of tiring yet'.¹⁹¹

Despite its well-established antagonism for the Irish Parliamentary Party the paper did not engage in any form of editorial triumphalism following Sinn Féin's sweeping general election victory in December 1918. Instead it focussed on the possibility of Ireland obtaining a favourable hearing at the Paris Peace Conference. The *Kerryman* was, however, far more circumspect than papers such as the *Meath Chronicle* and *Enniscorthy Echo* in this regard. It more reflected the cautious attitude of the *Mayo News* in merely speculating that the conference 'may, or may not, fail us'.¹⁹² President Wilson's subsequent refusal to give any consideration to the Irish question resulted in him being dubbed 'the world's chief hypocrite' and 'just as supercilious as his friend and partner, Lloyd George'.¹⁹³

As levels of violence in Ireland increased dramatically from 1919 onwards the *Kerryman* reported events extensively but curiously passed little editorial comment on actions carried out either by Crown Forces or by the IRA. Leading articles were notable for their stinging criticism of the British Government and what the paper regarded as its totally inadequate efforts to resolve the situation in Ireland. The Government of Ireland Act was dismissively labelled the 'Partition Bill' and described as 'the handiwork of Carson, who commanded Lloyd George to put it through the British Parliament'.¹⁹⁴ As hostilities

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 29 Jul. 1916

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 10 Feb., 12 May 1917

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 12 Jan. 1918

¹⁹² Ibid, 18 Jan. 1919

¹⁹³ Ibid, 22 Mar., 14 Jun. 1919

¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 13 Mar. 1920

intensified even further during 1920 the paper declared that ‘the English are pious hypocrites’ who were out ‘to humiliate and despoil this unfortunate nation’.¹⁹⁵ However, in common with so many other nationalist titles the *Kerryman* reserved particular contempt for British Premier, Lloyd George.

‘A notorious opportunist and trimmer’ who ‘hates this country with an abiding, wholehearted hate’ was how the paper described him in August 1920.¹⁹⁶ The British Prime Minister’s alleged loathing of all things Irish was a continuing theme in the editorial columns of the *Kerryman* as it further labelled him ‘the most unblushing hypocrite and prevaricator of his time’ who ‘made no attempt to conceal the malignant hatred he entertains for this country’.¹⁹⁷ In one of its final editorials before its enforced closure in April 1921 the resentment felt towards the British Prime Minister surfaced yet again as the paper asserted that no English minister since 1798 had ‘travelled so far along the path of coercion as he has done’.¹⁹⁸ Unfortunately the attack on the *Kerryman*’s premises barely two weeks after this editorial leaves it a matter for speculation as to how such a pro-Sinn Féin organ would have reacted to the truce of July 1921 and the Anglo-Irish Treaty six months later.

Conclusion

Although the *Kerryman* was ultimately classified as a pro-Sinn Féin organ along with titles such as the *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, and *Midland Tribune*, it differed significantly from the three latter newspapers. Unlike its Leinster counterparts the *Kerryman* never really articulated any degree of support or appreciation for the Irish Parliamentary Party. It is quite likely that this principally stemmed from Maurice Griffin’s very early conversion to the Sinn Féin cause and also the bitterness that developed between Griffin and the sitting MP for West Kerry, Thomas O’Donnell. Despite the link to Sinn Féin that pre-dated that of many other provincial titles the paper did not engage in any sense of *schadenfreude* at the demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Indeed as the War of Independence became more protracted the *Kerryman*’s editorial comment was certainly damning in its criticism of the British Government but hardly reached the same level of belligerence as that of the *Kilkenny People* or even the *Mayo News*. The admonition of Lloyd George was undoubtedly bitter in its tone but even the

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 29 May, 1920

¹⁹⁶ Ibid, 21 Aug. 1920

¹⁹⁷ Ibid, 9 Oct. 1920

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 2 Apr. 1921

Skibbereen Eagle, which most definitely had no republican tendencies, saw fit to similarly rebuke the British Prime Minister.

The *Kerryman* reflected the experiences of several other nationalist newspapers in undergoing periods of suppression plus the detention of one of its proprietors. However, only the *Westmeath Independent* and *Leitrim Observer* suffered to the same extent as the *Kerryman* by being forced out of business for over two years due to an attack on its premises. Nonetheless, it differed from many other provincial organs in that no individual personality was at the helm of the paper for a prolonged period of time as was the case at the *Westmeath Examiner* (J.P. Hayden), *Roscommon Herald* (Jasper Tully), *Drogheda Independent* (Michael A. Casey), and *Limerick Leader* (Con Cregan). Maurice Griffin passed away in 1928 at the relatively young age of fifty-three, Daniel Nolan died in 1938 while Thomas Nolan died the following year. Even though two of the co-founders had overseen the paper's fortunes for over three decades it was not a remarkably long stewardship by the standards of the Irish provincial press. Yet the publication they established proceeded to display impressive durability, far outliving all its contemporaries in Kerry at the time of its foundation.

Kerryman – Timeline

1904: founded by Maurice Griffin, Thomas Nolan, and Daniel Nolan.

1908: Maurice Griffin becomes a member of Sinn Féin.

1916: Maurice Griffin arrested and detained following Easter Rising. Paper suppressed from mid-August until early October.

1919: briefly suppressed for publishing advertisement for Dáil Éireann loan.

1920: publication suspended for two weeks due to high level of violence in Tralee area.

1921: printing works and offices wrecked by Crown Forces resulting in cessation of publication until August 1923.

5.8 Munster newspapers – Thematic analysis

Many of the characteristics of provincial newspapers in Leinster and Connacht are similarly discernible across the provincial print media in Munster during these years. Dominant figureheads at the helm, prolonged editorial reigns, remarkably lengthy periods of family ownership, and enthusiastic support for the GAA and Gaelic League were a feature of many nationalist titles in Munster though perhaps to a slightly lesser extent than the other two provinces. Munster newspapers also fell foul, possibly to a greater degree, of the Press Censor and Crown Forces with a number of nationalist titles suffering considerably as a result. However, other titles suffered at the hands of the IRA as it attempted to enforce its own form of censorship. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the output of some of the unionist and independent organs located in the province provide a rather unique perspective on this turbulent period of Irish history.

The *Clare Champion* most embodied a number of the features that were common to many newspapers across the three southern provinces. Over a century of ownership by the Galvin family, Sarsfield Maguire's four decades in the editorial chair, and his wife Josephine's determination that the paper should reflect her devout Catholicism marks the *Clare Champion* as exemplifying many of the primary features of Irish provincial newspapers. The fact that the paper experienced quite a lengthy suppression lends further weight to this assertion. On the other hand dominant personalities such as E.T. Keane and Jasper Tully plus prolonged occupancy of the editorial chair by a single individual were probably not as much in evidence in Munster as elsewhere. Con Cregan's fifty years as editor of the *Limerick Leader*, however, provides at least one example of the latter. The promotion of the activities of organisations such as the GAA and the Gaelic League was also clearly evident in Munster, particularly in publications such as the *Southern Star*, *Clonmel Nationalist*, *Tipperary Star*, and *Kerryman*.

Munster newspapers had to contend with the possibility of suppression and attacks on their premises possibly to a greater degree than in any of the other three provinces. A variety of titles in counties Clare, Limerick, Cork, Kerry, and Waterford were either suppressed or suffered malicious raids on their printing works and offices. The suppression of the *Southern Star* even before it became a Sinn Féin organ highlights the sense of uncertainty under which papers had to operate. Cumulatively the *Southern Star* probably endured the longest period of suppression of any provincial newspaper in Ireland though the

Clare Champion and *Waterford News* were also subjected to considerable periods of suppression. All four nationalist newspapers in County Limerick were also suppressed with the *Weekly Observer* in Newcastle West additionally enduring an attack on its offices. In Kerry the *Killarney Echo* did not reappear following an attack on its premises by Crown Forces. It was the *Kerryman*, however, that bore the worst excess of the British military as it was forced out of publication for over two years. Nonetheless, it was not only Crown Forces that were making the operation of a newspaper such a hazardous business. In addition to targeting the *Cork Examiner* the IRA issued threats and carried out attacks on both staff and premises of both the *Cork Constitution* and *Skibbereen Eagle* that ultimately led to the demise of both titles.

From an editorial standpoint the five newspapers considered in this chapter differ significantly from those titles in Leinster and Connacht similarly analysed. The papers scrutinised in the previous two chapters were nationalist organs, if not all necessarily pro-Sinn Féin. In Munster the situation is somewhat different. The *Kerryman* certainly held pro-Sinn Féin sympathies from a very early stage so its reluctance to wholly embrace Home Rule was hardly surprising. Unfortunately its reaction to Sinn Féin's achievements under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty can only be speculated upon as the paper was not in publication at the time. The editorial comment of the *Southern Star* is somewhat fragmented due to the change of ownership, high turnover of editors, and lengthy periods of suppression. However the paper unambiguously supported the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The *Clonmel Chronicle* also voiced support for the Treaty though otherwise it remained editorially oblivious to almost all significant developments between 1914 and 1921.

This most certainly was not the case at the *Cork Constitution* and *Skibbereen Eagle*. The leading articles of both these titles provide quite a unique perspective on developments in Ireland between 1914 and 1921. As a staunchly unionist organ the *Constitution* voiced strong support for the Ulster Unionists but curiously expressed utter disdain at the prospect of partition. It was also far quicker than many of its nationalist contemporaries in foreseeing probable developments within nationalism such as the electoral meltdown of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the estrangement of Eamon de Valera from his erstwhile Sinn Féin colleagues.

The editorial commentary of the *Skibbereen Eagle* refutes any suggestion that it was a unionist organ. The *Eagle* wholeheartedly welcomed the prospect of Home Rule and was quite antagonistic in its attitude to the Ulster Unionists or any notion of partition. Nevertheless, the paper had little time for Sinn Féin's brand of nationalism and, similar to the *Cork Constitution*, adopted a far more realistic attitude than many nationalist titles. This was most evident in its prediction that Sinn Féin's appeal to the Paris Peace Conference would fall on deaf ears and that an Irish republic was never likely to result from the negotiations that followed the truce of July 1921. Yet the *Eagle* did not join with other papers in blandly labelling the Easter Rising as the 'Sinn Féin rebellion'. It most honourably refused to accept that Sinn Féin had any involvement in the 'German plot' of 1918 and it expressed warm praise for the negotiating skills of Michael Collins and Arthur Griffith following the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

The *Clonmel Chronicle*, *Cork Constitution*, and *Skibbereen Eagle* operated in a region where the majority of their fellow-newspapers were solidly nationalist. Consequently analysis of their response to the evolving situation in Ireland during these years lends a much needed sense of balance to this examination of the Irish provincial press. This sense of balance can only be fully achieved by comprehensive scrutiny of provincial newspapers in an area where nationalist titles were not in the majority. Accordingly this study can only be fittingly concluded by closely examining the wide variety of provincial papers across the nine counties of Ulster.

Chapter 6 – Ulster

Ulster newspapers 1914-1921			
<u>County</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Place of publication</u>	<u>Political leaning/orientation</u>
Antrim	<i>Ballymena Observer</i>	Ballymena	Unionist
	<i>Ballymena Weekly Telegraph</i>	Ballymena	Neutral
	<i>Ballymoney Free Press</i>	Ballymoney	Unionist
	<i>Carrickfergus Advertiser</i>	Carrickfergus	Neutral
	<i>Larne Times</i>	Larne	Unstated
	<i>Lisburn Herald</i>	Lisburn	Unionist
	<i>Lisburn Standard</i>	Lisburn	Unionist
	<i>North Antrim Standard</i>	Ballymoney	Unionist
Armagh	<i>Armagh Guardian</i>	Armagh	Unionist
	<i>Lurgan Mail</i>	Lurgan	Unionist
	<i>Portadown Express</i>	Portadown	Unionist
	<i>Portadown News</i>	Portadown	Unionist
	<i>Ulster Gazette</i>	Armagh	Unionist
Cavan	<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	Cavan	Nationalist
	<i>Irish Post</i>	Cavan	Unionist
Derry	<i>Coleraine Chronicle</i>	Coleraine	Unionist
	<i>Derry Journal</i>	Derry	Nationalist
	<i>Derry People</i>	Derry	Nationalist
	<i>Derry Standard</i>	Derry	Unionist
	<i>Derry Weekly News</i>	Derry	Unstated
	<i>Irish Daily Telegraph</i>	Derry	Neutral
	<i>Londonderry Sentinel</i>	Derry	Unionist
	<i>Northern Constitute</i>	Coleraine	Unionist
Donegal	<i>Donegal Democrat</i>	Ballyshannon	Nationalist
	<i>Donegal Vindicator/ Independent</i>	Ballyshannon/Letterkenny	Nationalist
Down	<i>Banbridge Chronicle</i>	Banbridge	Independent
	<i>County Down Spectator</i>	Bangor	Unionist
	<i>Down Recorder</i>	Downpatrick	Unionist
	<i>Dromore Leader</i>	Dromore	Unionist
	<i>Dromore Weekly Times</i>	Dromore	Neutral
	<i>Frontier Sentinel</i>	Newry	Nationalist
	<i>Newry Reporter</i>	Newry	Independent
	<i>Newry Telegraph</i>	Newry	Unionist
	<i>Newtownards Chronicle</i>	Newtownards	Unionist
	<i>North Down Herald</i>	Bangor	Unionist
Fermanagh	<i>Fermanagh Herald</i>	Enniskillen	Nationalist
	<i>Fermanagh Times</i>	Enniskillen	Unionist
	<i>Impartial Reporter</i>	Enniskillen	Unionist
Monaghan	<i>Northern Standard</i>	Monaghan	Unionist
Tyrone	<i>Dungannon Democrat</i>	Dungannon	Nationalist
	<i>Mid-Ulster Mail</i>	Cookstown	Unionist
	<i>Tyrone Constitution</i>	Omagh	Unionist
	<i>Tyrone Courier</i>	Dungannon	Unionist
	<i>Strabane Chronicle</i>	Strabane	Independent
	<i>Strabane Weekly News</i>	Strabane	Unionist
	<i>Ulster Herald</i>	Omagh	Nationalist

6.1 Introduction

The nine counties of Ulster cover a geographical area of just under 22,000 square kilometres making it the second-largest Irish province after Munster. However, during the 1914-21 period it was by some distance the most populous province. According to the 1911 census the nine counties of Ulster boasted a population of 1.58 million people.¹ Even with the considerable population of Belfast (387,000) excluded the province of Ulster still possessed the largest population. At 204,000 County Down had the largest population while County Fermanagh had the lowest at just under 62,000.

In addition to having the largest population the province also boasted the largest number of provincial titles. A total of forty-six local papers were published in Ulster between 1914 and 1921. Four of them, the *Impartial Reporter*, *Londonderry Sentinel*, *Anglo-Celt*, and *Donegal Democrat* are scrutinised in this chapter. With the exception of the *Londonderry Sentinel* these titles were published in urban centres with relatively small populations. The unionist *Impartial Reporter* was based in Enniskillen which had a population of just under 5,000. Its main competition for unionist readership was the *Fermanagh Times*, also based in Enniskillen. The town was also home to the nationalist *Fermanagh Herald*. The aforementioned population of County Fermanagh was 56% Catholic with most of the remainder unsurprisingly comprised of Protestant denominations. Amongst these the Church of Ireland was most dominant at 34% with 7% Methodist and 2% Presbyterian.

With a population of 41,000 the city of Derry was the largest urban centre of population outside Belfast. The county had a total population of just under 141,000 which was served by two Coleraine newspapers (*Coleraine Chronicle* and *Northern Constitution*) while the *Londonderry Sentinel's* main rivals in the city were the unionist *Derry Standard* and the nationalist titles, the *Derry Journal* and the *Derry People*. The split of religious denominations was somewhat different in County Derry than in County Fermanagh. In the city of Derry the population was comprised of 56% Catholic, 18% Church of Ireland, 21% Presbyterian, and 3% Methodist. In the county the figures were 42% Catholic, 20% Church of Ireland, 34% Presbyterian, and 1% Methodist.

¹ Vaughan et al, pp 3-68; All the demographical statistics and information provided in this section are based on the 1911 census and are cited from Vaughan and Fitzpatrick's work.

The *Anglo-Celt* was published in Cavan town which had a population of slightly less than 3,000. County Cavan's population of 91,173 was the third-lowest of the Ulster counties. However, the *Anglo-Celt* had the advantage of being the county's only nationalist paper. Additionally, the county was home to the highest proportion of Catholics (81.46%) of all the Ulster counties. The *Donegal Democrat* was based in Ballyshannon which had a relatively small population of just over 2,000. However, the total population of County Donegal was 168,000 of which 79% was Catholic. Only two other papers were published in the county, the *Donegal Vindicator*, also based in Ballyshannon, and the *Donegal Independent* which served as the Letterkenny edition of the former paper.

6.2 Ulster newspapers – an overview

It is scarcely any great historical revelation to state that the characteristics of the provincial print media in Ulster during the 1914-1921 period differed considerably from the other three Irish provinces. Unionist titles were in the majority across the nine counties of Ulster but to the greater extent within the six counties that ultimately constituted the Northern Ireland state. Aside from the totally divergent political outlook of most of these unionist titles, the greater portion of them were established before 1880 with a significant amount dating back to the first half of the nineteenth century. By contrast most of the nationalist titles in the province had been founded from 1880 onwards in common with the majority of nationalist papers in the other three provinces. Nonetheless, many unionist organs shared certain features with those of their nationalist counterparts.

The most prominent of these was the lengthy editorial reigns that were so prominent an attribute of provincial newspapers in Leinster, Connacht, and Munster. The long and unbroken periods of family ownership that was evident at several newspapers in these three provinces was an equally visible trait at many titles in Ulster. This was most definitely the case at two of the papers that are subject to close scrutiny in this chapter, the *Impartial Reporter*, published in Enniskillen, and the *Londonderry Sentinel*. In the case of the *Impartial Reporter* it is the Trimble family that is almost inextricably linked with the name of the paper while the Colhoun family was closely associated with the *Londonderry Sentinel* for well over one hundred years. Both publications were staunchly unionist and so provide an altogether different perspective on this period of Irish history than any of the titles already analysed.

The *Impartial Reporter* and the *Londonderry Sentinel* had been in publication since the first half of the nineteenth century as had the *Anglo-Celt* in Cavan, the third paper to undergo detailed scrutiny in this chapter. Similar to the two aforementioned titles the *Anglo-Celt* was a family-owned newspaper, in this case it was the O'Hanlon family that held proprietorship over an extended period. However, the *Anglo-Celt* was a nationalist title as was the *Donegal Democrat*, the final newspaper to be analysed in this study. In complete contrast to the other three publications, the *Donegal Democrat* was only established in 1919 and its foundation at that time reflected the emergence of the new form of nationalism that had manifested itself in the few years preceding the paper's appearance. Detailed examination of both the *Anglo-Celt* and the *Donegal Democrat* provide valuable insight as to how nationalist organs reacted to developments in a region where most other newspapers professed an acutely conflicting political ideology. Nonetheless, as in the case of the other three provinces, such titles cannot be considered in isolation as it is essential firstly to provide a brief summary of the provincial press across the entire province.²

The most striking aspect of the provincial print media in the six counties that ultimately came under the authority of the Stormont Parliament was the extent to which unionist titles outnumbered those of a nationalist persuasion. Across these six counties there were forty-one local titles of which only six were nationalist.³ Even allowing for the fact that a small number of these publications were considered neutral or independent the unionist predominance is rather remarkable. Indeed across the entire province of Ulster it was only in County Donegal that nationalist organs were in the majority. The trend was most pronounced in Counties Antrim, Armagh, and Down with only one nationalist title (*Newry's Frontier Sentinel*) featuring amongst the twenty-two local papers published across the three counties. Such a high amount of local titles was all the more impressive given the proximity to Belfast and the substantial regional appeal of larger publications such as the unionist *Belfast Newsletter*, *Belfast Telegraph*, and *Northern Whig* in addition to the nationalist *Irish News*.

Despite these clearly evident differences, the print media in Ulster still shared a certain amount of characteristics with the other three provinces. The most visible of these was the exceptionally lengthy

² See Appendix G for a more comprehensive overview of Ulster newspapers.

³ These figures exclude any newspapers published in Belfast and also localised editions of a number of newspapers.

periods that many individual newspapermen spent at the helm of their particular publications. In County Antrim John Wier exemplified this trademark feature by spending almost fifty years as proprietor of the *Ballymena Observer*. In common with many of his fellow journalists in the province Wier was a devout Presbyterian and a staunch unionist.⁴ In a similar vein James McCarrison, editor of one of County Antrim's other main newspapers, the *Lisburn Herald*, held equally strong unionist convictions and was also a member of the Ulster Volunteers. McCarrison served as editor of the paper for over forty-seven years.⁵

The *Down Recorder* provided one of the most salient examples of editorial longevity and prolonged family links. William Young (W.Y.) Crichton became editor-proprietor of the paper in 1894 and remained in the position for over sixty years. Additionally the Crichton family has retained its close association with the paper for over one hundred years.⁶ Also in County Down, James Brown, editor-proprietor of the *Newry Telegraph*, held a deep Presbyterian faith similar to many of his counterparts in Ulster and was also a member of the Orange Order.⁷ The county's only nationalist title, the *Frontier Sentinel* in Newry, displayed a number of the attributes that were common to other nationalist organs across the country. The paper's editor, Joseph Connellan, occupied the editorial chair for almost sixty years and he was also an enthusiastic advocate of both the Gaelic League and the GAA.

One of the principal newspapers in County Armagh, the *Armagh Guardian*, was owned and edited by Samuel Delmege Trimble, a brother of William Copeland Trimble of the *Impartial Reporter*. By the start of World War I Trimble was a veteran of Irish journalism having worked at a number of papers in the north-west as well as at *Saunders Newsletter* in Dublin.⁸ This latter title ceased publication in 1879 and is regarded as the first commercially successful daily newspaper to serve the capital.⁹ Samuel Delmege Trimble was an unapologetic unionist as was John Young, proprietor of the *Portadown News*, also in County Armagh. Young, who died shortly after the outbreak of World War I, was also a strong supporter of the Ulster Volunteers.¹⁰ The editor of the *Portadown News* was James Campbell, who served in the

⁴ *Ballymena Observer*, 4 Feb. 1927

⁵ *Lisburn Herald*, 9 Nov. 1940

⁶ *Down Recorder*, 4 Jan. 2012

⁷ *Newry Reporter*, 17 Jul. 1969; *Newry Telegraph*, 19 Jul. 1969;

⁸ *Belfast Telegraph*, 1 Apr. 1947; *Irish Independent*, 2 Apr. 1947;

⁹ Oram, op. cit., p.34

¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 15 Dec. 1914

position for over forty years.¹¹ Such editorial longevity was more than matched at the *Lurgan Mail* where Louis Richardson, the paper's founder, was editor-proprietor from 1890 until 1936. The *Lurgan Mail* reflected the staunch unionist principles held by Richardson.¹²

Brothers John and Henry Little (H.L.) Glasgow, who established the *Mid-Ulster Mail* in Cookstown, County Tyrone in 1891, were also noted for their unwavering unionism. Both were also devoutly Presbyterian while H.L. Glasgow provided another example of remarkably lengthy occupancy of the editorial chair by serving in that position for fifty-eight years.¹³ The *Tyrone Courier* in Dungannon was owned and edited by Robert Taylor (R.T.) Simpson, a Presbyterian clergyman who was actively involved in the anti-Home Rule campaign. The Simpson family still owned the paper one hundred years later.¹⁴ At the *Tyrone Constitution* in Omagh, Robert A. Parke, a steadfast Presbyterian and a deeply committed unionist, served as editor from 1916 until 1968. Parke's unionist convictions were shared by the owner of the paper, Thomas Johnston, who acquired the *Tyrone Constitution* in 1904.¹⁵ The town of Omagh also featured a nationalist title, the *Ulster Herald*, which equally displayed characteristics that were common to both nationalist and unionist organs. The main personality behind the foundation of the paper in 1901, Michael Lynch, held a firm Catholic faith and was also a keen supporter of the GAA.¹⁶ The family associations with provincial newspapers that was a feature of both nationalist and unionist sections of the print media, was again visible at the *Ulster Herald* where the Lynch family still held the reins of the paper over a century after its establishment.¹⁷

Similar to Michael Lynch, Patrick A. (P.A.) McManus, the editor of County Fermanagh's principal nationalist newspaper, the *Fermanagh Herald*, was a staunch nationalist and a devout Catholic.¹⁸ Robert Hill (R.H.) Ritchie was editor-proprietor of the unionist *Fermanagh Times*. Hill, a member of the Orange Order, had taken the reins of the paper following the death of his father in 1916. Despite their

¹¹ *Irish Press*, 4 Jul. 1932

¹² *Lurgan Mail*, 29 Aug. 1936

¹³ *Irish Times*, 25 Dec. 1950, 9 Apr. 1957;

¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 7 Jul. 1944; *Tyrone Courier*, 5 Mar. 1980;

¹⁵ *The Tyrone Constitution: 150 years in print* (3 November 1994); *Tyrone Constitution*, 5 Apr. 1957;

¹⁶ *Ulster Herald*, 20 Apr. 1935

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 3 Jan. 2002

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 22 Dec. 1934; *Impartial Reporter*, 20 Dec. 1934; *Fermanagh Herald*, 29 Dec. 1934;

conflicting political ideologies both P.A. McManus and R.H. Ritchie were close friends.¹⁹ In neighbouring County Derry the nationalist *Derry People* was launched in 1902 with Patrick Joseph (P.J.) Flanagan its first editor. Flanagan, who later became involved in the republican movement, was an ardent supporter of the Gaelic League.²⁰ Also in Derry, James Joseph (J.J.) McCarroll, managing-director of the *Derry Journal*, was similarly a Gaelic League enthusiast in addition to being a wholehearted supporter of the GAA. In common with many of those in the nationalist ranks of the provincial press McCarroll was also devoutly Catholic.²¹ By contrast, one of the other main newspapers in the city of Derry, the *Derry Standard*, traditionally catered for the city's Presbyterian community.²²

The three Ulster counties that were to remain outside the Northern Ireland state, Cavan, Monaghan, and Donegal, did not feature the same amount of local titles as the other six counties in the province. The only paper published in County Monaghan was the unionist *Northern Standard*. County Cavan's only newspaper apart from the *Anglo-Celt* was the short-lived *Irish Post* (1910-1920). In County Donegal the strong connection between the GAA and the provincial press was again visible at the *Donegal Independent* where Patrick Aloysius (P.A.) Mooney, editor-proprietor of the paper until his death in 1907, served a term as vice-president of the GAA in the county.²³ The undoubted Catholic dimension that was a marked feature of so many nationalist newspapers was further illustrated at the *Donegal Vindicator*. John McAdam, who established the paper in 1889, was noted for his steadfast Catholic faith as was his daughter, Marie McAdam, who assumed control of the *Vindicator* upon her father's death in 1925.²⁴ Until 1920 the *Donegal Vindicator* had published a localised edition for County Fermanagh, the *Fermanagh News*. However, the main newspaper in County Fermanagh was the *Impartial Reporter*, which is the subject of the first case study in this chapter.

¹⁹ *Irish Times*, 5 Aug. 1943; *Fermanagh Herald*, 7 Aug. 1943;

²⁰ *Derry Journal*, 21 Feb. 1961

²¹ *Derry Journal*, 3 and 5 Mar. 1937; *Fermanagh Herald*, 6 Mar. 1937; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 4 Mar. 1937;

²² Brian Lacy, *Siege city: the story of Derry and Londonderry* (Belfast, 1990), pp 179-80

²³ *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Times*, 10 Jun. 1907;

²⁴ *Donegal Vindicator*, 13 Jun. 1925, 7 May 1938; *Donegal Democrat*, 7 May 1938;

6.3 Case Study 1: *Impartial Reporter*

The Trimble family and the *Impartial Reporter*

It is no exaggeration to state that the family association with individual newspapers that is such a distinguishing hallmark of the Irish provincial press is exemplified to the greatest extent by the *Impartial Reporter*. The Trimble family's connection to the paper stretches right back to its foundation in 1825 and although it was sold in 2006, the family still retain a considerable interest right up to the second decade of the twenty-first century.²⁵ The *Impartial Reporter* was launched by John Gregsten, described as a 'printer and jaunting car proprietor', and its first editor was William Trimble, who assumed proprietorship following Gregsten's death from cholera in 1834.²⁶ For much of the nineteenth century the paper was known as the *Fermanagh Reporter* with William Trimble at the helm for almost fifty years, during which time he became a considerably influential figure in the county. Trimble held a strong Presbyterian faith and was described as a person who fought his battles 'with his pen in one hand and his bible in the other'.²⁷ He had eighteen children by his first wife, Jane Beatty, nine of whom died young. Following the death of his first wife, William Trimble married Anne Farrell with whom he fathered a further eight children, six of whom survived.²⁸

The third son by William Trimble's second marriage was the aforementioned Samuel Delmege Trimble who ultimately went on to become editor-proprietor of the *Armagh Guardian*. However, it was the eldest son by this marriage, William Copeland Trimble, who inherited control of the *Impartial Reporter*, five years prior to the death of his father in 1888. Like his father before him, William Copeland Trimble married twice, his first wife dying in 1892. He had three sons and two daughters by his first marriage plus two sons and a daughter by his second marriage. Lionel Trimble, one of his sons by his first marriage, died after contracting a chill during a fire that destroyed the paper's printing works in 1901. Noel Trimble, a son by his second marriage, enlisted in the British Army and was killed in France in April

²⁵ 'Impartial Reporter sold to Ulster News Group'. *Press Gazette: Journalism Today*, 20 Jun. 2006 available at <http://www.pressgazette.co.uk/node/34580> [Accessed 20 Feb. 2015]

²⁶ Séamus MacAnnaidh, *Fermanagh books, writers, and newspapers of the nineteenth century* (Enniskillen, 1999), pp 34-5 and pp 86-7

²⁷ Ibid, pp 86-7; *Impartial Reporter: 150th Anniversary Edition* (22 May 1975);

²⁸ Desmond McCabe, 'Trimble, William' in McGuire et al (eds.); Anne Farrell was the widow of John Farrell, a Westport merchant, whose son was the aforementioned J.H. Farrell, founder of the *Portadown News*.

1916. William Copeland Trimble occupied the editorial chair of the *Impartial Reporter* for sixty-six years meaning that for almost the first one hundred and ten years of its existence the paper was exclusively edited by father and son.²⁹

Following the death of William Copeland Trimble in 1941 the paper passed to his son, William Egbert Trimble, known as “Master Bertie”. Although he spent some time as a younger man in Dublin and London learning the printing and journalistic trades, he was solely engaged with the *Impartial Reporter* from 1905 until his death in 1967. An accident at the paper’s printing works on New Year’s Day 1919 left him with a broken thigh and a limp for the rest of his life. His obituary in the nationalist *Fermanagh Herald* noted that William Egbert Trimble ‘would constantly write columns of vitriolic stuff about the [Irish] Republic yet he loved Dublin and its attendant cultural and musical circles’. According to the *Herald* he was also particularly proud of a photograph he had had taken with President Eamon de Valera ‘showing both of them smiling and obviously enjoying each other’s company’.³⁰

William Egbert Trimble was a keen music enthusiast, playing the violin, singing in a local choral society, and arranging the music for morning mass at his local Presbyterian church. His passion for music was inherited by his daughters, Joan and Valerie, who became accomplished concert pianists. They also inherited the reins of the *Impartial Reporter* following the death of their father. Accordingly, the paper faced into the late twentieth century under the fourth generation of the family with whom it had retained an unbroken relationship since its foundation in the early nineteenth century.³¹

William Copeland Trimble

The history of the Irish provincial press during these years is marked by the presence of formidable and imposing personalities such as E.T. Keane (*Kilkenny People*), Patrick Dunne (*Leitrim Observer*), and Jasper Tully (*Roscommon Herald*). However, no figure exemplifies this trait to the same extent as William Copeland Trimble. It is not simply his remarkably long tenure as editor of the *Impartial Reporter* that earns him such a reputation. Rather it was his response to contemporary developments, whether

²⁹ *Impartial Reporter*, 27 Nov. 1941

³⁰ Ibid, 16 Feb. 1967; *Fermanagh Herald*, 18 Feb. 1967; *Impartial Reporter:150th Anniversary Edition* (22 May 1975);

³¹ *Impartial Reporter*, 16 Feb. 1967; *Fermanagh Herald*, 18 Feb. 1967; The same obituary in the *Fermanagh Herald* also remarked that he was ‘bitterly’ unionist ‘in his loyalties’ yet was ‘never an Orangeman’.

through his own actions or the columns of his newspaper, which merits such a pre-eminent place in the annals of the Irish provincial print media. Nonetheless, this position of prominence is not altogether surprising for a person described as frequently ‘autocratic and egocentric’, even by the commemorative edition of his own newspaper.³²

Trimble’s ascension to the helm of the *Impartial Reporter* in the early 1880s coincided with the height of the Irish Land War. His concern for the plight of small farmers in his native county led to his involvement in the formation of the Fermanagh Tenant Farmers Association.³³ His support for land reform resulted in the *Impartial Reporter* depicting the ‘landlord class as an historical absurdity which had consistently suppressed the tenantry’ to the extent that it ‘had generated levels of discontent which threatened revolution’.³⁴ Accordingly the Land League received qualified support from Trimble and his paper and the 1881 Land Act was broadly welcomed. Nevertheless, the strongly nationalist element to the organisation, and its links with Charles Stewart Parnell, meant that such support was never likely to be more than temporary.³⁵

As the threat of Home Rule became more serious the *Impartial Reporter* ‘rapidly emerged as an even more strident and extreme vehicle of unionist opinion than its county rival, the *Fermanagh Times*’. Concurrently the paper developed into ‘a veritable quarry of anti-Home Rule invective’ while Trimble himself worked tirelessly at propagating the unionist position.³⁶ With the passing of Home Rule legislation becoming a reality Trimble lent his unequivocal support to Sir Edward Carson’s anti-Home Rule campaign. One of the first rallies in this campaign took place in Enniskillen in September 1912 and to mark the occasion William Copeland Trimble set about forming a mounted guard of honour for Carson. This troop of horsemen came to be known as the “Enniskillen Horse” and ultimately constituted the Ulster Volunteers’ only cavalry regiment.³⁷

³² *Impartial Reporter: 150th Anniversary Edition* (22 May 1975)

³³ *Ibid*; *Impartial Reporter*, 27 Nov. 1941;

³⁴ B.E. Barton, ‘The origins and development of unionism in Fermanagh, 1885-1914’ in Eileen M. Murphy and William J. Roulston (eds.), *Fermanagh: history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 2004), p.310

³⁵ Frank Thompson, ‘The Land War in County Fermanagh’ in Murphy et al (eds.), p.299

³⁶ Barton, *op. cit.*, pp 313-6

³⁷ Peadar Livingstone, *The Fermanagh story: a documented history of the County Fermanagh from the earliest times to the present day* (Enniskillen, 1969), p.271; *Impartial Reporter: 150th Anniversary Edition* (22 May

It is clear that William Copeland Trimble had a strong taste for military etiquette. His personal appearance was described as being 'always of a military style'.³⁸ One of the circulars sent to those forming the guard of honour for Carson contained precise instructions that 'a pole with the loyal union flag' was 'to be used like a lance, for ornament', 'a red braid' was 'to be wound round the brow band of the bridle' while 'two red, white, and blue rosettes' were 'to be tied at each side of the horse's head' in addition to 'six red, white, and blue ribbons for plaiting the horse's mane'. Trimble's zeal for such militaristic pageantry was further illustrated by the fact that he supplied the flags, rosettes, and ribbons but he also asked that each rider 'come in riding breeches and putties, if he has them, or tight trousers and leggings and spurs'.³⁹

In the aftermath of Carson's visit to Enniskillen in September 1912 Trimble forged ahead with his plans for the creation of a cavalry regiment. In November of that year he wrote to the Secretary of War in London seeking a supply of lances and in January of the following year he wrote requesting supplies of ammunition.⁴⁰ The letters from Trimble sparked a flurry of correspondence between the War Office in London and the Irish Administration in Dublin Castle. Trimble had initially given the impression that his troop of horsemen was formed simply to take its share 'in the defence of his country' and might be incorporated into the territorial system of the army.⁴¹ However, this explanation was given short shrift by the authorities.

The Under-Secretary's office in Dublin Castle concluded that following Carson's visit to Enniskillen 'the idea subsequently appears to have occurred to Mr Trimble to create a permanent drilled force' and that his request was calculated to obtain 'recognition from [a] legal authority so that there might be no evidence of the commission of the offence of illegal training and drilling'.⁴² The War Office broadly agreed that 'the communications of this gentleman, who calls himself "Commander" were couched in language 'to create further difficulty in dealing with practices which are on the border line of illegality'.⁴³ Effectively the authorities clearly understood that Trimble's allegiance and that of his aspiring cavalry

1975);

³⁸ *Impartial Reporter: 150th Anniversary Edition* (22 May 1975)

³⁹ Ulster Unionists, Drilling or Volunteers-Enniskillen Horse, CO904/27/1-198

⁴⁰ Trimble to Seely, 20 Nov. 1912 and 8 Jan. 1913, CO904/27/1-111, CO904/27/1-108;

⁴¹ Trimble to Seely, 20 Nov. 1912 CO904/27/1-111

⁴² Ulster Unionists, Drilling or Volunteers-Enniskillen Horse, CO904/27/1-195

⁴³ Ulster Unionists, Drilling or Volunteers-Enniskillen Horse, CO904/27/1-105/6

regiment lay firmly with Edward Carson and the Ulster Unionist Party, despite his protestation that ‘we do not touch party colours – our emblem is the Union flag’.⁴⁴ Ultimately Trimble was informed rather curtly that ‘the Army Council are not prepared, at the present juncture, to accede to the requests preferred by you’.⁴⁵

William Copeland Trimble was in his early sixties when war broke out in August 1914 and was consequently too old for active service despite his clearly evident ardour for the military lifestyle. He effectively withdrew from any significant form of political activity after 1921 but during the previous two years he had travelled to Australia, Canada, and the USA and on his travels he frequently addressed meetings regarding the prevailing situation in Ireland.⁴⁶ It was during the course of such a series of meetings that Trimble came to the attention of Dáil Éireann’s Publicity Department.

Through its contacts in Australia in June 1921 it was learned that ‘a man who calls himself William Copeland Trimble’ had addressed a number of meetings in New South Wales that had received significant coverage in several newspapers including the *Sydney Morning Herald*. Trimble’s speeches at such meetings, some of which were organised by the Protestant Federation of New South Wales, unsurprisingly propagated the Ulster Unionist position in addition to voicing extreme anti-Sinn Féin sentiment. However it was his address to a meeting held at Parramatta Town Hall that was most notable. Following the standard condemnation of Sinn Féin, Trimble bluntly stated that ‘the Irish problem would never be settled as long as there were Irish Celts in Ireland, because they were always a source of trouble’. His ethnically charged condescension preceded his bald assertion that ‘there was one man who understood Ireland, and whom Ireland understood’. ‘That man’, according to Trimble, ‘was Oliver Cromwell’. ‘What was wanted in Ireland’ he concluded, ‘was a modern Oliver Cromwell who would deal with outrages on the spot’.⁴⁷ Trimble’s racial denigration of Irish nationalists and his invocation of a figure so reviled by them, was hardly a spontaneous outburst; such sentiment was far from alien to the editorial comment of the *Impartial Reporter* between 1914 and 1921.

⁴⁴ Trimble to Seely, 20 Nov. 1912 CO904/27/1-111

⁴⁵ Ulster Unionists, Drilling or Volunteers-Enniskillen Horse, CO904/27/1-93

⁴⁶ *Impartial Reporter: 150th Anniversary Edition* (22 May 1975)

⁴⁷ ‘Ireland today – An Irishman on Sinn Féin’ June 1921, P80/185(1) and P80/185(2)

Editorial comment 1914-1921

The *Impartial Reporter* was normally published each Thursday with its masthead proclaiming that, in addition to County Fermanagh, the paper also served Cavan, Leitrim, North Monaghan, and South Tyrone. It was normally comprised of eight pages divided into seven columns though the number of pages occasionally dropped during the course of World War I. The front page was predominantly made up of advertisements but also included lists of local property auctions which, combined with details of auction notices that regularly appeared inside the paper, suggest that the *Impartial Reporter* may have catered for a slightly more affluent cohort of readers than many other provincial newspapers. Frequent adverts for motor cars, motor cycles, and side cars would appear to lend substance to such an assessment. Further advertisements for a variety of farm supplies and implements plus the publication of several agricultural notices reasonably explain the paper's appended title of *Farmer's Journal*. Other items to be advertised included the standard mix of household items such as flour and soap, plus various medications (most notably Andrews liver salt and Beechams pills and powders) in addition to notices promoting the paper's own printing business.

The *Impartial Reporter* made a number of claims above its editorial column. It asserted that its net sales were 'four times that of any other newspaper published in Enniskillen'. It further asserted that it possessed 'well over double the combined circulation of the other local papers' (presumably in County Fermanagh) and 'five times the combined circulation of other papers in the Clogher Valley'. Such multiple claims can often confuse rather than enlighten which may explain why by 1921, the *Impartial Reporter* simply stated that its net sales were certified as 6,119 weekly which equated to 'over six times' the net sales of papers published in the 'districts served by the Great Northern and Sligo Railways'. While such assertions cannot really be verified, the editorial columns over which they appeared were always likely to provide compelling reading with a personality such as William Copeland Trimble at the helm.

Leading articles in the *Impartial Reporter* during the early months of 1914 were understandably preoccupied with the Home Rule issue. From the outset a highly militant stance was adopted as it stated that Ulster's inclusion under the legislation 'invited Civil War'.⁴⁸ Accordingly, the Larne gun-running of

⁴⁸ *Impartial Reporter*, 1 Jan. 1914

April 1914 was enthusiastically lauded as ‘a wonderful triumph of organisation’.⁴⁹ The arming of the Ulster Volunteers seemed to inspire an emboldened attitude as the paper predicted that there was ‘no fear whatever of the Bill being placed on the statute book now’. In a rather smug manner the paper further contended that:

. . . Ulster is too strong. She knows her strength; she smiles at the Prime Minister and the Irish Party; she says nothing; she is peaceful; she is pursuing her ordinary avocations; but the silence is one of tension; she can laugh at political tricksters and the Irish Party; for she is strong in her might, and she knows what she can perform.⁵⁰

It was far from the only time that the paper would endeavour to speak on behalf of the entire province as if the region was an embodiment of political homogeneity and harmony. Nonetheless, the ostensible lack of concern that any Home Rule legislation would be enacted was short-lived. As the reality dawned that the Bill would most likely be passed a slight sense of desperation surfaced as it was suggested that the King should not sign the legislation as ‘Ulster will not acknowledge a Dublin parliament’.⁵¹ When it was finally signed into law in September 1914 the *Impartial Reporter* once more decided to speak on behalf of the province:

Ulster said nothing. It remained dumb, though it felt a lot, and girded its teeth all the more.⁵²

The eagerness to speak on Ulster’s behalf highlights the paper’s somewhat curious interpretation of Ulster’s geographic boundaries and indeed its broader attitude to partition. In January 1914 the *Impartial Reporter* emphatically declared that the Home Rule exclusion zone should not simply be comprised of ‘the four north-eastern counties but seven or eight counties of our northern province’.⁵³ However, by June 1916 the paper had decided that as counties Monaghan, Cavan, and Donegal were predominantly nationalist they did not ‘belong to our Ulster’.⁵⁴ Accordingly, it decreed ‘the new Ulster of

⁴⁹ Ibid, 30 Apr. 1914

⁵⁰ Ibid, 14 May 1914

⁵¹ Ibid, 9 Jul. 1914

⁵² Ibid, 1 Oct. 1914

⁵³ Ibid, 1 Jan. 1914

⁵⁴ Ibid, 8 Jun. 1916; This was certainly not viewed as a concession to nationalists. The paper simply concluded that ‘but for a slice of North Monaghan and a slice of West Cavan, neither of those counties belongs to our Ulster’. It also deemed that ‘the same thing applies to three-fourths of County Donegal’ with ‘the exception

the six counties of the Plantation’ and had no qualms in admitting that such a revision would ensure a unionist majority in an area that ‘will contain two unionists to one nationalist’.⁵⁵ Four years later, with the pending establishment of a northern parliament for six of the Ulster counties, the sentiment was restated that the inclusion of the remaining three counties would ‘invite trouble’ and ‘reduce the unionist majority so as to leave it at times in jeopardy’.⁵⁶ While the unionist *Cork Constitution* decried partition the *Impartial Reporter* was quite happy ‘to rejoice in being cut off from those with whom she cannot work and with whom no one can work satisfactorily’.⁵⁷ As levels of violence grew increasingly protracted during the summer of 1920 the paper seized the opportunity to assert ‘the great moral and religious superiority of the North in all relations of life’ while the nationalist South had ‘become Bolshevik, atheistic, and pagan’ and a place where ‘the Devil glories in using former followers of the Christ to be his hellish conspirators and manslayers’.⁵⁸

The outbreak of World War I and the attendant issues it generated with regard to recruitment and conscription did not pose any difficulties for the *Impartial Reporter*. ‘We must back the flag’, the paper proclaimed upon the outbreak of war, before warning that ‘we have no room in Ireland for traitors’.⁵⁹ Commitment to the war effort was notable for its castigation of those it deemed to be ‘shirking’ their duty, repeated calls for the introduction of conscription, and the excoriation of the Irish Parliamentary Party for its efforts in ensuring that conscription was not extended to Ireland after being introduced in Britain during 1915. ‘Ulster’s response to the call to the colours has been remarkable’ the paper proudly asserted in January 1915.⁶⁰ Those who had failed to enlist were deemed ‘cowards’ who, the paper confidently assured its readers, ‘have not proceeded from the homes of Ulster’. That ‘disgrace’, it continued, ‘appertains to the other provinces’.⁶¹ With such a mindset it was hardly surprising that the paper bemoaned that the government’s delay ‘in introducing compulsory service passes comprehension’.⁶² The *Impartial Reporter’s* response to the concerns of nationalist MPs regarding the

of a slice of East Donegal.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 15 Jun. 1916

⁵⁶ Ibid, 18 Mar. 1920

⁵⁷ Ibid, 21 Aug. 1919

⁵⁸ Ibid, 8, 29 Jul. 1920

⁵⁹ Ibid, 6 Aug. 1914

⁶⁰ Ibid, 14 Jan. 1915

⁶¹ Ibid, 11 Nov. 1915

⁶² Ibid. 29 Jul. 1915

introduction of conscription was to dismiss them as 'mere parrots' that 'have no minds of their own' and who 'must do as they are told'.⁶³ Accordingly, such nationalist MPs were denounced for having 'gloried in their shame when they took credit for having had Ireland excluded from the operation of the Compulsory Service Bill'.⁶⁴

To a certain extent the *Impartial Reporter's* response to the Easter Rising echoed that of the *Cork Constitution* in its outright vilification of both the British Government and the Dublin Castle authorities for its alleged failure to rein in what it considered the more extreme elements of Irish nationalism.⁶⁵ In its recognisably unrestrained manner the paper enthusiastically advanced the allegations of 'German gold' while those who took part in the rebellion were denigrated as the 'scum of Ireland's manhood'.⁶⁶ The rise of Sinn Féin that began to gather impetus during the first half of 1917 afforded the paper fresh opportunity to adopt a condescending attitude towards nationalist Ireland. As Sinn Féin began to assert itself as a serious electoral force its aspiration for an Irish republic was dismissed as 'insane an idea as ever evolved out of the mind of a madman'.⁶⁷ The paper's reaction to that party's by-election victory in East Clare in July 1917 prompted a somewhat xenophobic, possibly even racist, response. Following Eamon de Valera's return as MP for the constituency he was described as the 'brown-skinned Spaniard-American, foreign by his father's side, foreign by birth in the United States, and only having connexion (sic) with Ireland through his Irish mother'.⁶⁸ De Valera's Spanish connections were obviously a source of irritation to the *Impartial Reporter* as it referred to him on several occasions over the next few years in a rather petty manner as 'Senor de Valera'.⁶⁹

All the while the paper maintained its superior stance from within Ulster. 'We in Ulster are not much concerned with the family quarrel', the paper editorialised with regard to the struggle within Irish

⁶³ Ibid, 19 Aug. 1915

⁶⁴ Ibid, 21 Sept. 1916

⁶⁵ Ibid, 27 Apr. 1916; According to the paper 'Mr Henry Asquith and Mr Birrell should be in the same Tower of London (with Roger Casement)' as there had been 'no peace in the country since Mr Asquith became Prime Minister' and 'no trouble in Ireland like that which has occurred during the period of office of Mr Augustine Birrell'.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 4 May 1916; Though the tone of *Impartial Reporter* editorials were hardly noted for their moderation the reaction to Easter 1916 may have been even more embittered due to the death of Noel Trimble, a son of William Copeland Trimble, in France in April 1916.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 26 Apr. 1917

⁶⁸ Ibid, 19 Jul. 1917

⁶⁹ Ibid, 1 Nov. 1917, 7 Feb. 1918, 6 Feb. 1919, 14 Apr. 1921;

nationalism between the Irish Parliamentary and Sinn Féin. 'In this northern province' (presumably now excluding Monaghan, Cavan, and Donegal) 'we are safe from many of the distractions of the south and west'.⁷⁰ Yet it was abundantly clear prior to the East Cavan by-election of June 1918 that the *Impartial Reporter* was far from unconcerned about developments within nationalist politics. The contest between Arthur Griffith of Sinn Féin and John F. O'Hanlon of the Irish Parliamentary Party gave rise to one of the extremely rare instances that the paper voiced any positive sentiment about an Irish nationalist of any particular creed. In its obvious eagerness for a Sinn Féin defeat the paper described O'Hanlon as 'eminently a nationalist of worth, and a member that the country might be proud of'.⁷¹ This sudden regard for the Irish Parliamentary Party was again visible in the closing stages of the 1918 general election campaign. As the paper conceded that a Sinn Féin victory was virtually certain the Irish electorate was lambasted for having 'rushed to the newest fad' and forgotten 'all that the [Irish] Party has obtained and done for Ireland'.⁷²

Sinn Féin's sweeping general election victory conveniently removed any perceived necessity to express positive sentiment about any strand of Irish nationalism in the pages of the *Impartial Reporter*. Its editorial comment from then until the end of 1921 was marked by almost blanket denigration of Irish nationalism that was frequently quite vitriolic. When it quickly became clear that Sinn Féin would not obtain a hearing at the Paris Peace Conference the paper gleefully saluted the manner in which the US President had 'distinctly snubbed them [Sinn Féin] in an ignominious way which showed profound contempt and disdain'.⁷³ The proclamation of Sinn Féin in September 1919 was welcomed despite 'years of exasperating forbearance' as was the suppression of Dáil Éireann, 'the so-called assembly of an Irish-speaking parliament'.⁷⁴ Terence MacSwiney's death in October 1920 following his prolonged hunger strike was brusquely dismissed as a 'suicide' and a 'theatrical performance' that had been 'going on for weeks'.⁷⁵ However, the paper's antipathy towards Irish nationalism appeared to be also inspired by a somewhat racial undertone.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 12 Jul. 1917

⁷¹ Ibid, 19 May 1918

⁷² Ibid, 12 Dec. 1918

⁷³ Ibid, 20 Feb. 1919

⁷⁴ Ibid, 18 Sept., 1919

⁷⁵ Ibid, 28 Oct. 1920

In November 1919, with levels of violence increasing the paper berated the Dublin Castle administration for being 'ignorant of the mind and way of the Irish Celt' The same editorial had a very firm view on how to deal with the issue:

There was one man who did understand them, and there was one man whom they understood - Oliver Cromwell. We do not approve in these days of all that he did do, nor do we at all mean to convey that we need a man of the same unrelenting and Drogheda-ferocious type now - but we do most unhesitatingly assert for the last ten years the country has suffered for the want of such a man of iron resolution, quick execution, firmness of temperament, and exacting in just punishment. *We want a modern Oliver Cromwell.*⁷⁶

The invocation of a figure so loathed by Irish nationalists was certainly no sporadic outburst, as William Copeland Trimble's aforementioned speech in Australia in June 1921 illustrates. Indeed on no less than five separate occasions during 1919 and 1920 the paper called for a modern day Oliver Cromwell to deal with the situation in Ireland.⁷⁷ Castigation of the British Government's lack of resolution was combined with further disparagement of the 'Irish Celt':

We regret to have to admit it, but we must concede that British Government in Ireland has been a failure by reason of the incapacity of the Englishman (or Welshman) to understand the Irish Celt. Nearly all the politicians imagine that they can wheedle the Celt with soft soap and concessions, promises of Home Rule and the like; and Paddy laughs in his sleeve at the stupid Englishman, and prepares another raid to extract something more. Mr Lloyd George thought he would purchase peace by the doles (sic): Paddy smiled and murdered another man or two; Mr George increased the Old Age Pensions, and Paddy immediately murdered more, and made more raids on women.⁷⁸

With such an extreme and implacable outlook it was scarcely surprising that the paper was positively seething upon the calling of the truce in July 1921. It was 'humiliating', according to the paper, that England 'has had to confess defeat and surrender and make terms with men whom the Premier and

⁷⁶ Ibid, 6 Nov. 1919

⁷⁷ Ibid, 25 Mar., 27 May, 3 Jun., 2 Dec. 1920

⁷⁸ Ibid, 29 Jan. 1920

Chief Secretary declared over and over again were murderers and criminals'.⁷⁹ In the weeks prior to the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty conflicting opinions were evident as to the status of the six partitioned Ulster counties. In early November it was confidently predicted that 'the six northern counties are safe' as 'Lloyd George has again affirmed his pledge'.⁸⁰ Yet only a week later the paper declared that Lloyd George 'cannot be trusted' as 'there is no knowing what he may do yet'.⁸¹ Nonetheless, the *Impartial Reporter* reacted in near celebratory manner to the agreement reached in London in early December.

This was principally based on the failure to achieve an Irish republic and the necessity to take an oath of allegiance. Any disquiet regarding the possible revision of the boundary of the area over which the Stormont Parliament had administrative control was summarily dismissed.⁸² The paper gloated at the unfolding divisions within Sinn Féin and could not resist the temptation to once again condescendingly question de Valera's Irishness. 'Poor de Valera, the Spaniard, has been outwitted by the crafty Sassenachs' the paper almost joyfully declared.⁸³ Nor could it resist availing of the emerging Treaty split to further deprecate the 'Irish Celt':

As the Irish Celtic race are by nature fissiparous, a split is almost inevitable.⁸⁴

However, if many nationalist titles were guilty of underestimating the strength of unionist resolve, the *Impartial Reporter's* reading of nationalist politics displayed a similar lack of sound judgment. It confidently predicted that Mr de Valera would retire if the Dáil went against his wishes and ratified the Treaty.⁸⁵ This was to prove as equally lacking in foresight as the suggestion in many nationalist titles that the unionists of Ulster would ultimately feel their interests would be better served under a Dublin parliament. Possibly it provides a salutary lesson to all newspapers that they should restrict themselves to documenting and analysing contemporary developments rather than trying to predict the future.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 14 Jul. 1921

⁸⁰ Ibid, 3 Nov. 1921

⁸¹ Ibid, 10 Nov. 1921

⁸² Ibid, 8 Dec. 1921; Apart from a brief comment that some 'loyalists that live close to the borders of Fermanagh' that 'may find themselves outside the Northern Pale' the paper indicated little concern at any potential boundary changes.

⁸³ Ibid, 15 Dec. 1921

⁸⁴ Ibid, 29 Dec. 1921

⁸⁵ Ibid, 15 Dec. 1921

Conclusion

The *Impartial Reporter* encapsulated so many of the features that hallmarked both unionist and nationalist newspapers across the Irish provincial press in the latter nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century. Remarkably long editorial tenures, unbroken association with one family over a prolonged period of time, and a highly dominant personality with a deep religious faith at the helm of the newspaper were characteristics that were common to provincial titles across all the four provinces. Nevertheless, no other newspaper embodied all of these traits to the same extent as the *Impartial Reporter*. Through several generations of the Trimble family dating back to the early 1800s the paper arguably created a form of template within the provincial print media. However, its editorial comment between 1914 and 1921 was unlikely to have been replicated to any great extent across the country.

The *Impartial Reporter* was a staunchly unionist organ but its editorial output during these years was regularly quite self-serving and frequently strayed well beyond the defence of the unionist position. This most likely reflected the rather dictatorial tendencies of its editor-proprietor, William Copeland Trimble. The self-serving nature of the paper's editorial commentary was best illustrated by its effective re-drawing of the map of Ulster to exclude Monaghan, Cavan, and Donegal. While a unionist organ such as the *Cork Constitution* deplored partition the *Impartial Reporter* almost viewed it as cause for celebration. Unionists outside the 'new Ulster' were obviously of no concern to William Copeland Trimble and his paper. The creation of an administrative area in which a unionist majority could be guaranteed was clearly the main priority.

In its advancement of the unionist cause the *Impartial Reporter* did not confine itself to attacking the Irish Parliamentary Party or, in later years, Sinn Féin. It targeted all Irish nationalists, regardless of creed. In the early years of World War I this principally manifested itself in a series of allegations that nationalists were 'shirking' their duty by failing to enlist in the British Army. Yet such disparagement was quite mild in comparison to what was to come. The repeated calls for a 'modern Oliver Cromwell' and the persistent denigration of the 'Irish Celt' (accompanied by the derogatory use of the word 'Paddy') illustrate clearly that the paper had few qualms in engaging in blanket degradation of Irish nationalists. Consequently, it seems almost redundant to conclude that while the *Impartial Reporter* was unquestionably catering for a unionist readership, it displayed no desire to gain any understanding of

Irish nationalism, much less come to an accommodation with it. In summary the paper could justifiably be said to represent what Irish nationalists and others regarded as ‘intransigent unionism’.

Impartial Reporter – Timeline

1825: founded by John Gregsten with William Trimble as first editor.

1834: William Trimble assumes proprietorship following death of John Gregsten.

1883: William Copeland Trimble assumes control of paper.

1888: death of William Trimble

1912: William Copeland Trimble forms guard of honour, known as the “Enniskillen Horse, for Edward Carson’s visit to the town and subsequently endeavours to establish permanent cavalry regiment.

1916: death of Noel Trimble, son of William Copeland Trimble, while serving in the British Army in France during World War I.

1919-1921: William Copeland Trimble tours Australia, USA, and Canada.

1941: death of William Copeland Trimble.

1883-1941: William Copeland Trimble, editor-proprietor.

6.4 Case Study 2: *Londonderry Sentinel*

Origins

The establishment of the *Londonderry Sentinel* in 1829 coincided with the passing of Catholic Emancipation and the two events were certainly not unconnected. Derry historian Brian Lacy notes how the editor of the *Londonderry Journal* at the time, William Wallen, ‘vehemently disagreed’ with the policy of the paper’s new owners in supporting Catholic Emancipation. Accordingly, Wallen resigned his post and founded the *Londonderry Sentinel* along with a number of like-minded friends. The paper first appeared in September 1829 and its opening editorial professed alarm at the ‘ill-timed and timid concession’. ‘The Protestants have been deceived’, it continued, ‘by friends and guides in whom we trusted’. However, such people would be held accountable, as it warned that, ‘if the schoolmaster is

abroad, the Protestant Sentinel is at his post'.⁸⁶ In the decades that followed the *Sentinel* evolved to become what another local historian has labelled the city's 'chief anti-nationalist thunderer'.⁸⁷

The people behind the *Sentinel*

The remarkably lengthy family associations with individual newspapers that were a ubiquitous feature of the Irish provincial press is again in evidence at the *Londonderry Sentinel*. In this case it was the Colhoun family that fulfilled that role. James Colhoun was a junior member of staff at the time of the paper's foundation in 1829. When William Wallen died in 1843 Colhoun took over the management of the *Sentinel* on behalf of his widow. Upon her death in 1857 James Colhoun assumed proprietorship in conjunction with Thomas Chambers, a Derry solicitor. The partnership with Chambers was amicably terminated about twenty years later leaving Colhoun as sole proprietor. James Colhoun died in October 1897 at which stage the paper passed to his son, William Colhoun.⁸⁸

Like his father before him, William Colhoun was deeply involved in unionist politics in Derry. He was president of the Londonderry Unionist Association and also served on the standing committee of the Ulster Unionist Council during the campaign against Home Rule. Upon his death in 1915 the *Irish Times* remarked that 'for almost a quarter of a century past' he 'had been regarded as the leader of Unionism in Londonderry'. At the time of his passing in April of that year his three sons, James, William, and Jack, were all serving in the British Army.⁸⁹ However, it was to his eldest son, James that the proprietorship of the *Londonderry Sentinel* passed. James Colhoun served in France for the entirety of World War I with the Inniskilling Fusiliers. He followed in his father's footsteps by becoming president of the city's unionist association. Following his death in September 1945, control of the paper passed to his widow, Florence Colhoun, who managed the business until it was sold thirteen years later. The sale of the paper

⁸⁶ Lacy, op. cit., pp 173-4; *Derry Journal*, 9 Jun. 1972; *Derry Journal*: 225th Anniversary Supplement (6 June 1997); When marking both its centenary and its 150th anniversary the *Londonderry Sentinel* did not acknowledge that Catholic Emancipation was a factor in its establishment but merely stated that William Wallen had resigned the editorship of the *Journal* 'because his convictions were out of harmony with those of the new proprietors'.

⁸⁷ Seán McMahon, *A history of County Derry* (Dublin, 2004), p.115

⁸⁸ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 3 Apr. 1915, 19 Sept. 1929;

⁸⁹ Ibid, 3 Apr. 1915; *Irish Times*, 2 Apr. 1915;

in 1958 marked the end of the Colhoun family's links with the *Londonderry Sentinel*; it was an association that had lasted 129 years.⁹⁰

In contrast to the Trimble family at the *Impartial Reporter*, the Colhoun family did not occupy the editorial chair at the *Sentinel*. From 1893 until his retirement in 1931 the paper was edited by John Charles (J.C.) Orr who served a total of forty-eight years at the paper. Described as 'an exceedingly staunch unionist' with 'a deep rooted attachment to the cause which he so effectively espoused' Orr was one of the earliest and most enthusiastic recruits to the City of Derry battalion of the UVF.⁹¹ Similarly, one of Orr's senior colleagues at the paper, and indeed his successor as editor, Cecil Davis (C.D.) Milligan, was an equally resolute unionist. He was considered 'a staunch loyalist' with 'a deep-rooted attachment for the cause' and 'a great champion of Ulster and the British way of life'. Milligan was also a member of the UVF, the Orange Order, the City of Londonderry and Foyle Unionist Association, as well as being a devout member of the Church of Ireland.⁹² With such a fervently unionist ownership and editorship in place there was little doubt as to where the *Sentinel's* editorial allegiance lay. Nonetheless, the paper's editorial commentary between 1914 and 1921 is just as compelling as any other Irish provincial title, whether unionist or nationalist.

Editorial comment 1914-1921

The *Londonderry Sentinel* was a tri-weekly publication (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) usually consisting of eight pages divided into six columns. It carried roughly the same proportion of advertisements as most other provincial newspapers. Nonetheless, many of the individual adverts that featured strongly indicate a slightly wealthier cohort of readers. This was evidenced by the regular appearance of notices for shipping companies such as White Star Line, Anchor Line, and Union Castle Line promoting ocean-going liner travel, principally to the USA and Canada, but also to South and East Africa. Adverts for Ford cars plus a variety of brands of motorcycles and bicycles further strengthens the notion of a somewhat more affluent readership. The regular listing of the London Stock Exchange prices lends further weight to such a conclusion. Apart from this the advertising space consisted of much of the

⁹⁰ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 7 Sept. 1945, 19 Sept. 1979; *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 7 Sept. 1945;

⁹¹ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 2 Dec. 1941

⁹² *Ibid*, 22 Sept. 1956; Curiously Milligan was also a founder-member of Derry City Football Club, an institution that predominantly came to be associated with the city's nationalist population.

standard fare of drapery shops, foodstuffs, farm machinery, the paper's own printing works, plus a variety of medications such as Orrbridge lung tonic, Mother Spiegel's syrup, and Doan's backache and kidney pills.

The *Londonderry Sentinel* advertised itself as 'opposed to Home Rule or any legislation tending to sever the Union between England and Ireland'.⁹³ In the early months of 1914 this took the form of condemnation of the British government's plan to introduce a measure of Home Rule for Ireland. The plan was regarded as a 'cowardly desertion of the Unionists of Ireland' that left it up to 'the unionist manhood of Ulster to emphasise the extent of the outrage by preparing to make all resistance in its power'.⁹⁴ Accordingly, the British Army officers involved in the Curragh mutiny of March 1914 were fulsomely praised for having 'manfully offered to resign their commissions rather than do the government's dirty work'.⁹⁵ Hostility towards Home Rule took a decidedly more militant tone in the aftermath of the Larne gun-running as the paper predicted 'a death-grapple with whatever forces may be employed to expel them from their birth right in the Empire'. Such a 'death-grapple' would not cease 'until the unionists of Ulster are hopelessly and continually defeated, until the best and bravest are destroyed, until the land has been deluged in blood'.⁹⁶

With the outbreak of war in August 1914 the *Sentinel* promptly expressed its loyalty to the British cause while John Redmond's offer of nationalist assistance was instantly dismissed as a 'put-up job'.⁹⁷ Thereafter the paper frequently mirrored the *Impartial Reporter's* sentiments regarding recruitment, if not with the same strength of language, alleging minimal levels of enlistment across nationalist Ireland in contrast to what it claimed was the highly enthusiastic response from the unionist community in Ulster. Indeed the supposed failure of nationalists to enlist was a constantly recurring theme throughout the war. Cabinet ministers were lambasted for their failure to acknowledge 'the extraordinary disparity between the enlistment figures of the purely nationalist parts of Ireland and those of the area which includes Ulster'.⁹⁸ Similarly the government was warned of the necessity to act 'to prevent the

⁹³ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.584

⁹⁴ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 17 Jan. 1914

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 24 Mar. 1914

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 11 Jun. 1914

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 4 Aug. 1914

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, 9 Jan. 1915

wholesale flight to America of shirkers from the western counties of Ireland'.⁹⁹ Yet when a report published by the Lord Lieutenant in February 1915 contradicted the *Sentinel's* claims regarding recruitment, the figures were dismissed as being 'ridiculously astray' and 'bogus'.¹⁰⁰ Undeterred, the paper proceeded to call for conscription to be introduced in Ireland but claimed the government 'may be too greatly afraid of Mr Redmond and Mr Devlin'.¹⁰¹

In the immediate aftermath of Easter 1916 the *Sentinel* echoed the response of many provincial papers, both unionist and nationalist, in alleging German involvement in the rebellion. It claimed that 'a German auxiliary vessel disguised as a neutral and working in conjunction with a German submarine' had unsuccessfully attempted to land arms in the country.¹⁰² Although the rebels were labelled 'the Dublin mobsmen' the *Sentinel* appeared to express a grudging admiration for their ability to capture several buildings in Dublin that represented 'a fairly substantial achievement'.¹⁰³ Nonetheless, it agreed that 'it was absolutely necessary to make a speedy example of the ringleaders' in order to discourage 'certain people suspected of, shall we say, a sneaking sympathy with the movement for clearing the hated English garrison out of Ireland'.¹⁰⁴

The rise of Sinn Féin that ensued was greeted by the *Sentinel* with understandable antipathy. However, it did not engage to any noticeable extent, in the broad denigration of Irish nationalists so typical of the *Impartial Reporter*. Indeed the paper displayed a significant degree of foresight in its response to Sinn Féin's early electoral successes. Shortly after Count Plunkett's election as MP for North Roscommon in February 1917 it presciently articulated the fears of the Irish Parliamentary Party when commenting that 'the Plunkett poison may spread' and later acknowledged that party's dread of a general election as it would result in its 'political extinction'.¹⁰⁵ Éamon de Valera's victory in East Clare a few months later provided further confirmation, if it were needed, that 'the Sinn Féiners will sweep the decks as soon as they are given a chance'.¹⁰⁶ Despite its accurate assessment of Sinn Féin's electoral prospects the paper

⁹⁹ Ibid, 6 Nov. 1915

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 3 Feb. 1916

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 7 Oct. 1916

¹⁰² Ibid, 25 Apr. 1916

¹⁰³ Ibid, 27 Apr. 1916

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 9 May 1916

¹⁰⁵ Ibid, 17 Feb., 15 Mar. 1917

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 12 Jul. 1917

clearly harboured fears of its burgeoning influence. This was quite evident following the South Armagh by-election early in 1918 when it welcomed the Irish Parliamentary Party's victory over Sinn Féin and gladly admitted that 'South Armagh unionists' had 'helped the Redmondite candidate to beat the Sinn Féiner'.¹⁰⁷ The paper was guilty of considerable misreading of Sinn Féin tactics when it declared, in anticipation of that party's general election success, that its abstentionist policy could be abandoned in the face of pressure from the Catholic Church.¹⁰⁸

The *Sentinel's* hostility towards Sinn Féin generally did not manifest itself in the supercilious and partitionist tones that hallmarked the *Impartial Reporter's* editorial commentary. Equally it did not overtly purport to speak on behalf of the broader province of Ulster. Initially the paper objected to the entire island of Ireland being governed by a Home Rule parliament but ultimately it simply sought the exclusion of the six Ulster counties from any such measure. With the passing of the Home Rule bill in 1914 it defiantly proclaimed that 'a Dublin parliament will never rule over the northern province'.¹⁰⁹ Unionists from the South of Ireland were censured for their participation in the Irish Convention of 1917 and accused of not being representative of 'southern unionists generally'.¹¹⁰ The establishment of the Stormont parliament four years later was welcomed as a 'measure of self-government' that was 'compatible with the security of Britain and the inalienable liberties of the North'.¹¹¹

Throughout the three years leading up to the establishment of the Stormont parliament the *Londonderry Sentinel* had been a persistent critic of Sinn Féin for what it perceived as the party's inextricable links to the more violent elements of militant republicanism. Unlike the unionist *Cork Constitution* there was never any suggestion that the Sinn Féin leadership may simply have been unable to control such elements. The first meeting of Dáil Éireann in January 1919 was considered 'an incitement to crime' while Sinn Féin was later accused of possessing 'a great secret army, whose

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 5 Feb. 1918; This effectively confirms the assertion of the *Meath Chronicle* (referred to in Chapter 3) that the Irish Parliamentary Party victory was only achieved with unionist support.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, 21 Dec. 1918

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, 17 Sept. 1914

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 5 Mar. 1918

¹¹¹ Ibid, 14 Jun. 1921

business it is to murder police and soldiers, and who succeed in frightening the population into screening the murderers'.¹¹²

As the likelihood of some form of Irish self-government was being considered during 1920 the paper expressed its horror at the possibility that 'control of three parts of the country' would pass 'into the hands of men whose political creed consists of hatred both of England and the majority of the people in the remaining quarter'.¹¹³ Indeed the concern at what it considered the government's leniency in 'allowing the unhindered development of the Sinn Féin programme' was so great that it believed there would be 'no alternative but for the Ulster Volunteers to reorganise their force and take steps to stem an invasion which would result in reducing Ulster to the deplorable condition of the South and West'.¹¹⁴ Yet despite its antagonism towards Sinn Féin the *Sentinel* was willing to afford some degree of respect to Irish nationalists.

This was most evident at the time of the hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney during September and October 1920. While the *Impartial Reporter* rather cruelly dismissed MacSwiney's death as a 'suicide' the *Londonderry Sentinel* adopted quite a different view. Even prior to his death it expressed its clear admiration at the 'remarkable struggle' of a man displaying a 'firmness of will throughout' and a 'wonderful reserve of vitality'.¹¹⁵ Upon his death the paper seemed genuinely moved by 'the remarkable courage of the man' and lauded his bravery in his 'desire to die for Ireland' that was 'strong enough to sustain him against the horrible pangs of starvation'.¹¹⁶ The *Sentinel* also accorded Eamon de Valera a certain amount of credit several months later when it acknowledged that the recent Sinn Féin election manifesto 'was marked by a moderation of expression not observed in many of his [de Valera's] earlier pronouncements'.¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, the reaction to the truce of July 1921 was one of anger and suspicion.

In a manner not entirely dissimilar to that of the *Impartial Reporter* the *Sentinel* accused Lloyd George of maintaining a silence as to 'the extent of the surrender which has been extorted from the British

¹¹² Ibid, 23 Jan., 23 Oct. 1919;

¹¹³ Ibid, 2 Mar. 1920

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 13 Jul. 1920

¹¹⁵ Ibid, 11 Sept. 1920

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 26 Oct. 1920

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 7 May 1921

Government'.¹¹⁸ Later editorials decried the government for consulting 'with the conspirators against the lives of the King's soldiers and police' while it was additionally asserted that 'there is no knowing to what lengths Mr Lloyd George will go in the attempt to placate the rebels'.¹¹⁹ Accordingly, when rumours surfaced in late November that deliberations had broken down, the paper happily speculated that the talks had 'gone to pieces', and that 'the farewells may have been already said'.¹²⁰

Upon the completion of negotiations in London the reaction of the *Londonderry Sentinel* differed somewhat to that of the *Impartial Reporter* in that it did not focus to any great extent on Sinn Féin's failure to secure an Irish republic. In the immediate aftermath of the talks the most notable aspect of its response was what it regarded as the 'treachery' of Lloyd George in breaking 'his distinct pledge to Sir James Craig that nothing would be done to the prejudice of the rights of the northern parliament behind the back of the northern premier'.¹²¹ While this was clearly a reference to a potential boundary revision the paper curiously did not express any further concerns in this regard. Instead the *Sentinel* turned its attention to the emerging divisions within Sinn Féin and appeared to take a certain pleasure in labelling Dáil Éireann a 'laughable farce' that was 'leisurely making up its mind' whether to accept or reject the Treaty.¹²²

Conclusion

The *Londonderry Sentinel* displayed a number of traits that were common to many other Irish provincial newspapers. Easily the most visible of these was the association with the Colhoun family that lasted well over a century. Allied to this was the lengthy editorial tenure of J.C. Orr that lasted close on four decades. The involvement of three generations of the Colhoun family in the unionist politics of the city, and indeed that of successive editors J.C. Orr and C.D. Milligan, provides further examples of senior newspapermen playing a highly active role in local politics.

From an editorial perspective the *Londonderry Sentinel* articulated many of the sentiments that might be expected of a solidly unionist newspaper. These included a militant assertion of Ulster's right to be

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 23 Jul. 1921

¹¹⁹ Ibid, 11 Oct., 19 Nov. 1921;

¹²⁰ Ibid, 26 Nov. 1921

¹²¹ Ibid, 13, 17 Dec. 1921

¹²² Ibid, 20, 22 Dec. 1921

excluded from Home Rule, outright condemnation of the 1916 Rising, castigation of the Sinn Féin party for its assumed involvement in attacks on Crown Forces, and perhaps most notably, a suspicion and distrust of the British Government for supposedly acceding to nationalist demands. Yet the *Sentinel* never descended to the racial denigration of the 'Irish Celt' nor the name-calling (e.g. 'Senor de Valera') that so typified the editorial commentary of the *Impartial Reporter*. Indeed, its reaction to the hunger strike and subsequent death of Terence MacSwiney indicated a clear acceptance that it was not only unionists who could be possessed of honour and integrity, quite an admission for a staunchly unionist organ. Ultimately, however, the *Sentinel* retreated to a more recognisably unionist position in appearing to derive a particular enjoyment in witnessing emerging nationalist divisions over the Treaty.

Londonderry Sentinel – Timeline

1829: founded by William Wallen.

1843: death of William Wallen.

1857: James Colhoun assumes joint proprietorship with Thomas Chambers.

1877/8: James Colhoun assumes sole proprietorship.

1893-1931: J.C. Orr, editor.

1897: death of James Colhoun following which control of paper passes to William Colhoun.

1915: death of William Colhoun following which control of paper passes to his son, James.

1945: death of James Colhoun.

6.5 Case Study 3: *Anglo-Celt*

Origins

The *Anglo-Celt* was founded in 1846 by Sir John Young (who later held the office of Chief Secretary for Ireland) of Bailieborough with Gustavus Tuite D'Alton serving as the first editor. The paper was launched with the specific purpose of supporting Sir Robert Peel's campaign for the repeal of the Corn Laws. The

realisation of this goal the following year resulted in a change of ownership of the paper.¹²³ In 1847 the *Anglo-Celt* was acquired by twenty-four-year-old Zacariah Wallace of Coolock in Dublin. Wallace, who also fulfilled the role of editor, is described by the paper's 150th anniversary edition as a 'liberal, constitutional, and utilitarian nationalist'. He had been deeply shocked by the horrors of the Great Famine for which he believed the landlord system to be the principal cause, and was, consequently, a strong proponent of land reform. In 1852 he was convicted of seditious libel relating to an editorial he had penned regarding a land dispute in County Clare. Wallace received a six month prison sentence and a fifty pound fine, and although there were strong appeals for his release on health grounds none were successful. His health broken from the ordeal, Zacariah Wallace died in February 1857 at the early age of thirty-five.¹²⁴

Following Wallace's death his sister-in-law, Charlotte Bournes (also guardian of his two children), assumed the reins of the *Anglo-Celt*. However, Wallace's father, Joseph, soon gained control of the paper. Joseph Wallace was a conservative whose political views differed considerably from those of his late son, with the result that the paper actually ceased publication in 1858. In the meantime Charlotte Bournes, whose political sympathies were very much in harmony with those of her deceased brother-in-law, founded the *Cavan Observer*. This title first appeared in 1857 and remained in publication until her death seven years later. By this time the *Anglo-Celt* was just about to resume publication.¹²⁵

The re-appearance of the *Anglo-Celt* in 1864 provides yet another instance of the highly significant role of the Catholic Church in the history of the Irish provincial press. At the initiation of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kilmore, Dr Nicholas Conaty, John F. O'Hanlon, then the chief reporter with the *Evening Mail* in Dublin, was approached with a view to taking over the ownership and editorship of the *Anglo-Celt*. O'Hanlon's subsequent assumption of the dual role marked the beginning of a family association with the paper that still existed over one hundred and fifty years later.¹²⁶

¹²³ *Anglo-Celt: Souvenir Supplement 1846-1996* (30 May 1996)

¹²⁴ *Ibid*

¹²⁵ *Ibid*

¹²⁶ *Ibid*

The people behind the *Anglo-Celt*

John F. O'Hanlon was a supporter of Isaac Butt and the nascent Home Rule movement, and played a significant role in the campaign of Joseph Biggar when the latter was returned as an MP at the 1874 general election.¹²⁷ He was also active in the campaign for land reform and was a leading member of the Cavan Farmers Defence League.¹²⁸ Following his death in 1885 ownership of the paper passed to his wife, Kate, who hailed from a significant journalistic family and who remained in control of the paper until her death in 1908.¹²⁹ Upon her passing her two sons, John F. (J.F.) O'Hanlon and Edward T. (E.T.) O'Hanlon, assumed control of the *Anglo-Celt* and were jointly to remain at the helm of the paper until the middle of the twentieth century.¹³⁰

E.T. O'Hanlon succeeded to the editorial chair when he was only eighteen years of age following the death of his father. He served in that position for a remarkable sixty-one years. His nephew, Edward (Ned) O'Hanlon, who succeeded him as editor, remembered him as 'a quiet undemonstrative man'.¹³¹ E.T. O'Hanlon was a devout Catholic and a keen supporter of the GAA as well as being a very active member of local tennis and golf clubs. He was also closely associated with Sir Horace Plunkett and the Co-Operative movement and indeed the *Anglo-Celt* devoted considerable attention to agricultural affairs.¹³² His brother, J.F. O'Hanlon, had a somewhat more prominent public persona.

J.F. O'Hanlon was managing-director of the *Anglo-Celt* newspaper for over sixty years. In addition to sharing his brother's wholehearted Catholicism he was also an energetic advocate of the GAA and was the first chairman of the organisation in County Cavan. He was also a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party which brought him into close contact with senior figures such as John Redmond, Joseph Devlin, and John Dillon. J.F. O'Hanlon also played a significant role in local politics, he was initially a member of

¹²⁷ Ibid

¹²⁸ Gerard Moran, 'The emergence and consolidation of the Home Rule movement in County Cavan, 1870-86' in Raymond Gillespie (ed.), *Cavan: essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1995), p.162

¹²⁹ *Anglo-Celt: Souvenir Supplement 1846-1996* (30 May 1996); Kate O'Hanlon's father was Edward O'Farrell, proprietor of the *Evening Post* in Dublin, while her brother was Edward French O'Farrell, chief sub-editor of the *Daily Telegraph* in London.

¹³⁰ Ibid

¹³¹ Ibid

¹³² *Anglo-Celt*, 24 May 1947; Although J.F. O'Hanlon has been referred to as editor of the *Anglo-Celt* in some local history texts the obituaries of both E.T. O'Hanlon and J.F. O'Hanlon, and indeed the paper's 150th anniversary edition, record E.T. O'Hanlon as the long-time editor of the paper.

the Cavan Board of Guardians and later the Cavan Urban Council where he served as chairman for a number of years. Most notably, however, J.F. O'Hanlon was the Irish Parliamentary Party candidate in opposition to Arthur Griffith of Sinn Féin in the East Cavan by-election of June 1918.¹³³

Hugh Oram comments that the *Anglo-Celt* granted fair coverage to both sides during the course of the by-election campaign.¹³⁴ This is quite a valid observation as the paper principally assumed an anti-conscription stance rather than engaging in any denigration of Sinn Féin. Although J.F. O'Hanlon lost the contest, his defeat was more likely due to the heightened political atmosphere of the time rather than any lack of personal popularity. Clear evidence of such an assertion was provided only nine years later when O'Hanlon headed the poll at the 1927 general election to take a seat as an independent TD. He held the seat until 1933 and was principally an advocate of the farmer's cause during his time in Dáil Éireann.¹³⁵

During the course of the by-election campaign in 1918 the *Meath Chronicle* had very unfairly referred to J.F. O'Hanlon as 'a pro-Britisher' and 'England's candidate' (as detailed in Chapter 3).¹³⁶ It was not the only time a degree of conflict would arise between the two papers. In the prelude to the general election of December 1918 an article appeared in the Navan-based paper implying that the delay in the release of voters' lists for East Cavan was attributable to the *Anglo-Celt*, which held the printing contract for the publication of such voter records.¹³⁷ The *Anglo-Celt* duly sued the *Meath Chronicle* for libel which ultimately resulted in James Davis, proprietor of the *Meath Chronicle*, being required to issue an apology (published in a number of local and national newspapers) to the effect that their initial claim was completely without foundation.¹³⁸

Regardless of this implied assertion of bias by the *Meath Chronicle*, such a notion could have easily been dispelled by the fact that there was a significant Sinn Féin presence at the *Anglo-Celt*. Thomas K. Walsh, who joined the paper in 1903 and subsequently spent forty-seven years on the editorial staff, was highly involved in the establishment of the Sinn Féin party in County Cavan. He later took an active part in the

¹³³ *Anglo-Celt*, 29 Dec. 1956

¹³⁴ Oram, op. cit., p.136

¹³⁵ *Anglo-Celt*, 29 Dec. 1956

¹³⁶ *Meath Chronicle*, 15 Jun. 1918

¹³⁷ Ibid, 7 Sept. 1918

¹³⁸ *Irish Independent*, 19, 28 Jun. 1919;

War of Independence as a result of which he was interned at both Ballykinlar Camp in County Down and Crumlin Road Gaol in Belfast. While Walsh's brand of nationalism clashed with that of the O'Hanlon brothers he shared their steadfast Catholic faith. Another common characteristic was his enthusiasm for the GAA and Thomas K. Walsh was central to the foundation of one of the first hurling clubs in County Cavan in 1904.¹³⁹

Editorial comment 1914-1921

The listing for the *Anglo-Celt* in the *Newspaper Press Directory* described the paper as circulating in as many as ten adjoining counties in Ulster and Leinster, and extensively in the USA and Canada. It is open to question whether such a remarkable geographical spread of readers could be verified but the additional information that the paper devoted particular attention to agriculture was quite evident in the pages of the *Anglo-Celt* between 1914 and 1921.¹⁴⁰ The paper was normally comprised of twelve pages divided into seven columns and regularly featured agricultural announcements such as notices of upcoming fairs and shows, plus frequent items concerning the care of livestock and crops. Accordingly, many of the advertisements that appeared were of a related nature. Goods advertised included farm implements and machinery, seeds, rick covers and tarpaulins, plus details of veterinary care for animals.

In addition to the numerous farming-related adverts the paper also carried the standard advertising fare promoting local grocery stores and drapery shops plus various foodstuffs (most notably several different brands of flour). Similar to many other provincial newspapers medications also featured strongly. Amongst those appearing regularly in the advertising columns of the *Anglo-Celt* were Angiers emulsion (for bronchitis and coughs), Sloans liniment (for throat and chest), and Zam-buk cream (for sore and tender skin). Other items to feature strongly in these columns included Locke's whiskey, Velvan plug tobacco, Ford cars, and Raleigh bicycles.

Despite its significant ties with the Irish Parliamentary Party the *Anglo-Celt* tended to devote considerably less editorial attention to on-going political developments than many other provincial titles. As the Home Rule issue, but more specifically unionist opposition to it, came to the fore in the

¹³⁹ *Anglo-Celt*, 15 Apr. 1950; Walsh was a native of Westport where he had commenced his journalistic career working under the Doris brothers at the *Mayo News*. He has also worked at the *Connaught Telegraph* prior to moving to the *Anglo-Celt*.

¹⁴⁰ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.209

early months of 1914 it refrained from making any major editorial pronouncements though it did voice its disapproval of the prevailing situation in the 'Unionist North' where 'no Catholic has the remotest chance of receiving ordinary fair play'.¹⁴¹ Such comments, however, were notable for their infrequency. With the outbreak of war several months later the paper focussed on the necessity for Irishmen to play their part in defeating 'the Army which has deliberately butchered little children and old women in its march through Belgium'.¹⁴² While the *Anglo-Celt* unequivocally articulated Irish support for the war effort its attitude towards conscription was rather different.

To a certain extent the paper echoed the stance of the *Tuam Herald* in wholeheartedly promoting recruitment but vehemently opposing conscription. The *Anglo-Celt*, however, made certain claims in this regard that would not have been appreciated by unionists in Ulster. As early as September 1914 the paper asserted that the response of the Ulster Volunteers to Lord Kitchener's appeal for recruits was greatly overstated by the unionist leadership.¹⁴³ As the possibility of conscription became a live issue during the course of the war the paper declared that Sir Edward Carson 'knows in his heart that the unionist farmers are as bitterly opposed to their sons being taken off the land as are the nationalists'.¹⁴⁴ The notion of unionist aversion to compulsory recruitment was a theme the paper continued to pursue. As the measure was just about to be introduced in Ireland the *Anglo-Celt* speculated that it was not only unionists drawn from the farming community that would not welcome conscription. In an editorial from April 1918 the paper claimed that 'many of Sir Edward Carson's followers' were happily avoiding conscription having gained employment in 'the northern shipyards and other Belfast industries' that were essential to 'the prosecution of the war'.¹⁴⁵

It was this same issue that principally dominated the *Anglo-Celt's* editorial commentary in the weeks leading up to the East Cavan by-election of June 1918. In the contest that pitted its managing-director, J.F. O'Hanlon, against Sinn Féin's Arthur Griffith, the paper refrained from engaging in any significant criticism of Sinn Féin and instead expressed the desire for 'unity in the face of the menace of

¹⁴¹ *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Mar. 1914

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 10 Oct. 1914

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 19 Sept. 1914

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 9 Dec. 1916

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 20 Apr. 1918

conscription'.¹⁴⁶ In this respect much significance was afforded to O'Hanlon's offer to stand aside, 'if his opponent did likewise', so that the seat could 'be handed over to a prominent Irishman, who would hold it until the danger of conscription had passed'.¹⁴⁷ The proposal was never likely to garner any major consideration within Sinn Féin which was seeking to re-establish its authority following electoral defeats in South Armagh, East Tyrone, and Waterford in the previous six months. The arrest of Arthur Griffith and a number of his party colleagues a short time before polling day was viewed by the *Anglo-Celt* as having 'no other effect than to gain momentary adherents to the cause of Sinn Féin' and consequently decided the contest in Griffith's favour.¹⁴⁸

Prior to this time the *Anglo-Celt* had not really voiced any great antipathy towards Sinn Féin or any strand of militant nationalism. Following the Easter Rising it did not allege any collusion with Germany but protested at the severity of the response of the authorities. Such a response could only be justified, the paper argued, 'if anywhere in Ireland there was anything but an impotent minority that approved the insanity of the insurrection'.¹⁴⁹ The rise of Sinn Féin that ensued during 1917 drew minimal editorial response. However, the Irish Parliamentary Party's defeat to that party at the South Longford by-election in May 1917 highlighted the need for John Redmond 'to make it perfectly plain to Mr Lloyd George that no measure of Home Rule will be accepted by this country which is not complete'. Basically this meant that a Dublin parliament 'for three-fourths or nine-tenths of the country would not be an Irish representative assembly, and could be productive of nothing but harm'.¹⁵⁰

As a nationalist newspaper in Ulster the *Anglo-Celt's* opposition to partition was more pronounced than its nationalist counterparts elsewhere. There was little evidence of any fear that Cavan, or any part of it, might ultimately come under the administration of a Belfast parliament. Yet this did not diminish the distaste for partition to any extent. Much of the initial opposition was based on the straightforward argument that it was not economically feasible as Ulster depended heavily on trade from the rest of

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 4 May 1918

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 11, 18, 25 May 1918; Thomas J. Morrissey, 'O'Neill, Laurence' in McGuire et al (eds.); This offer was repeated a number of times in the weeks leading up to the poll. Initially it was suggested that the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Laurence O'Neill, could be the compromise candidate. O'Neill had convened and chaired an anti-conscription conference at Dublin's Mansion House that brought together several divergent nationalist groups opposed to the measure.

¹⁴⁸ *Anglo-Celt*, 29 Jun. 1918

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, 13 May 1916

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 12 May 1917

Ireland.¹⁵¹ While this was a recurring theme whenever the paper editorialised on the matter much of its ire was directed at Sir Edward Carson. He was the person that had ‘lunched with the Kaiser’ and ‘by his introduction of German guns into this country he gave to other minds the idea of recouring to arms’.¹⁵² In a similar vein Carson was effectively accused of hypocrisy for having ‘reluctantly agreed to the six county arrangement’ and how ‘it wrings his heart strings that the unionists of Cavan, Monaghan, and Donegal have been cut off from their brethren in the North-East’.¹⁵³ The establishment of the Stormont parliament in 1921 was met with outright cynicism by the *Anglo-Celt*. It was an assembly, the paper believed, with little power to legislate ‘beyond what the County Councils undertake at present’ and its members would soon ‘become fully conscious as to how impotent they are to achieve anything worthwhile’.¹⁵⁴

Although the *Anglo-Celt* clearly held strong views on issues such as Irish support for the war effort, conscription, and partition it should not mask the fact that agricultural matters accounted for the majority of editorial attention between 1914 and 1921. This is a point well noted by local historian, Eileen Reilly, who comments that ‘the editorials of the *Anglo-Celt* reflect as much a preoccupation with agriculture’ during the course of World War I as with the progress of the war.¹⁵⁵ It was a preoccupation that did not diminish in subsequent years. During 1917 a total of twenty-three of the paper’s weekly editorials related to agriculture while in 1918 the figure was seventeen. The trend lessened somewhat during 1919 and 1920 but in 1921 a remarkable total of twenty-eight editorials were agriculture-related. Leading articles with headings such as ‘Get in the food crops’, ‘The outrageous prices of artificial manures’, ‘Butter and eggs’, ‘The wool swindle – and how to end it’, and ‘The lessons Denmark teaches our farmers’, provide some indication of where the editorial priorities of the *Anglo-Celt* lay.¹⁵⁶

In mid-December 1921, at the height of the debate on the Anglo-Irish Treaty, a leading article of the *Anglo-Celt* was headed ‘How to prevent factory butter from injuring the name of our choicest product’.¹⁵⁷ Nonetheless, it was not the case that the paper refrained from editorial comment on the

¹⁵¹ Ibid, 11 Jul., 1 Aug. 1914;

¹⁵² Ibid, 23 Nov. 1918

¹⁵³ Ibid, 8 May 1920

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, 25 Jun. 1921

¹⁵⁵ Eileen Reilly, ‘Cavan in the era of the Great War, 1914-18’ in Gillespie (ed.), p.186

¹⁵⁶ *Anglo-Celt*, 22 Jan., 19 Feb., 11, 18 Jun., 20 Aug. 1921;

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 17 Dec. 1921

Treaty. The agreement was warmly welcomed for opening up ‘that vista which the country has been longing for down the centuries’ that provided the ‘possibility of development to which no limits can be placed’.¹⁵⁸ It was confidently stated that ‘so far as the rural population in the country is concerned there is practical unanimity in favour of confirming the agreement’.¹⁵⁹ However, the strength of opposition to the Treaty within Dáil Éireann was somewhat underestimated as it predicted that those members arguing against endorsement would ultimately ‘submit to its ratification in obedience to the wishes of their constituents’.¹⁶⁰ Despite the *Anglo-Celt*’s vehement opposition to partition the issue did not really feature in its editorial response to the Treaty.

Conclusion

Many of the highly discernible traits within the Irish provincial print media during this era were very much in evidence at the *Anglo-Celt*. The remarkably lengthy association with the O’Hanlon family, the prolonged tenures of both E.T. and J.F. O’Hanlon, and strong support for the GAA meant that the paper held much in common with its nationalist counterparts. Despite its close links with the Irish Parliamentary Party it rarely adopted a condemnatory attitude towards Sinn Féin. Equally it did not engage in the stinging criticism of the British Government that was such a feature of many nationalist titles, particularly from 1920 onwards. This was not because the *Anglo-Celt* assumed the role of a disinterested bystander in the manner of the *Clonmel Chronicle*. Rather it was because agriculture and related matters were accorded editorial priority to a considerable extent between 1914 and 1921. Nonetheless, the paper displayed one other tendency that was common to many nationalist publications. In casting doubt over the staying power of the Stormont parliament the *Anglo-Celt* clearly underestimated unionist resolve. It was hardly alone though in making such an error.

Anglo-Celt – Timeline

1846: founded by Sir John Young with Gustavus Tuite D’Alton as first editor.

1847: acquired by Zacariah Wallace.

1852: conviction and imprisonment of Zacariah Wallace.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 31 Dec. 1921

¹⁶⁰ Ibid

1857: death of Zacariah Wallace.

1858-1864: paper ceases publication.

1864: John F. O'Hanlon becomes owner and editor.

1885: death of John F. O'Hanlon.

1908: E.T. O'Hanlon and J.F. O'Hanlon assume joint control.

1918: J.F. O'Hanlon stands as Irish Parliamentary Party candidate at East Cavan by-election in opposition to Sinn Féin's Arthur Griffith.

1927: J.F. O'Hanlon elected to Dáil Éireann

1947: death of E.T. O'Hanlon, editor for 61 years.

1956: death of J.F. O'Hanlon, managing-director for 60 years.

6.6 Case Study 4: *Donegal Democrat*

Origins

John Downey was the main personality behind the establishment of the *Donegal Democrat* in 1919. Downey was foreman at the printing works of the *Donegal Vindicator*, the main title serving County Donegal at the time, but he clearly felt that the county was in need of a newspaper that reflected the form of nationalism that had swept Sinn Féin to general election victory in December 1918. With this in mind he resigned his position at the *Vindicator* to establish the *Donegal Democrat* in conjunction with Cecil A. Stephens, and the paper made its first appearance in June 1919.¹⁶¹ John Downey was a devout Catholic and was also an enthusiastic supporter of both the GAA and the Gaelic League. As early as 1909 he played hurling for the Aodh Ruadh club and remained a regular attendee at GAA matches throughout his life. Equally, his efforts to promote the Gaelic League were described as 'lifelong and legion'.¹⁶² Downey fulfilled the role of editor-proprietor of the *Donegal Democrat* from its foundation in 1919 until his death in 1947. The paper's co-founder, Cecil A. Stephens, shared a number of Downey's most

¹⁶¹ *Donegal Democrat*, 24 May 1947, 15 Jan. 1971;

¹⁶² *Ibid*, *Donegal Vindicator*, 24 May 1947

notable attributes. He was also a GAA enthusiast and acted as secretary of the first GAA club formed in Ballyshannon, a position he also filled at the branch of the Gaelic League in the town. During the 1918 general election campaign Stephens canvassed for the Sinn Féin party and was additionally an intelligence officer in the IRA.¹⁶³

The ninetieth anniversary edition of the *Donegal Democrat* actually credits the famed Donegal republican, Peadar O'Donnell, as playing a role in the foundation of the paper. It is claimed that during 1918, while O'Donnell was working as a full-time trade union official, he was approached by three printers working at the *Donegal Vindicator* who were in dispute with their employer. According to the story the three workers were advised by O'Donnell that they stood little chance of success in their dispute and should start their own newspaper instead, which subsequently lead to the establishment of the *Donegal Democrat*.¹⁶⁴ The veracity of this account is rather questionable as it is not even suggested that John Downey was one of these printers. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the newly-established paper strongly sympathised with O'Donnell's republican ideals, which renders its editorial comment all the more worthy of scrutiny.

Editorial comment: 1919-1921

From the time of its launch the *Donegal Democrat* claimed circulation not only in County Donegal but also in Tyrone, Fermanagh, Leitrim, and Sligo. It was usually comprised of six or eight pages and during most of its first year of publication it took what is possibly best described as the latter day tabloid appearance. The front page was noticeable for a complete absence of adverts though a wide variety of goods and services were advertised within the paper. These included items such as motor cars, bicycles, and clothing, plus various groceries and provisions while the many services promoted included dressmaking, hairdressers, undertakers, dentistry, and optometry.

Key events and developments such as the outbreak of World War I, the Easter Rising, the conscription crisis, and the rise of the Sinn Féin party cannot be considered in this particular case study due to the simple fact that the *Donegal Democrat* did not commence publication until 1919. Nonetheless, as the last extant provincial newspaper to be established prior to independence its editorial output is no less

¹⁶³ *Donegal Democrat*, 15 Jan. 1971

¹⁶⁴ *Donegal Democrat: Anniversary Supplement* (27 August 2009)

deserving of careful consideration. Although it was generally considered a broadly republican organ much of its editorial space was devoted to local matters in a manner similar to the *Midland Tribune* and *Leitrim Observer*. However, when its lead articles turned their attention to political developments it was abundantly clear that the *Democrat* was a highly enthusiastic proponent of the form of nationalism that had dramatically risen to the fore in the two years preceding its own birth.

In its very first issue the *Donegal Democrat* claimed that it would publish the ‘unbiased truth, without regard to class, creed, or politics’, hardly a new departure for any fledgling newspaper. It also claimed that it would be an ‘independent newspaper’ and ‘a non-political paper in a world of politics’.¹⁶⁵ Yet within a few months it was quite clear where its political sympathies lay. Upon the proclamation of Dáil Éireann in September 1919 the paper protested at ‘this latest act of repression’ and proposed that Ireland’s case be brought ‘before the nations of the world for a fair hearing’. Failing that, England should ‘quit this country and let us manage our own affairs’.¹⁶⁶

The amount of newspaper suppressions that had taken place in the few years before its launch meant that the *Democrat* was clearly aware that expressing such sentiments ran a similar risk in its own case. In January 1920 it complained that if ‘DORA [Defence of the Realm Act] does not approve of our opinions or those of our correspondents, we are suppressed without warning’.¹⁶⁷ The paper’s ninetieth anniversary edition states that its offices were raided by police and military on several occasions during the War of Independence.¹⁶⁸ However, there is little evidence of the *Donegal Democrat* being suppressed or missing any issues due to enforced closure. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest that the paper was less than forceful in expressing its disapproval of British policy in Ireland.

As levels of violence increased during 1920 the *Democrat* accused the British Government of ‘every day pouring fresh troops and all kinds of weapons of modern warfare into the country’.¹⁶⁹ Condemnation of British tactics in Ireland was not as frequent or as vociferous as papers such as the *Enniscorthy Echo* and *Kilkenny People* but it was certainly not restrained. This was particularly evident upon the death of Terence MacSwiney in October 1920:

¹⁶⁵ *Donegal Democrat*, 6 Jun. 1919

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1919

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 23 Jan. 1920

¹⁶⁸ *Donegal Democrat: Anniversary Supplement* (27 August 2009)

¹⁶⁹ *Donegal Democrat*, 18 Jun. 1920

The brutality of his [Terence MacSwiney's] unchivalrous captors was so excessive that even the decent portion of their own bought press cried shame in their deeds. For whilst the agony of death was watched by an outraged world, the Huns of the British House of Commons laughed at their handiwork, and the pigs that form the British Government grunted their satisfaction at the torture endured by one whose nobility they were too ignorant to understand.¹⁷⁰

Just over a month later the paper defiantly asserted that 'the reprisal policy may go some way towards quelling the spirit of revolt, but unless the root cause be removed, the spirit of revolt is but driven underground'.¹⁷¹ By April 1921 it rather presciently remarked that even 'Lloyd George himself confesses that he recognises that force is not a remedy'.¹⁷²

In common with many other nationalist titles the *Donegal Democrat* felt a deep sense of bitterness that 'the policy of physical resistance', sponsored by Sir Edward Carson at the time of the Home Rule crisis, and 'preached by his followers from every platform in Ulster' appeared to have been rewarded. Accordingly the *Democrat* considered the Government of Ireland Act (disparagingly referred to as the 'Partition Act') 'a complete surrender to Ulster's physical resistance campaign'.¹⁷³ The opening of the Stormont parliament in June 1921 by King George prompted the paper to question why £40,000 was spent on preparations for the royal visit when 'unemployment is rife in Belfast' with 'the majority of those at work' on 'half-time', while simultaneously 'the army of expelled workers is not decreasing'.¹⁷⁴ Such comments may also have been intended to cast doubt on the economic viability of the new Northern Ireland state and its prospects for survival. If so then the *Donegal Democrat* was not unlike many other nationalist titles in underestimating unionist resistance to any notion of participation in a Dublin parliament.

The truce of July 1921 was greeted with extreme caution but the paper believed that 'no avenue to peace should be left unexplored'.¹⁷⁵ Reaction to the agreement reached in London six months later was somewhat muted. It was conceded that 'in no previous attempt at settlement were such favourable

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, 29 Oct. 1920

¹⁷¹ Ibid, 10 Dec. 1921

¹⁷² Ibid, 29 Apr. 1921

¹⁷³ Ibid, 27 May 1921

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, 24 Jun. 1921

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 1 Jul. 1921

terms proposed much less agreed upon'. It was further acknowledged that the main negotiators had 'suffered much for the cause which they advocated' and accordingly were fully aware of the possibilities of achieving their objectives.¹⁷⁶ There was little further editorial discussion of the Treaty which provokes a suspicion that the paper did not wholly approve. This may have been because editor-proprietor, John Downey, was a strong supporter of Eamon de Valera (and indeed Downey was later an enthusiastic Fianna Fáil supporter) and did not wish to appear as solidly pro-Treaty.¹⁷⁷ Regrettably this is only speculation so it is perhaps best to simply conclude that the *Donegal Democrat* welcomed the Anglo-Irish Treaty without wholeheartedly endorsing it.

Conclusion

To a certain extent this case study of the *Donegal Democrat* neatly bookends one of the principal journalistic developments considered in this study of the Irish provincial press. The emergence of a distinctly nationalist bloc within the Irish provincial press that began in the early 1880s with the launch of titles such as the *Leinster Leader* and *Midland Tribune* was effectively brought to a conclusion with the foundation of the *Donegal Democrat* in 1919. The most noteworthy features that characterised so many of these newspapers, such as a strong Catholic dimension and wholehearted support for sporting and cultural organisations such as the Gaelic League and GAA, were just as evident at the *Democrat* as they were in those nationalist titles that were launched from 1880 onwards. Both co-founders of the paper, editor-proprietor John Downey, and Cecil A. Stephens, personified these attributes that were so prevalent across the nationalist print media.

The *Democrat's* editorial commentary on the final two years prior to Irish independence somewhat mirrored that of the *Midland Tribune* and *Leitrim Observer* in shying away from political developments at certain times and concentrating on local issues instead. However, when leading articles shifted their focus to politics they tended to reflect the form of nationalism that had replaced that endorsed by those provincial publications established in the 1880s and 1890s. The *Donegal Democrat* was clearly supportive of the republican agenda though perhaps not as strongly as claimed by some local historians. Nonetheless, the slightly veiled under-estimation of unionist resolve that was articulated in the paper

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 9 Dec. 1921

¹⁷⁷ *Donegal Democrat: Anniversary Supplement* (27 August 2009)

was a feature it shared with most other nationalist titles. Ultimately the *Donegal Democrat* welcomed the Anglo-Irish Treaty though its rather lukewarm response was possibly a portent of what was to follow.

Donegal Democrat – Timeline

1919: founded by John Downey and C.A. Stephens

1919-1947: John Downey, editor.

1947: death of John Downey.

1971: death of C.A. Stephens.

6.7 Ulster newspapers – Thematic analysis

The political and religious demographics of the province of Ulster meant that the structure of the print media within the province differed to that of the rest of Ireland. The greater number of unionist titles was obviously the most visible difference but the predominance of these titles within the six counties that ultimately comprised the Northern Ireland state was quite remarkable. Other factors also distinguished the composition of the provincial press in Ulster from the other three provinces. The most notable of these factors was the concentration of local titles in counties Antrim and Down. However, it is not simply the high number of titles in these counties that is noteworthy. The eighteen local titles located in these two counties were spread across eleven different towns, all within close proximity of Belfast. This concentration and internal spread of local newspapers was not replicated anywhere else in Ireland. Nonetheless, this was not the only way in which the composition of the provincial press in Ulster differed from the other three provinces.

Nationalist titles that had been established from around 1880 onwards predominated in Leinster, Connacht, and Munster. The situation was rather different in Ulster. Although some unionist titles in Ulster commenced publication within the same period, such as the *Tyrone Courier* (1880), *Lurgan Mail* (1890), and *Mid-Ulster Mail* (1891), the majority of newspapers in the province dated from the first half of the nineteenth century. This not only includes the two unionist publications examined in this chapter,

the *Impartial Reporter* (1825), and *Londonderry Standard* (1829), but also titles such as the *Newry Telegraph* (1812), *Londonderry Standard* (1836), *Northern Standard* (1839), and *Tyrone Constitution* (1844).

Even the oldest nationalist paper in the province, the *Derry Standard* (1772), did not develop such sympathies until the latter part of the nineteenth century. By contrast nationalist organs did not really emerge until the early twentieth century with the launch of the *Ulster Herald* in 1901, *Derry People* and *Fermanagh Herald* (both 1902), and the *Frontier Sentinel* (1904). Prior to this the six counties later to be governed by the Stormont parliament featured no nationalist newspaper (apart from the *Irish News* which only commenced publication in Belfast in 1891) while the *Donegal Vindicator* (established in 1889) and the *Anglo-Celt* were the only nationalist titles published across the entire nine counties of Ulster.

Despite the markedly divergent political outlook of the majority of Ulster's provincial papers there were still a number of traits they held in common with their nationalist counterparts throughout Ireland. Family ties to individual newspapers and remarkably lengthy editorial reigns were just as prevalent within the print media in Ulster. The Trimble family's association with the *Impartial Reporter* is doubtless the most pertinent example of the former but it was also in evidence at several other titles. The *Londonderry Sentinel* (Colhoun family), *Down Recorder* (Crichton family), and *Tyrone Courier* (Simpson family) all exemplify this characteristic if not to the same extent as the *Impartial Reporter*. In a similar vein the exceptionally lengthy editorial tenures of, amongst others, James McCarrison (47 years at the *Lisburn Herald*), W.Y. Crichton (63 years at the *Down Recorder*), and H.L. Glasgow (58 years at the *Mid-Ulster Mail*), clearly demonstrate that such editorial longevity was not the sole preserve of nationalist journalists.

Editors and proprietors of unionist papers were equally noted for their participation in politics as their nationalist peers. Although they were never elected to public office, the involvement of newspapermen such as William Copeland Trimble and William Colhoun in the campaign against Home Rule was considerable. Many of their like-minded fellow-journalists in Ulster either became members of the Ulster Volunteers or were highly supportive of the organisation. J.C. Orr, the editor under William Colhoun at the *Londonderry Sentinel*, was one such figure while others noted for their staunch unionism

included John Young (*Portadown News*), Louis Richardson (*Lurgan Mail*), and Thomas Johnston (*Tyrone Constitution*). Additionally, and again in common with several of their nationalist counterparts, many senior newspapermen in Ulster held a deep religious faith. In this respect it was the Presbyterian faith that predominated. Exemplifying this particular attribute were journalists such as John Weir (*Ballymena Observer*), James Brown (*Newry Telegraph*), and R.T. Simpson (*Tyrone Courier*).

Although nationalist titles were very much in a minority in Ulster they still displayed similar characteristics to those in the other three provinces. The devout Catholic faith of so many provincial newspapermen elsewhere in the country was mirrored in Ulster by Michael Lynch (*Ulster Herald*), P.A. MacManus (*Fermanagh Herald*), J.J. McCarroll (*Derry Journal*), and John Downey (*Donegal Democrat*). Their newspapers were similarly strong supporters of both the Gaelic League and the GAA. Other nationalist titles such as the *Donegal Vindicator*, *Frontier Sentinel*, and *Anglo-Celt* were equally supportive of both organisations. Nationalist newspapers in Ulster were also noted for their lengthy family associations, most notably the O'Hanlon family at the *Anglo-Celt* where E.T. O'Hanlon served as editor for over sixty years. Similarly, Joseph Connellan served for almost the same length of time in the editorial chair of the *Frontier Sentinel*, proving that prolonged editorial tenures were unquestionably a countrywide phenomenon, regardless of political creed. The editorial commentary of Ulster newspapers, however, cannot be so easily summarised.

The *Impartial Reporter* of Enniskillen was quite unique in this respect. Doubtless the paper displayed traits that were common to organs professing the conflicting political ideologies in Ireland at the time. Nonetheless, it is still almost impossible to identify a nationalist publication whose nationalism was of an equivalent extreme to the unionism of the *Impartial Reporter*. Uncompromising and diehard may be the kindest description of its editorial commentary though it also could be considered rabid and sectarian. The *Londonderry Sentinel* was an equally staunch unionist organ though its antipathy towards Irish nationalists rarely reached the vituperative levels of the *Impartial Reporter*. Indeed the *Londonderry Sentinel* was occasionally willing to afford some to degree of merit to Irish nationalists (most notably upon the death of Terence MacSwiney), an occurrence that was never likely to be replicated within the pages of the *Impartial Reporter*.

Despite the *Anglo-Celt's* close links to the Irish Parliamentary Party and the *Donegal Democrat's* clear republican sympathies neither paper tended to focus on political developments to the same extent as the two unionist titles. In the case of the *Anglo-Celt* agricultural matters commanded considerable editorial attention while the leading articles of the *Donegal Democrat* focussed on local matters to a notable extent during the first two years of its existence. Both papers obviously opposed partition but afforded the matter scant attention upon the conclusion of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921. Furthermore, despite some indications that the *Donegal Democrat* was the recipient of some unwanted attention from Crown Forces, there is little evidence of nationalist titles in Ulster being suppressed or subjected to enforced closure during these years. Nonetheless, such an assertion may be slightly misleading considering the significantly lower amount of nationalist titles in the province.

In the final analysis it can be justifiably stated that the provincial print media in Ulster exhibited many contrasting features to the rest of Ireland while simultaneously displaying much that was common. Wholehearted nationalism elsewhere was matched by staunch unionism in Ulster. Devout Catholicism in the other three provinces was counter-balanced by God-fearing Presbyterianism in Ulster. The characteristics of nationalist titles in the province mirrored those in Leinster, Connacht and Munster but they were very much in a minority and most were only launched early in the twentieth century. In many ways the composition of the provincial print media in Ulster could unfortunately be viewed as a microcosm of the problem that was to affect the region for years to come.

Conclusion

In the introduction to this study the very limited number of texts that constitute the journalistic historiography of the Irish provincial press in the 1914-1921 period of Irish history was cited as one of the principal factors necessitating a project such as this. Maurice Walsh's comment regarding the willingness of historians to draw upon newspapers as a source was also highlighted. It is a trait that is not accompanied, as Walsh further stresses, by any inclination towards investigation or analysis of such popular source material.¹ This imbalance is brought into sharp focus during the course of J.J. Lee's seminal work of twentieth century Irish history, *Ireland 1912-1985: politics and society*.

In his assessment of how the broader populace outside Dublin reacted to the Easter Rising, Lee refers to eleven different newspapers across the south and west of Ireland.² Apart from labelling Jasper Tully of the *Roscommon Herald* 'a vitriolic anti-Parnellite' and describing the *Clare Champion* as 'strongly Redmondite' there is little elaboration as to the specific sympathies of the newspapers he is citing.³ This extract is not pinpointed in order to denigrate an eminent historian such as Lee. Nonetheless, it clearly illustrates that even in such a core text of modern Irish history the citation of the provincial press, albeit quite sparingly in this case, is still a feature despite the paucity of research into this section of the Irish print media.

In order to commence the process of filling this considerable historiographical gap this thesis posed four primary research questions. The first of these research questions sought to determine the nature of the relationship between provincial press and society. In this respect probably the most dominant feature was the remarkably strong religious dimension to this relationship that manifested itself in the deep religious faith of most editors and proprietors. Amongst unionist titles in Ulster it was the Presbyterian faith that was most prevalent. Devout Catholicism predominated amongst the editors and proprietors of nationalist publications. When P.J. Doris of the *Mayo News* died in 1937 his obituary extolled his 'virtuous piety' and proudly referred to the fact that during his months of incarceration in England after

¹ Walsh, op. cit., pp 3-6

² Lee, op. cit., pp 32-35; Three of these titles, the *Kerryman*, *Kilkenny People*, and *Roscommon Herald* are the subject of case studies in this thesis. The remaining eight titles are the *Clare Champion*, *Connacht Tribune*, *Cork Examiner*, *Leinster Leader*, *Limerick Leader*, *Tipperary Star*, and *Wicklow People*

³ Ibid, pp 33-35

the Easter Rising 'he never missed morning mass and communion'.⁴ With very few exceptions the obituaries of such newspapermen are similarly notable for their references to the steadfast Catholic faith of the deceased. As local newspapers played a key role in the lives of its readers this considerable Catholic influence within the provincial print media may well explain, at least to a certain extent, the powerful position occupied by the Catholic Church in Ireland over such a long period of time. The role of the provincial press in this regard was certainly acknowledged by Archbishop Neil Farren of Derry when he was guest of honour at the golden jubilee dinner of the *Ulster Herald* in 1952. At a function in Omagh that was also attended by several members of the local Catholic clergy Archbishop Farren paid tribute 'to the work of our Catholic and Irish newspapers generally'.⁵ Yet any role the provincial press may have played in this regard has received virtually no acknowledgement from those who have documented the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland.

The late Emmet Larkin was arguably the foremost historian of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Yet in his eight volumes of work charting the history of the Irish Catholic Church in the second half of the nineteenth century there is absolutely minimal reference to the provincial press. This situation is much the same with regard to other historians of the Irish Catholic Church. These include Tom Inglis, Mary Harris, John Henry Whyte, Patrick J. Corish, Desmond Fennell, Oliver Rafferty, Kevin Collins, and Desmond J. Keenan. Some of the related texts by these authors occasionally cite provincial newspapers but none credit the provincial press with playing any role in the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Likewise Patrick Murray does not acknowledge the provincial print media in his book, *Oracles of God: the Roman Catholic Church and Irish politics, 1922-37*, but draws heavily on provincial newspapers as a source throughout.⁶ However, if the role of the provincial press has been largely overlooked in the historiography of the Irish Catholic Church then one other somewhat darker element of this inter-relationship has also been highly neglected by most historians.

In his study of sexual crime in the Irish Free State between 1922 and 1933 Anthony Keating clearly illustrates that 'the vast majority of sexual crime cases brought to court were never reported'.⁷ Those that were reported, as Keating further points out, were described in rather oblique and coded terms and frequently endeavoured to distance the perpetrator or the nature of the crime from the area in which it

⁴ *Mayo News*, 27 Feb. 1937

⁵ *Derry People, Ulster Herald*, 20 Dec. 1952

⁶ The texts by Larkin and various other historians are listed in Appendix H.

⁷ Anthony Keating, 'Sexual crime in the Irish Free State 1922-33: its nature, extent and reporting' in *Irish Studies Review*, 20, no. 2 (May, 2012), p.149

took place.⁸ Those newspapers that adopted such an evasive stance on this matter were, by and large, still edited by the same personalities that have been depicted in this study. This cohort of senior newspapermen were products of the dramatic political developments that took place in Ireland from the 1880s onwards and, for the most part, were devout Catholics and ardent nationalists. Consequently, there was little appetite to reveal these ‘unpalatable aspects of Irish life’ which would cast a deep shadow on the desired portrayal of ‘the social and moral health of the Free State’.⁹ However, it would be unfair to accuse the provincial press of complicity in a cover-up of these sexual crimes that came back to haunt Irish society so many decades later. Nevertheless, ‘the timidity of Irish journalistic culture in this regard’ can only be regarded as a contributory factor in ‘ensuring a paucity of action regarding these issues’ that led to ‘a failure to adequately protect the victims of sexual crime for generations to come’.¹⁰

The relationship between the provincial press and another major institution of Irish society, the Gaelic Athletic Association, is understandably not coloured by such darker features. Nevertheless, the historical link between the two bodies is undeniable and is one of the most distinctive aspects of the relationship between the provincial print media and broader Irish society. Throughout this study the support of various newspaper editors and proprietors for the GAA has been repeatedly cited. It was unquestionably a distinguishing feature of the provincial press across all four provinces and was epitomised by senior pressmen such as James Reddy (*Nationalist and Leinster Times*), Terence Devere (*Western People*), Brandon J. Long (*Clonmel Nationalist*), and Joseph Connellan (*Frontier Sentinel*). The key role played by local newspapers was recognised by Liam Mulvihill, who served as director-general of the GAA for 29 years (1979-2008). At an award ceremony in 1980 organised by the Connacht Council of the GAA, Mulvihill acknowledged that ‘the provincial press and the GAA grew up together’ and further added that ‘there has always been a close link between the GAA and the local press and through this it has made our association such as it is’.¹¹ This extremely close relationship was also recognised by Tomás Ó Duinn in ‘An Irishman’s Diary’ in the *Irish Times* in 1992. Noting the generous coverage allotted to Gaelic games over the years by ‘virtually all provincial editors’, Ó Duinn quite validly observed that ‘no organisation is

⁸ Ibid, p.147; Keating outlines in detail how a variety of provincial newspapers used terms such as ‘terrible and very deplorable’ or a ‘case of a bad and loathsome type’ to describe the court proceedings while frequently it was reported that the convicted person was a ‘stranger’ or a ‘gypsy’.

⁹ Ibid, p.139

¹⁰ Ibid, p. 149; Anthony Keating, ‘Setting the agenda for the press: the 1929 case against the *Waterford Standard*’ in *New Hibernia Review*, 1, no.2 (Summer, 2012), p.32;

¹¹ *Western People*, 3 Dec 1980; By coincidence the ceremony at which Mulvihill made these remarks was held at the clubhouse of the Ballina Stephenites club, one of whose founder members, Terence de Vere, was also involved in the foundation of the *Western People* and later became proprietor of the paper.

more indebted to provincial newspapers than the GAA'.¹² Yet, much like the case of the Catholic Church, historians of the organisation have afforded scant attention to any part played by the provincial press.

The historiography of the GAA is, perhaps understandably, not as substantial as that of the Catholic Church. Nonetheless, numerous texts have been published that chart the history of the association. Foremost amongst these works is arguably Marcus de Búrca's, *The GAA: a history*. This is undoubtedly a comprehensive work though the only provincial journalist mentioned is John Wyse Power, who was a journalist at the *Leinster Leader* when he attended the inaugural meeting of the GAA in Thurles in 1884.¹³ Power, who is probably better known for his IRB connections, is also referred to in *Michael Cusack and the GAA*, another of de Búrca's works on the subject, and also in Séamus Ó Riain's, *Maurice Davin (1842-1927): first president of the GAA*. However, Wyse Power, who served as general secretary of the organisation, is rarely mentioned in his capacity as a journalist in either of these texts. Several provincial newspapers are sourced in the latter publication but it does not credit the provincial press with any role in the early development of the GAA. Further works by Mike Cronin and Paul Rouse contain absolutely minimal reference to the provincial print media. As if to emphasise this oversight, the fourteen essays documenting various aspects of the history of the association contained in *The Gaelic Athletic Association 1884-2009*, make no reference to the provincial press though local papers are occasionally cited.¹⁴

The Gaelic League was another organisation with extremely strong links to the provincial press. One of the primary aims of the Gaelic League was the promotion of the Irish language and in this regard many local titles lent their wholehearted support. However, in contrast to the GAA, the Irish language did not become an intrinsic part of Irish society. The reasons for this are not so easily explained and it is certainly a subject that is in need of further research. Consequently, unlike the GAA and the Catholic Church, there is no substantial historiography of this somewhat complex aspect of Irish society. Nonetheless, there is little doubt that the Gaelic League, and in turn the Irish language, had a staunch ally in the Irish provincial press. Many of those journalists already noted for their strong Catholic faith and their affinity to the GAA were equally supportive of the Irish language movement. In this regard they were joined by journalists such as Seán Etchingham (*Enniscorthy Echo*) John Burke (*Tuam Herald*), Peadar O'hAnnracháin (*Southern Star*), Edward Long (*Tipperary Star*), and P.J. Flanagan (*Derry People*).

¹² *Irish Times*, 16 Jan. 1992

¹³ Marcus de Búrca, *The GAA: a history* (2nd ed., Dublin, 1999), p.17

¹⁴ A list of all these texts relating to the history of the GAA is contained in Appendix I.

The support of these senior pressmen for organisations such as the Gaelic League and the GAA hallmarked the relationship between the provincial press and Irish society. To a significant extent these defining traits equally contribute to answering the second major research question of this thesis which aimed to establish the characteristics of the proprietors, editors, and reporters who constituted the senior ranks of the provincial print media. In this respect possibly one of the striking features of the Irish provincial press during these years is that it produced its own cast of characters that, to a certain extent, mirrored some of the aspects of the broader political arena.

What is generally regarded as the revolutionary period in Ireland was notable for the prominence of individual personalities such as Arthur Griffith, Eamon de Valera, Michael Collins, and Edward Carson. On a microcosmic level this was reflected within the ranks of the Irish provincial press by the presence of such unique and distinctive figures as E.T. Keane, Jasper Tully, and William Copeland Trimble. The eventual split between de Valera and Collins was even replicated to a certain extent in the provincial press by the estrangement of the Doris brothers at the *Mayo News*. Indeed the separation of Irish nationalism into constitutional and republican camps that began to manifest itself most acutely after the 1916 Rising was personified at a number of provincial publications.

The aforementioned case of the Doris brothers is probably the most fitting example of this but it was also evident at several other newspapers. In the case of the *Enniscorthy Echo*, where Sir Thomas Esmonde and William Sears were co-founders of the paper, Esmonde's ultimate allegiance to the Irish Parliamentary Party was counterbalanced by the complete transfer of loyalty of William Sears to the Sinn Féin cause. Similarly the unswerving loyalty to John Redmond of T.F. McGahon, long-time editor of the *Dundalk Democrat*, contrasted to the ardent republicanism of Frank Necy, a journalist at the same paper for almost fifty years (including twenty as editor). The *Tuam Herald* provided another example of the opposing strands of Irish nationalism co-existing at the same paper. R.J. Kelly, editor-proprietor of the paper for almost fifty years, had little time for Irish republicanism. Yet John Burke, whom Kelly employed as manager at the *Herald* (and who later assumed control of the paper), became an elected Sinn Féin representative. At the *Anglo-Celt* in Cavan the close links of the O'Hanlon brothers to the Irish Parliamentary Party did not prevent Thomas K. Walsh, an early Sinn Féin activist in the county, from serving on the paper's editorial staff for close on half a century. However, those newspapers and newspapermen that constituted the provincial print media provided far more than a simple mirror image of broader Irish society.

It was stated in the introduction to this study that it would not be merely an assessment of Irish provincial newspapers as faceless entities. The ensuing examination of local newspapers in all four Irish provinces has illustrated that a substantial number of these publications featured highly dominant and distinctive personalities at the helm. The aforementioned Keane, Tully, and Trimble were far from the only figures to fall into this category, though their highly individualistic and abrasive natures possibly set them apart amongst this cohort of newspaper editors and proprietors. Yet the provincial press in Ireland was equally notable for other highly distinctive figures whose names became synonymous with the particular publication at which they spent the greater part of their journalistic careers.

This is very much the case with respect to several of the individual case studies contained in this work. In Leinster James Pike of the *Midland Tribune* and William Sears of the *Enniscorthy Echo* certainly fall into this category. Patrick Dunne of the *Leitrim Observer* in Connacht is another fitting example of such a newspaperman. In Munster the trio of Maurice Griffin, Daniel Nolan, and Thomas Nolan are indelibly linked to the history of the *Kerryman* newspaper. The case studies of Ulster newspapers provide equally pertinent examples in this regard. Aside from the obvious example of William Copeland Trimble at the *Impartial Reporter*, the O'Hanlon brothers at the *Anglo-Celt* and John Downey of the *Donegal Democrat* further illustrate this extremely strong link between specific personalities and their newspaper. It was an attribute that was far from limited to those newspapers examined in these case studies. Further examples of this trait include journalists such as Michael A. Casey (*Drogheda Independent*), P.A. McHugh (*Sligo Champion*), J.P. Farrell (*Longford Leader*), Edward Walsh (*Munster Express*), and Michael Lynch (*Ulster Herald*).

This undeniable bond between individual personalities and their newspapers was undoubtedly burgeoned by the remarkable length of time that several of these figures spent at the helm of their respective publications. E.T. Keane, Jasper Tully, and William Copeland Trimble have been cited as some of the most dominant personalities of the provincial print media but all three served remarkably lengthy tenures directing the fortunes of their papers. Keane spent over 50 years as editor-proprietor of the *Kilkenny People*; Tully fulfilled the same role at the *Roscommon Herald* for 57 years while Trimble's term as editor-proprietor of the *Impartial Reporter* lasted 66 years. These three newspapermen were far from unique in remaining in the editorial chair for such prolonged periods.

The most pronounced example of this striking feature of the Irish provincial press was, without doubt J.P. Hayden, who spent 72 years as editor-proprietor of the *Westmeath Examiner*. Nonetheless, there

were numerous other examples of this editorial longevity and it embraced both nationalist and unionist titles. In the nationalist camp it was exemplified by figures such as Patrick Dunne (editor-proprietor of the *Leitrim Observer* for close on 60 years), Joseph Connellan (editor of the *Frontier Sentinel* for just under 60 years), Con Cregan (editor of the *Limerick Leader* for almost 50 years), and William Myles (editor of the *Tipperary Star* from 1925 until 1975). This trait was equally exemplified at unionist organs by journalists such as W.Y. Crichton (editor of the *Down Recorder* for over 60 years), H.L. Glasgow (editor of the *Mid-Ulster Mail* for 58 years), and Robert A. Parke (editor of the *Tyrone Constitution* for over 50 years). Indeed editorial tenures ranging from 30 to 50 years were decidedly common across the Irish provincial press if not even the norm.

This editorial longevity within the provincial print media was accompanied by a distinct element of continuity that existed due to so many titles remaining under family ownership for extended periods of time. Again this was a feature that was evident across all four provinces and applied to both nationalist and unionist papers. In Leinster the Davis and Powell families at the *Meath Chronicle* and *Midland Tribune* respectively typified this trait. The Gillespie family at the *Connaught Telegraph* and both the Kelly and Burke families at the *Tuam Herald* in Connacht provide further examples of this recurring trend. Prolonged family connections to provincial newspapers was epitomised in Munster by the Galvin family at the *Clare Champion* and the Walsh family at the *Munster Express*. Ulster was equally no exception such familial ties. The Trimble family connection to the *Impartial Reporter* was the most extraordinary instance of family ownership but it also existed at other unionist titles such as the *Londonderry Sentinel* and *Down Recorder* which were synonymous with the names of the Colhoun and Crichton families respectively. Even the limited number of nationalist titles in the province also displayed such a trait; the O'Hanlon family's connection to the *Anglo-Celt* and the Lynch family's ties to the *Ulster Herald* being equally pertinent examples.

Most of these provincial editors, whether of family-owned newspapers or otherwise, were highly vocal in asserting the absolute validity of claims for Irish self-government and displayed little hesitation in criticising the British Government for preventing or delaying the realisation of such claims. Yet the same provincial editors rarely elaborated as to how Irish society would benefit under this new scenario to which they so aspired. Apart from the occasional economic argument there is minimal evidence of any attempt to explain how the lives of ordinary Irish citizens would improve once some form of autonomy was achieved.

It can only be concluded that the provincial press shared the sentiments of both Sinn Féin and the IRA who, as claimed by Michael Laffan, 'had no interest in digging down to the roots of Irish society'. The primary aim was 'to sweep away the King, Westminster and the Dublin Castle system rather than to improve the lot of the poor or curb the power of the rich'.¹⁵ Laffan further contends that 'Sinn Féin was an establishment-in-waiting'.¹⁶ Irish provincial newspapers, with their traditions of prolonged editorial reigns and extended periods of family ownership, slotted conveniently into such a niche. The highly conservative nature of the newly independent state, so yearned for by provincial editors and proprietors, also draws comment from Tom Garvin who notes how the Free State was founded 'with effective legal and institutional continuity by a conservative, if democratic, nationalist elite in 1922'.¹⁷ Indeed Garvin traces the origins of the new state back to the late 1800s and notes 'the rise of a cheap, popular, mainly nationalist provincial press' as one of the significant factors that aided its emergence.¹⁸ Laffan and Garvin's assertions as to the absence of any real change with the establishment of the Free State are supported by John M. Regan who similarly argues that, following independence from Britain, 'Irish institutions much as Irish society remained the same as what went before'.¹⁹

The provincial press had little objection to such continuity which is rather strange considering that so many provincial titles spent much of the preceding years articulating the need for change in the way in which Ireland was governed. Indeed many of them, as detailed during the course of this study, had been on the receiving end of much undesired attention for advocating such views. This leads to the third research question outlined at the outset of this thesis as to how the relationship between the provincial press and the British authorities manifested itself.

The environment in which provincial journalists were forced to operate presented far greater dangers than anything that had been experienced theretofore. During this time the British authorities sought to exert control over the output of newspapers to an extent that had not previously been encountered. It was a period that commenced upon the outbreak of war in August 1914. The Defence of the Realm Act was the tool utilised by the British Government in its endeavours to exercise such control. This was

¹⁵ Michael Laffan, 'Labour must wait': Ireland's conservative revolution' in Ciaran Brady and Patrick J. Corish (eds.), *Radicals, rebels, and establishments: papers read before the Irish Conference of Historians, Maynooth, 16-19 June 1983* (Maynooth, 1983), p.203

¹⁶ Ibid, p.219

¹⁷ Tom Garvin, *Preventing the future: why was Ireland so poor for so long?* (Dublin, 2004), p.26

¹⁸ Ibid, p.31

¹⁹ John M. Regan, *The Irish counter-revolution, 1921-1936: Treatyite politics and settlement in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p.378

superseded by the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act which came into force as hostilities intensified in Ireland. Prior to Easter 1916 very few provincial papers had been affected by such legislation but this changed significantly thereafter. Many papers were suppressed over the course of the next few years with the *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, *Clare Champion*, and *Southern Star* enduring the lengthiest terms of suppression. Newspaper owners such as P.J. Doris (*Mayo News*), William Sears (*Enniscorthy Echo*), Maurice Griffin (*Kerryman*), and Patrick Dunne (*Leitrim Observer*) were imprisoned due to their Sinn Féin links. Provincial titles such as the *Westmeath Independent*, *Kerryman*, *Leitrim Observer*, and *Galway Express* suffered attacks on their premises by Crown Forces that resulted in their non-publication for prolonged periods, with the *Galway Express* actually ceasing operations a few months later. Attacks on newspaper offices were not the sole preserve of Crown Forces as the IRA targeted the *Cork Examiner*, *Cork Constitution*, and *Skibbereen Eagle*.

In general unionist titles did not have to operate in fear of suppression. Initially this may seem a rather redundant observation. However, it is worth recalling some of the editorial commentary of unionist newspapers from 1914 that has been considered in this study. With the imminent passing of the Home Rule bill the leading articles of the *Cork Constitution*, *Impartial Reporter*, and *Londonderry Sentinel* spoke of civil war, championed the cause of the Ulster Volunteers, and expressed tacit approval for the Larne gun-running of April 1914. Not only was open defiance of the British Government loudly voiced, particularly in the two Ulster titles, but the *Londonderry Sentinel* spoke of the land being 'deluged in blood' should there be any attempt to enforce Home Rule in Ulster.²⁰ Yet such newspapers drew no censure from the authorities. Accordingly, it is understandable that many nationalist titles may well have felt aggrieved at the rather inconsistent application of censorship and the frequently innocuous reasons for the suppression of newspapers that occurred with regularity in the wake of the Easter Rising.

The fact that so many provincial titles came into varying degrees of conflict with the British authorities leads to the obvious question as to the nature of the sentiment being articulated by such publications. Accordingly, this explains the necessity for the fourth and final research question posed in this thesis. This question sought to determine how the provincial press responded to the numerous critical developments that took place in Ireland between 1914 and 1921.

²⁰ *Londonderry Sentinel*, 11 Jun. 1914

This study does not purport to be a comprehensive analysis of the response of the provincial press in Ireland to events that occurred during these years. Nevertheless, the close scrutiny of seventeen different titles across all four provinces provides a highly valuable insight into how such events were perceived across the country.²¹ Possibly the most marked feature of the editorial commentary is the criticism of the events of Easter 1916 that was expressed in many nationalist titles. However, this criticism was significantly tempered by a distinct sense of anger with the British government, which, many of these papers claimed, created the environment for rebellion. This environment, according to many of these publications, was brought about by the government's toleration of the actions of Edward Carson and the Ulster Volunteers and the attendant arming and drilling of the latter body. The other most discernible feature of the editorial commentary of nationalist papers was the enthusiastic response to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. Notably, titles that had come to be regarded as Sinn Féin organs, such as the *Meath Chronicle*, *Enniscorthy Echo*, *Kilkenny People*, and *Southern Star* expressed warm approval for the agreement. Crucially though, most nationalist titles expressed relatively little concern regarding partition, mistakenly assuming that northern unionists would eventually come to believe that their interests would be better served under a Dublin parliament. However it would not be correct to assume that there was a relatively uniform response to events during the 1914-21 period from either the nationalist or unionist sections of the Irish provincial press.

As this study has clearly demonstrated the editorial output of papers such as the *Kilkenny People* and the *Kerryman* differed markedly from fellow-nationalist titles such as the *Tuam Herald* and *Anglo-Celt*. Equally amongst unionist titles clear differences were evident. The most pronounced example of this was the *Cork Constitution's* utter distaste for partition while the *Impartial Reporter* welcomed it in an almost celebratory manner. In many cases editorial commentary was of a distinctly impassioned and intense nature which, in the case of nationalist papers, incurred the wrath of the Press Censor. In some instances the fervid nature of lead articles was due to the editor's commitment to either the republican or unionist cause while in other instances it was attributable to the forceful personality of the person occupying the editorial chair. Quite often it was a combination of both these factors. Regardless of the personalities of individual editors there is little doubt that editorial responses to events in Ireland between 1914 and 1921 are not easily categorised and were certainly not uniform.

²¹ Appendix J provides an overview of the attitude of all seventeen titles analysed in this study to conscription, the ceasefire of July 1921, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921.

Those who composed such editorial commentary contributed significantly to the role and influence of the Irish provincial press, which has rarely merited consideration, whether in pre-independence or post-independence Ireland. The more dramatic cases of the suppression of nationalist titles or attacks by Crown forces has been the focus of the limited historical recognition it has received up to now. Many nationalist titles avoided such experiences but it is these clashes with the British authorities that hallmark the experience of Irish provincial newspapers during these years. Yet such clashes could hardly be considered extraordinary in what was one of the most turbulent periods of Irish history. It is a period that has given rise to a multitude of texts documenting various other aspects of Irish society. These include biographies of political and military leaders, detailed depictions of key events, as well as numerous volumes of local history. Up to now newspapers have rarely been the focus of any of the substantial number of publications relating to the 1914-1921 period. At least the experience of national titles has been documented to some extent by Ian Kenneally (as detailed in the introduction to this study). There has been minimal research into their counterparts in the provinces which has been a somewhat glaring omission.

The provincial press has been cited with regularity in many of these works documenting various facets of what is sometimes referred to as the revolutionary period of Irish history. It is a source that, up to now, has remained largely unresearched and unanalysed without any evident consideration as to political sympathy or possible prejudice. Consequently, this study fulfils the dual function of providing a thorough assessment of such popular source material and filling a rather critical gap in the history of Irish journalism. Yet this study does more than simply fill a historiographical void.

The history of the Irish provincial press between 1914 and 1921 fully merits such close scrutiny in its own right. Not alone did it produce a range of memorable characters but it also featured a range of personalities that played an active and important part in both the political and military campaign that ultimately resulted in the establishment of the Irish Free State. Provincial newspapers were required to deal with the uncertainty and ambiguity of censorship allied to the attendant threat of suppression in a rapidly changing political atmosphere. This precarious environment in which these papers were forced to operate only worsened during the War of Independence when many of them were subjected to attacks on their premises and intimidation of their staff. Titles that were only in their journalistic infancy, but went on to become pillars of the provincial press, such as the *Clare Champion* and the *Kerryman*, endured prolonged periods of suppression and enforced closure. Additionally many newspapermen were arrested and imprisoned. All the while such newspapers strived to survive as financial entities.

Ultimately, however, the provincial press emerged as a rather conservative force in the newly independent state for which it had strongly agitated.

Despite these ordeals in the midst of such a well-documented period of Irish history, and the undoubted position of influence it came to assume, the provincial press has, as John Horgan points out, 'rarely, if ever' been 'the subject of intensive discussion or research' and has tended 'to be taken for granted'.²² The experiences of provincial newspapers and their personnel that have been documented in this study clearly illustrate just how much of an anomaly this has been.

²² John Horgan, 'The provincial papers of Ireland: ownership and control and the representation of 'community' in Desmond Bell (ed.), *Is the Irish Press independent?: essays on ownership and control of the provincial, national, and international press in Ireland* (Dublin, 1986), p.11

Appendix A

The following are the principal texts that constitute the journalistic historiography of the 1914 to 1921 period in Ireland:-

Costello, Francis J., 'The role of propaganda in the Anglo-Irish War 1919-1921' in *The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies*, 14, no. 2 (January, 1989), pp 5-24.

Curry, James, 'The Worker: James Connolly's organ of the Irish working class' in Mark O'Brien and Felix M. Larkin (eds.), *Periodicals and journalism in twentieth century Ireland: writing against the grain* (Dublin, 2014), pp 75-88.

Glandon, Virginia E., *Arthur Griffith and the advanced-nationalist press, Ireland, 1900-1922* (New York, 1985).

Inoue, Keiko, 'Propaganda II: propaganda of Dail Eireann, 1919-21' in Joost Augusteijn (ed.), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (London, 2002), pp 87-102.

Kenneally, Ian, *The paper wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland, 1919-1921* (Cork, 2008).

- 'Truce to treaty: Irish journalists and the 1920-21 peace process' in Rafter (ed.), pp 213-225.
- 'A tainted source'? The *Irish Bulletin*, 1919-21' in O'Brien et al (eds.), pp 89-101.

Maume, Patrick, 'Irish-Ireland and Catholic Whiggery: D.P. Moran and *The Leader*' in O'Brien et al (eds.), pp 47-60.

Murphy, Brian P., *The origins & organisation of British propaganda in Ireland 1920* (Cork, 2006).

Novick, Benjamin Z., *Conceiving revolution: Irish nationalist propaganda during the First World War* (Dublin, 2001).

- 'Propaganda I: advanced nationalist propaganda and moralistic revolution, 1914-18' in Augusteijn (ed.), pp 32-48.

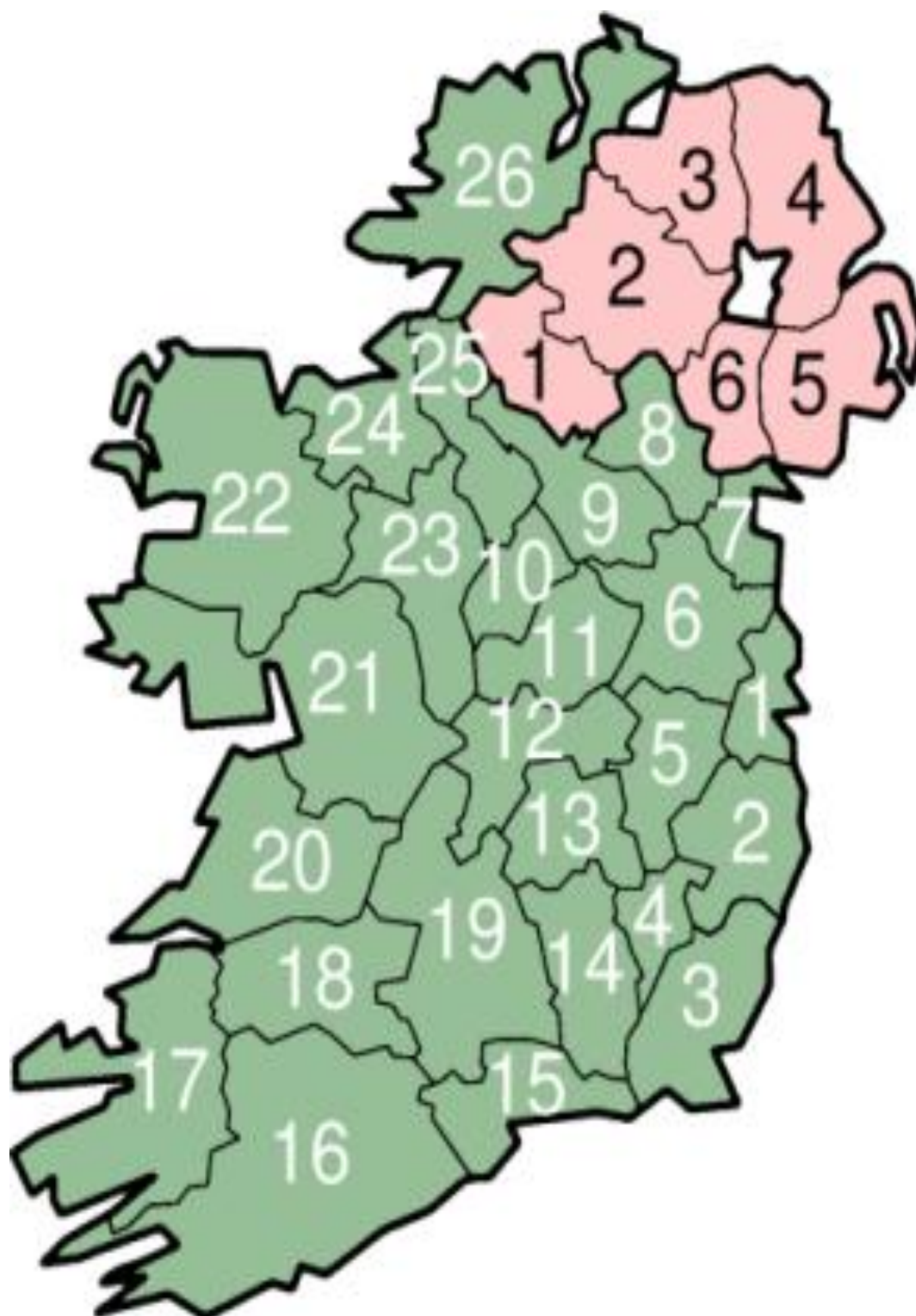
Steele, Karen Margaret, *Women, press, and politics during the Irish revival* (New York, 2007).

Tiernan, Sonja, 'Challenging the headship of man': militant suffragism and the *Irish Citizen*' in O'Brien et al (eds.), pp 61-74.

Uí Chollatáin, Regina, 'An Claidheamh Soluis agus Fáinne an Lae: the turning of the tide' in O'Brien et al (eds.), pp 31-46.

Walsh, Maurice, *The news from Ireland: foreign correspondents and the Irish Revolution* (London, 2000).

Appendix B -Map of Ireland detailing newspaper titles in each county



Northern Ireland:

1. **Fermanagh** – *Fermanagh Herald, Fermanagh Times, Impartial Reporter*
2. **Tyrone** – *Dungannon Democrat, Mid-Ulster Mail, Strabane Chronicle, Strabane Weekly News, Tyrone Constitution, Tyrone Courier, Ulster Herald*
3. **Derry** – *Coleraine Chronicle, Derry Journal, Derry People, Derry Standard, Derry Weekly News, Irish Daily Telegraph, Londonderry Sentinel, Northern Constitution*
4. **Antrim** – *Ballymena Observer, Ballymena Weekly Telegraph, Ballymoney Free Press, Carrickfergus Advertiser, Larne Times, Lisburn Herald, Lisburn Standard, North Antrim Standard*
5. **Down** – *Banbridge Chronicle, County Down Spectator/Newtownards Spectator, Down Recorder, Dromore Leader, Dromore Weekly Times, Frontier Sentinel, Newry Reporter, Newry Telegraph, Newtownards Chronicle, North Down Herald/Newtownards Herald*
6. **Armagh** – *Armagh Guardian, Lurgan Mail, Portadown Express, Portadown News, Ulster Gazette*

Republic of Ireland:

1. **Dublin** – Newspapers based in Dublin not included in this study as they do not constitute part of the provincial press.
2. **Wicklow** – *Bray and South Dublin Herald, Wicklow Newsletter, Wicklow People, Wicklow Press*
3. **Wexford** – *Enniscorthy Echo, Enniscorthy Guardian, New Ross Standard, Wexford Free Press, Wexford People*
4. **Carlow** – *Carlow Sentinel, Nationalist and Leinster Times*
5. **Kildare** – *Kildare Observer, Leinster Leader*
6. **Meath** – *Meath Chronicle, Meath Herald*
7. **Louth** – *Drogheda Advertiser, Drogheda Argus, Drogheda Independent, Dundalk Democrat, Dundalk Examiner, Dundalk Herald*
8. **Monaghan** – *Northern Standard*
9. **Cavan** – *Anglo-Celt, Irish Post*
10. **Longford** – *Longford Independent, Longford Journal, Longford Leader*

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11. **Westmeath** – *Westmeath Examiner, Westmeath Guardian, Westmeath Independent, Westmeath Nationalist and Midland Reporter*
 12. **Offaly** – *King’s County Chronicle/Leinster Reporter, King’s County Independent, Midland Tribune*
 13. **Laois** – *Leinster Express*
 14. **Kilkenny** – *Kilkenny Journal, Kilkenny Moderator, Kilkenny People*
 15. **Waterford** – *Dungarvan Observer, Munster Express, Waterford News/Waterford Evening News, Waterford Standard, Waterford Star/Waterford Evening Star*
 16. **Cork** – *Cork Constitution, Cork Weekly News, Skibbereen Eagle, Southern Star* (For the purposes of this study the *Cork Examiner* is not included as it had a broad readership across the province of Munster and its experiences are comprehensively documented by Ian Kenneally in *The paper wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland 1919-1921*)
 17. **Kerry** – *Kerry Advocate, Kerry Evening Post, Kerryman/Liberator, Kerry News, Kerry People, Kerry Press, Kerry Sentinel, Kerry Weekly Reporter, Killarney Echo*
 18. **Limerick** – *Limerick Chronicle, Limerick Echo, Limerick Leader, Munster News, Weekly Observer*
 19. **Tipperary** – *Clonmel Chronicle, Clonmel Nationalist, Nenagh Guardian, Nenagh News, Tipperary People/Tipperaryman, Tipperary Star*
 20. **Clare** – *Clare Champion, Clare Journal/Saturday Record, Kilrush Herald*
 21. **Galway** – *Connacht Tribune, East Galway Democrat, Galway Express, Galway Observer, Galway Pilot, Tuam Herald, Western News/Galway Leader/Loughrea Guardian/Tuam People*
 22. **Mayo** – *Ballina Herald, Connaught Telegraph, Mayoman, Mayo News, Western People*
 23. **Roscommon** – *Roscommon Herald, Roscommon Journal, Roscommon Weekly Messenger, Strokestown Democrat, Western Nationalist*
 24. **Sligo** – *Sligo Champion, Sligo Independent, Sligo Nationalist/Connachtman*
 25. **Leitrim** – *Leitrim Advertiser, Leitrim Observer*
 26. **Donegal** – *Donegal Democrat, Donegal Vindicator/Donegal Independent*

Appendix C – Irish provincial newspapers 1914-1921

<u>Title</u>	<u>Publication dates</u>	<u>Political leaning/orientation</u>	<u>Key figures</u>	<u>Censored Y/N</u>	<u>Suppressed Y/N</u>
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	1847-	Nationalist	E.T. O'Hanlon, J.F. O'Hanlon	N	N
<i>Armagh Guardian</i>	1844-1982	Unionist	S.D. Trimble	N	N
<i>Ballina Herald</i>	1844-1962	Neutral	J. Duncan	Y	Y
<i>Ballymena Observer</i>	1855-	Unionist	J. Wier	N	N
<i>Ballymena Weekly Telegraph</i>	1867-1970	Neutral	T. Boyd	N	N
<i>Ballymoney Free Press</i>	1863-1934	Unionist	J. Shannon	N	N
<i>Banbridge Chronicle</i>	1870	Independent	A.W. Emerson	N	N
<i>Bray and South Dublin Herald</i>	1876-1927	Unstated	F. McPhail	N	N
<i>Carlow Sentinel</i>	1831-1920	Unionist	G. Langran	N	N
<i>Carrickfergus Advertiser</i>	1883-	Neutral	J. Bell	N	N
<i>Clare Champion</i>	1903-	Nationalist	T. Galvin, J. Maguire, S. Maguire	Y	Y
<i>Clare Journal/Saturday Record</i>	1776-1936	Unstated	O. Tuohy	N	N
<i>Clonmel Chronicle</i>	1848-1935	Independent	A.R. Burns	N	N
<i>Clonmel Nationalist</i>	1890-	Nationalist	B.J. Long	N	N
<i>Coleraine Chronicle</i>	1844-	Unionist	J. Shannon	N	N
<i>Connacht Tribune</i>	1909-	Nationalist	T.J.W. Kenny	Y	N
<i>Connaught Telegraph</i>	1828-	Nationalist	T.H. Gillespie	N	N
<i>Cork Constitution</i>	1822-1924	Unionist	H.L. Tivy, W.J. Ludgate	N	N
<i>Cork Weekly News</i>	1883-1925	Unstated		N	N
<i>County Down Spectator/Newtownards Spectator</i>	1904-	Unionist	D.E. Alexander	N	N
<i>Derry Journal</i>	1772-	Nationalist	J.J. McCarroll	N	N
<i>Derry People</i>	1902-	Nationalist	P.J. Flanagan	N	N
<i>Derry Standard</i>	1836-1964	Unionist	J.C. Glendenning	N	N
<i>Derry Weekly News</i>	1892-1956	Unstated	Owned by North of Ireland Publishing Co.	N	N
<i>Donegal Democrat</i>	1919-	Nationalist	J. Downey, C.A. Stephens	N	N
<i>Donegal Vindicator/Donegal Independent</i>	1831-1956	Nationalist	J. McAdam	N	N

<i>Down Recorder</i>	1836-	Unionist	W.Y. Crichton	N	N
<i>Drogheda Advertiser</i>	1837-1929	Unionist	R.H. Taylor	N	N
<i>Drogheda Argus</i>	1835-	Nationalist	M. McKeown	N	N
<i>Drogheda Independent</i>	1884-	Nationalist	M.A. Casey	N	N
<i>Dromore Leader</i>	1916-	Unionist	J. Lindsay	N	N
<i>Dromore Weekly Times</i>	1900-1952	Neutral	R.J. Hunter	N	N
<i>Dundalk Democrat</i>	1849-	Nationalist	T.F. McGahon	N	N
<i>Dundalk Examiner</i>	1830-1960	Nationalist	J. Mathews	Y	Y
<i>Dundalk Herald</i>	1868-1921	Unionist		N	N
<i>Dungannon Democrat</i>	1913-1923	Nationalist	B. Conway	N	N
<i>Dungarvan Observer</i>	1912-	Unstated	J.A. Lynch	N	N
<i>East Galway Democrat</i>	1910-1949	Nationalist	N.E. O'Carroll	N	N
<i>Enniscorthy Echo</i>	1902-	Nationalist	William Sears	Y	Y
<i>Enniscorthy Guardian</i>	1889-	Nationalist	Owned by <i>Wexford People</i>	N	N
<i>Fermanagh Herald</i>	1902-	Nationalist	P.A. MacManus	N	N
<i>Fermanagh Times</i>	1880-1949	Unionist	R.H. Ritchie	N	N
<i>Frontier Sentinel</i>	1904-1972	Nationalist	J. Connellan	N	N
<i>Galway Express</i>	1853-1920	Unionist up to 1917	H. D. Fisher, T. Walshe	Y	Y
<i>Galway Observer</i>	1881-1966	Nationalist	A.G. Scott	N	N
<i>Galway Pilot</i>	1883-1918	Independent	J.N. Sleator	N	N
<i>Impartial Reporter</i>	1825-	Unionist	W.C. Trimble	N	N
<i>Irish Daily Telegraph</i>	1904-1952	Neutral	W&G Baird Ltd (owners of <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>)	N	N
<i>Irish Post</i>	1910-1920	Unionist	W&G Baird Ltd (owners of <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>)	N	N
<i>Kerry Advocate</i>	1914-1916	Nationalist	M.P. Ryle, T. O'Donnell	N	N
<i>Kerry Evening Post</i>	1774-1917	Unionist	G. Raymond	N	N
<i>Kerryman/Liberator</i>	1904-	Nationalist	M. Griffin, T. Nolan, D. Nolan	Y	Y
<i>Kerry News</i>	1894-1941	Nationalist	C. O'Mahony	Y	Y
<i>Kerry People</i>	1902-1928	Nationalist	M.P. Ryle	N	N
<i>Kerry Press</i>	1914-1916	Nationalist	J. Savage	N	N
<i>Kerry Sentinel</i>	1878-1918	Nationalist	E. Harrington	N	N
<i>Kerry Weekly Reporter</i>	1883-1936	Nationalist	C. O'Mahony	Y	Y
<i>Kildare Observer</i>	1879-1935	Independent	J. Gray	N	N

<i>Kilkenny Journal</i>	1766-1965	Nationalist	Kenealy family, J. Upton	N	N
<i>Kilkenny Moderator</i>	1814-1925	Unionist	I.B. Lalor	N	N
<i>Kilkenny People</i>	1893-	Nationalist	E.T. Keane	Y	Y
<i>Killarney Echo</i>	1899-1920	Nationalist		Y	Y
<i>Kilrush Herald</i>	1877-1922	Independent	P.J. Boyle	N	N
<i>King's County Chronicle/Leinster Reporter</i>	1845-1963	Unionist	J. Wright, A. Wright	N	N
<i>King's County Independent</i>	1894-	Nationalist	Owned by <i>Westmeath Independent</i>	N	N
<i>Larne Times</i>	1891-1983	Unstated	W&G Baird Ltd (owners of <i>Belfast Telegraph</i>)	N	N
<i>Leinster Express</i>	1831-	Independent	M.C. Carey	N	N
<i>Leinster Leader</i>	1880-	Nationalist	J.L. Carew, M. O'Kelly	Y	N
<i>Leitrim Advertiser</i>	1856-1924	Independent	B. McKiernan	N	N
<i>Leitrim Observer</i>	1890-	Nationalist	P. Dunne	N	Y
<i>Limerick Chronicle</i>	1766-1953	Unionist	J.A. Baldwin	N	N
<i>Limerick Echo</i>	1898-1947	Nationalist	C. O'Sullivan	Y	Y
<i>Limerick Leader</i>	1889-	Nationalist	J. Buckley, C. Cregan	Y	Y
<i>Lisburn Herald</i>	1891-1969	Unionist	R. McMullen, J. McCarrison	N	N
<i>Lisburn Standard</i>	1876-1959	Unionist	V. McMurray, J. Kennedy	N	N
<i>Londonderry Sentinel</i>	1829-	Unionist	W. Colhoun, J. Colhoun, J.C. Orr	N	N
<i>Longford Independent</i>	1868-1925	Independent	J.H. Turner	N	N
<i>Longford Journal</i>	1839-1937	Unionist	W.T. Dann	N	N
<i>Longford Leader</i>	1897-	Nationalist	J.P. Farrell	N	N
<i>Lurgan Mail</i>	1890-	Unionist	L. Richardson	N	N
<i>Mayo News</i>	1892-	Nationalist	P.J. Doris, W. Doris	Y	Y
<i>Mayoman</i>	1919-1921	Nationalist	J.J. Collins	N	N
<i>Meath Chronicle</i>	1897-	Nationalist	T. Daly, J. Davis, H.G. Smith, P. Quilty	Y	Y
<i>Meath Herald</i>	1845-1936	Unionist	W.A. McDougall	N	N
<i>Midland Tribune</i>	1881-	Nationalist	J. Pike, M. Powell	Y	Y

<i>Mid-Ulster Mail</i>	1891-	Unionist	John & H.L. Glasgow	N	N
<i>Munster Express</i>	1851-1935	Nationalist	E. Walsh	N	N
<i>Munster News</i>	1851-1935	Nationalist	F. Counihan & Sons	Y	Y
<i>Nationalist and Leinster Times</i>	1883-	Nationalist	J. Reddy	Y	N
<i>Nenagh Guardian</i>	1838-	Unionist up to 1916	Prior family, J. Ryan	N	N
<i>Nenagh News</i>	1894-1926	Nationalist	J.F. Power	N	N
<i>New Ross Standard</i>	1879-	Nationalist	Owned by Wexford People	N	N
<i>Newry Reporter</i>	1867-	Independent	J.A. Bell	N	N
<i>Newry Telegraph</i>	1812-1970	Unionist	J. Brown	N	N
<i>Newtownards Chronicle</i>	1873-	Unionist	Henry family	N	N
<i>North Antrim Standard</i>	1887-1922	Unionist	J.M. Russell	N	N
<i>North Down Herald/Newtownards Herald</i>	1871-1957	Unionist	R.D. Montgomery	N	N
<i>Northern Constitution</i>	1875-	Unionist	J.M. Russell	N	N
<i>Northern Standard</i>	1839-	Unionist	P. McMinn, J.J. Turley	N	N
<i>Portadown Express</i>	1906-1920	Unionist	A. Shannon	N	N
<i>Portadown News</i>	1859-1982	Unionist	J. Young, J. Campbell	N	N
<i>Roscommon Herald</i>	1859-	Nationalist	J. Tully	N	N
<i>Roscommon Journal</i>	1828-1927	Independent	W. Tully	N	N
<i>Roscommon Messenger</i>	1848-1935	Nationalist	J.P. Hayden	N	N
<i>Skibbereen Eagle</i>	1857-1922	Independent	J.T. Wolfe, P. Sheehy	N	N
<i>Sligo Champion</i>	1836-	Nationalist	P.A. McHugh, A. McHugh	Y	N
<i>Sligo Independent</i>	1855-1961	Unionist	W.D. Peebles	N	N
<i>Sligo Nationalist/Connachtman</i>	1910-1920	Nationalist	B. McTernan, R.G. Bradshaw	Y	Y
<i>Southern Star</i>	1890-	Nationalist	J.M. Burke, P. O'Hourihane, S. Buckley, S. Hales	Y	Y
<i>Strabane Chronicle</i>	1896-	Independent	North-West of Ireland Printing & Publishing Co.	N	N

<i>Strabane Weekly News</i>	1908-	Unionist	Owned by <i>Tyrone Constitution</i>	N	N
<i>Strokestown Democrat</i>	1913-1948	Nationalist	P. Morahan	N	N
<i>Tipperary People/Tipperaryman</i>	1921-1934	Nationalist	J.R. & E. McCormack	N	N
<i>Tipperary Star</i>	1909-	Nationalist	E. Long	Y	N
<i>Tuam Herald</i>	1837-	Nationalist	R.J. Kelly, J. Burke	N	N
<i>Tyrone Constitution</i>	1844-	Unionist	T. Johnston, R.A. Parke	N	N
<i>Tyrone Courier</i>	1880-	Unionist	R.T. Simpson	N	N
<i>Ulster Gazette</i>	1844-	Unionist	W.J. Greer, J.W. Clarke	N	N
<i>Ulster Herald</i>	1901-	Nationalist	M. Lynch, A. Mulvey	N	N
<i>Waterford News</i>	1848-	Nationalist	E. Downey	Y	Y
<i>Waterford Standard</i>	1863-1953	Unionist	R. Whalley, D.C. Boyd	N	N
<i>Waterford Star</i>	1891-	Nationalist	C. O'Mahony	N	N
<i>Weekly Observer</i>	1914-1927	Nationalist	A.J. Byrnes, S. Brouder	Y	Y
<i>Western Nationalist</i>	1907-1920	Nationalist	J. Flanagan	N	N
<i>Western News</i>	1876-1926	Nationalist	W. Hastings	N	N
<i>Western People</i>	1883-	Nationalist	T. Devere, T.A. Walsh	N	N
<i>Westmeath Examiner</i>	1882-	Nationalist	J.P. Hayden	N	N
<i>Westmeath Guardian</i>	1835-1928	Unionist	F.J. Farrell	N	N
<i>Westmeath Independent</i>	1846-	Nationalist	T. Chapman, M. McDermott-Hayes	Y	y
<i>Westmeath Nationalist/Midland Reporter</i>	1891-1939	Nationalist	G.W. Tully	N	N
<i>Wexford Free Press</i>	1888-1971	Nationalist	M.A. Corcoran, W. Corcoran	N	N
<i>Wexford People</i>	1853-	Nationalist	E. O'Cullen	Y	N
<i>Wicklow Newsletter</i>	1858-1927	Unionist	F. McPhail, R. Egan	N	N
<i>Wicklow People</i>	1882-	Nationalist	Owned by <i>Wexford People</i>	N	N
<i>Wicklow Press</i>	1905-1916	Nationalist	M.A. Corcoran, W. Corcoran	N	N

Appendix D

Leinster newspapers

Laois

The *Leinster Express*, based in Portlaoise (then called Maryborough), was one of the oldest titles in the province. The only County Laois newspaper at the time, it was grouped amongst those titles of an independent political outlook (as referred to in the last chapter two).¹ Founded in 1831 by Henry W. Talbot the paper was owned and edited by Michael Charles Carey since 1903 when he succeeded his father as proprietor.² There is little evidence of the *Leinster Express* attracting the attention of either side in the ensuing Anglo-Irish conflict. This may have been due to its relatively distanced political stance or the fact that its catchment area bore witness to fairly minimal military activity during the War of Independence.³

Wicklow

Similar reasons could also possibly explain why Wicklow based newspapers did not attract the attention of any warring faction. The *Wicklow Newsletter*, owned by Frank McPhail, was a unionist organ so was hardly likely to draw the wrath of the British authorities.⁴ Its editor around this time was Robert Egan, who later became a news editor at the *Irish Press*.⁵ Frank McPhail was a Church of Ireland member and was also the proprietor of the *Bray and South Dublin Herald* which circulated in 'Bray, Kingstown, and Dalkey' so could scarcely be considered a provincial paper.⁶ The other two titles in the county were nationalist in their sympathies but avoided any significant controversy during the 1914-1921 period. The *Wicklow People*, established in 1882, was owned by the "People" group of publications whose main

¹ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.214

² *Leinster Express*, 7 Aug. 1943

³ Hopkinson, op. cit., p.146; Hopkinson notes the relative lack of activity in County Laois during the War of Independence by commenting how the IRA leader in Laois, Lar Brady, 'became noted in republican circles for his determination to avoid military confrontation'.

⁴ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.216; This paper was established in 1858 and remained in publication until 1927.

⁵ *Irish Press*, 17 Feb. 1936

⁶ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.209

organ was the *Wexford People* while Mary Agnes Corcoran was the proprietor of the short-lived *Wicklow Press* (1905-1916).⁷

Carlow

The situation in neighbouring County Carlow was somewhat different and rather more interesting. Of the two newspapers serving the county one was the unionist *Carlow Sentinel*. Its owner, George Langran, was described as 'a decent and inoffensive man' whose unionist politics were 'not of a rabid kind'.⁸ The county's main paper, however, was the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* (also known as the *Carlow Nationalist*) whose political leanings were clearly discernible from its title. The paper was launched in 1883 by brothers Patrick and John Conlan 'with the full support of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster'.⁹ By the second decade of the twentieth century the management of the paper had passed to James Reddy. The co-founder, Patrick Conlan, died in 1898 at the early age of 46 while his brother John retired from journalism around 1904 to take up farming.¹⁰

Reddy, who had married the widow of the paper's co-founder, John Conlan, followed the trend of many newspapermen of that era in that he was a staunch supporter of both the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).¹¹ Among those working on the paper at the time were a number of people with strong links to the republican movement. Michael Sheridan, a reporter, was a member of both the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) and the Irish Volunteers.¹² Francis Aylmer, who served on the paper's editorial staff for almost fifty years, was secretary of the local Sinn Féin organisation during the War of Independence.¹³ Indeed during the summer of 1919 a series of articles penned by Kevin O'Higgins (elected as Sinn Féin MP for Queen's County (Laois) at the general election the previous December) were published in the paper. It is difficult to comprehend how the authorities did not consider at least

⁷ *Irish Times*, 24 Sept. 1924

⁸ *Nationalist and Leinster Times: Centenary Issue 1883-1983* (23 September 1983)

⁹ *Ibid*

¹⁰ *Ibid*; John Conlan was later elected to Dáil Éireann where he served as Farmers Party TD for the Kildare constituency from 1923 to 1927.

¹¹ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 8 Apr., 1944; Reddy actually served a period of time as secretary of the Carlow County Board of the GAA.

¹² Jim and Brendan Fleming (eds.), *1916 in Laois: an account of the activities of the Laois Volunteers up to and including the 1916 Rising* (Laois 1916 Commemoration Committee, 1996), p.33

¹³ *Irish Times*, 14 Apr. 1960; *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 16 Apr. 1960;

some of O'Higgins's statements as 'likely to cause disaffection' but, amazingly, none of his contributions were censored.¹⁴

This is not to suggest that the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* did not attract the attention of the Press Censor. The press censorship reports from the time indicate that the Carlow organ was forced to delete content on more occasions than most other provincial titles.¹⁵ Yet Reddy must have maintained a relatively amicable relationship with the office of the Press Censor as evidenced by the warm tribute paid to Lord Decies on his retirement from the post.¹⁶ Reddy's obituary noted how he 'was a fearless upholder of Ireland's rights' during the War of Independence but also how he 'steered this newspaper through a period in which alien censorship of a very rigid kind was one of the most difficult and delicate problems'.¹⁷ The fact that his paper avoided any undesired attention would seem to vindicate this comment and suggest that he performed an extremely skilful balancing act.

Kildare

County Kildare similarly boasted two provincial newspapers. The *Kildare Observer*, owned by Jane Gray, had been established in 1879. Independent in politics it remained in publication until 1935.¹⁸ The other title, the *Leinster Leader*, was unquestionably nationalist in both origin and sympathy. Established as a limited liability company in August 1880, many of its initial shareholders were drawn from the Catholic clergy in counties Kildare and Carlow. The paper went through a number of editors in its first six years before ownership was transferred to J.L. Carew and James Leahy, the parliamentary representatives for Kildare.¹⁹ Leahy's involvement in the paper was believed to be only nominal and while Carew had very

¹⁴ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 31 May 1919, 7, 14, 21 & 28 June 1919, 5 & 12 Jul. 1919, 2 Aug. 1919; In this series of articles O'Higgins repeatedly referred to England's 'army of occupation' in addition to using language such as 'the Prussianism of English rule', 'British rapacity', 'the force and fraud of England', as well as claiming how England's 'atrocities in Ireland made the worse deeds of the Prussian in Belgium look like peccadilloes'. This represents only a small sample of his comments but sufficiently indicate the overall tone of his contributions.

¹⁵ Press Censorship Reports, August 1918 - February 1919, CO904/167/1, CO904/167/2; The Press Censorship Reports that are available for this period indicate that the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* was required to delete content approximately ten times between August 1918 and February 1919. This was a significantly higher number of instances than most other provincial newspapers.

¹⁶ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 3 May 1919; As referred to in the last chapter the paper commented how Lord Decies had 'acted all through in a most courteous and tolerant manner' and felt 'certain that all sections of the Irish press regret his departure'

¹⁷ *Nationalist and Leinster Times*, 8 Apr. 1944

¹⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.214

¹⁹ *Leinster Leader: Centenary Supplement* (15 November 1980); Among the early editors of the *Leinster Leader* was John Wyse Power, who was a member of the IRB, one of the co-founders of the GAA, and later went

little practical involvement in the running of the paper, it was to serve as a mouthpiece for his political views until his death in 1903.²⁰ In the aftermath of the 1916 Rising the editor of the paper (Michael O’Kelly) was arrested along with two other staff.²¹ Nonetheless, the *Leinster Leader* is not noted for having any major republican connections and indeed one historian has noted that after October 1919, the paper did not publish any of the press releases regularly issued by Sinn Féin’s propaganda department and sent to around forty local newspapers.²²

Westmeath

There were four provincial titles based in Westmeath, one in Athlone and three in Mullingar. The latter was home to the conservative *Westmeath Guardian* which had been in existence since 1835.²³ Like so many provincial organs of a conservative/unionist hue it ceased publication within a decade or so of the establishment of the Irish Free State, the final issue of the *Westmeath Guardian* appearing in 1928. The political sympathies of the other two titles published in Mullingar were solidly nationalist. The *Westmeath Nationalist and Midland Reporter* had first appeared in 1891 and remained in publication until 1939. However, the principal nationalist paper in the town, the *Westmeath Examiner*, provides an illustration of a remarkable sense of longevity and continuity within the Irish provincial press. When it celebrated its centenary in 1982 the paper was incredibly under the direction of only its second editor.²⁴ This was mainly attributable to J.P. Hayden who founded the *Westmeath Examiner* in 1882 and remained at the helm until his death in 1954. A life-long friend of John Redmond, he was elected MP for South Roscommon in 1897. He held the seat until the 1918 general election which effectively marked the death knell of the party he represented.²⁵

The remaining paper in the county was the Athlone based *Westmeath Independent*. Founded in 1846 by James Martin as a ‘conservative journal’ it initially had a distinctly Protestant ethos.²⁶ Its political outlook

on to work for the *Freeman’s Journal*, *Irish Daily Independent*, *Evening Herald*, and *Evening Telegraph*. Patrick Conlan, who co-founded the *Nationalist and Leinster Times* in 1883 also worked with the *Leinster Leader* prior to establishing the Carlow-based newspaper.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ Ibid

²² Keiko Inoue, ‘Propaganda II: propaganda of Dáil Éireann, 1919-21’ in Joost Augusteijn (ed.), *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923* (London, 2002), p.97

²³ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers’ guide 1917*, p.214

²⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 2 Oct. 1982

²⁵ Ibid, 10 Jul. 1954; Jeremiah Sheehan, *Worthies of Westmeath: a biographical dictionary with brief lives of famous Westmeath people* (Moate, 1987), pp 54-5

²⁶ *Westmeath Independent: 150th Anniversary Special Supplement* (July 1996)

changed significantly under Thomas Chapman who became proprietor in 1883. A member of the Church of Ireland, Chapman actively supported the Land League and the Irish Parliamentary Party.²⁷ Both he and the *Westmeath Independent* solidly supported John Redmond and the recruiting drive in the early stages of World War I. Indeed two of Chapman's sons served in the British Army while in the early months of 1916 his paper frequently included a photo gallery of 'gallant heroes, local men who were serving at the front'.²⁸ This was to change dramatically, however, in the years that followed.

In the wake of Easter 1916 the paper severed its ties with the Irish Parliamentary Party. By August 1917 Chapman had become president of the local Sinn Féin club while his editor, Michael McDermott Hayes, was on its committee.²⁹ This new found political allegiance soon incurred the wrath of the Press Censor. In January 1918 Lord Decies deemed the tone of the paper 'violent and of a nature to cause disaffection'. The *Westmeath Independent*, plus three other titles, was 'severely warned as to their future conduct'.³⁰ Two months later its tone, along with an ever increasing number of provincial publications, was considered 'distinctly bad, and likely to cause disaffection' and 'as having seriously transgressed the Defence of the Realm regulations'. The various editors were warned that if a similar tone was maintained 'action will be taken'.³¹

Within a short time action was taken when, on 5 April 1918, a combined force of police and military seized the paper's printing works. At the time Chapman claimed that 'no caution had been given' though he accepted that his paper 'pursued a strong political policy, demanding a settlement of the Irish question on independent national lines'.³² The ban was removed a week later but well over two years later, long after censorship restrictions had been removed, a far worse fate befell the paper. In October 1920 the printing works were attacked by Crown Forces and partially wrecked. Despite the setback the paper that only four months earlier had stated that 'English rule is broken in Ireland' was still published the following Saturday.³³ A fortnight later a military force returned and this time completely destroyed

²⁷ *Offaly Independent*, 22 Apr. 1922

²⁸ Wheatley, op. cit., pp 240-1; *Westmeath Independent* 17 Jul. 1915, 23 Oct. 1915, 11 Mar. 1916;

²⁹ Wheatley, op. cit., p.241

³⁰ Press Censorship Report, January 1918, CO904/166/1; The other titles warned were the *Connacht Tribune*, *Galway Express*, and *Weekly Observer*.

³¹ Press Censorship Report, March 1918, CO904/166/2

³² *Irish Independent*, 6 Apr. 1918; Similar to many newspapers of the time the printing works of the *Westmeath Independent*, in addition to publishing the newspaper, was engaged in a large amount of commercial printing activities. At the time of this seizure the *Irish Independent* reported that 'over 100 workers were employed, and the firm had in course of preparation large contracts for public bodies all over Ireland'.

³³ Oram, op. cit., pp 143-4

the printing works. Chapman, who was in a delicate state of health at the time anyway never really recovered from the trauma. Even though he managed to start the paper up again in February 1922, Thomas Chapman passed away only two months later at the age of fifty-eight.³⁴

Longford

No County Longford titles suffered such a fate. The *Longford Independent*, established in 1865 and owned by Joseph Henry Turner, was independent in political outlook.³⁵ William Thomas Dann was the proprietor of the *Longford Journal*, a unionist organ that advocated 'the interests of all sects of Protestants'.³⁶ Nonetheless, the principal newspaper in the county was the nationalist *Longford Leader*. It was founded in 1897 by J.P. Farrell; a year previously Farrell had been elected as MP for West Cavan and from 1900 to 1918 he served as MP for North Longford.³⁷ In addition to writing and publishing a volume of local history, J.P. Farrell was extensively involved in the affairs of the county.³⁸ To add to his parliamentary activities he was also the first county president of the GAA Longford, while he was later appointed president of Longford Wanderers, the first soccer club in the county.³⁹ Also, in 1909 he became president of the newly established branch of the Ancient Order of Hibernians in Longford town.⁴⁰ By 1917, however, both his influence and that of his paper had declined significantly.

Historian Marie Coleman has noted that the paper's circulation had fallen considerably by this time while Arthur Griffith's *Nationality* became increasingly popular as the fortunes of his Sinn Féin party continued to rise. Despite the fact that the party sought publicity from the provincial press, Sinn Féin activists in the county actually blamed Farrell and the *Longford Leader* when its coverage of a Sinn Féin rally apparently led to the imprisonment of Thomas Ashe. The paper had reported a speech made by Ashe at Ballinalee for which he was arrested for using seditious language. Ashe subsequently received a two year prison term with hard labour but died in September 1917 from the effect of forced feeding having gone on hunger strike some time earlier.⁴¹ J.P. Farrell suffered a stroke during the campaign for

³⁴ *Westmeath Independent: 150th Anniversary Special Supplement* (July 1996); *Offaly Independent*, 22 Apr. 1922;

³⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.214; The paper ceased publication in 1925.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p.214; *Longford Journal* was published from 1839 until 1937.

³⁷ *75 years of Longford: The Longford Leader 1897-1972* (29 September 1972)

³⁸ *Ibid*; *History of the County Longford* written by Farrell was published in 1891.

³⁹ Hunt, *op. cit.*, pp 527-8; Cronin et al, *op. cit.*, p.255

⁴⁰ Gerard Morgan, 'The Ancient Order of Hibernians in County Longford' in Morris et al (eds.), p.593

⁴¹ Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish Revolution, 1910-1923* (Dublin, 2003), pp 71-4; Coleman states that 'Sinn Féiners in Longford blamed Ashe's arrest on J.P. Farrell, whose newspaper the *Longford Leader* was considered to have brought Ashe to the attention of the police by publishing the text of his

the 1918 general election in which he was decisively beaten by Sinn Féin's Joe McGuinness.⁴² He died three years later at the relatively early age of 56 though the paper he founded has survived well into the twenty-first century.

Louth

With one minor exception there is little record of County Louth's six newspapers of the time coming into conflict with either the British authorities or Irish republicans. This renders investigation of these publications no less interesting. The independent unionist *Drogheda Advertiser* was edited by a Newry man, Robert Henry Taylor. In 1926 Taylor acquired the *Drogheda Argus*, a nationalist title that had first been published in 1835.⁴³ Similar to Drogheda, Dundalk was also home to an independent unionist title. The *Dundalk Herald* was established in 1868 but ceased publication in 1921.⁴⁴ The nationalist *Dundalk Examiner* began life in 1830 as the *Newry Examiner*. By 1919 it was regarded as a Sinn Féin paper and in September of that year, following the publication of a full page advertisement for the Dáil Éireann loan, police visited its offices and seized all copies.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, the two main newspapers in the county were inarguably the *Drogheda Independent* and *Dundalk Democrat*.

Local historian Donal Hall correctly recognises both of these organs as 'strong advocates of constitutional nationalism and supporters of the Irish Parliamentary Party'.⁴⁶ The origins of these two newspapers were slightly different however. Almost uniquely for an Irish provincial title the *Dundalk Democrat* was first published in the immediate wake of the Great Famine. Its founder in 1849 was Joseph Cartan, who strongly supported land reform and the repeal of the Act of Union.⁴⁷ By the second decade of the twentieth century the paper was owned by the Roe family (Thomas Roe having acquired it

speech at Ballinalee'

⁴² Ibid, pp 86-7

⁴³ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.210; *Irish Times*, 31 Oct. 1939, 30 June 1953; *Drogheda Argus*, 10 June 1950; The *Drogheda Advertiser* and *Drogheda Argus* merged in 1929 under the title of the latter paper. The *Drogheda Argus* was later taken over by Joe Stanley who had been the publisher of the Arthur Griffith journals *Nationality* and *Scissors and Paste*. Stanley also printed the first edition of *An tÓglach*, the official organ of the Irish Volunteers and was imprisoned in Frongoch after the 1916 Rising where he had fought in the GPO.

⁴⁴ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.212

⁴⁵ Ibid, p.212; *Irish Times*, 27 Sept. 1919; The paper's printing works were not interfered with though 'newsboys selling the paper on the streets were requested to hand over all copies'. The *Dundalk Examiner* ceased publication in 1960.

⁴⁶ Donal Hall, *World War I and nationalist politics in County Louth, 1914-1920* (Dublin, 2005), p.8

⁴⁷ *Dundalk Democrat*, 22 Oct. 1949, 16 Oct. 1999;

from Cartan in 1872) and edited by Thomas F. McGahon.⁴⁸ McGahon was an unwavering supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party and unlike many other provincial editors at no stage did he shift his allegiance towards the Sinn Féin party. Indeed he is once quoted as saying that 'my heart died with John Redmond as far as politics are concerned'.⁴⁹ Despite McGahon's distaste for militant nationalism the paper's reporting staff included Frank Neco, a member of the Irish Volunteers who was imprisoned in Wales following the 1916 Rising.⁵⁰

The *Drogheda Independent* is numbered among the considerable batch of nationalist newspapers that began to emerge from 1880 onwards. Its origins can be traced to an Augustinian priest, Father James Anderson, who founded the Drogheda Independent Club in 1881 to promote nationalist ideals in the town. This led to the formation of the paper three years later which, unsurprisingly, was an enthusiastic advocate of the nationalism encapsulated by Charles Stuart Parnell.⁵¹ In 1889 Michael A. Casey was appointed editor at the request of William O'Brien MP. A devout Catholic, Casey played a key role in the development of the paper and was to remain in the post for almost fifty years.⁵² Although there were strong links to the Irish Parliamentary from the paper's foundation, by early 1919 it was moving closer to the Sinn Féin viewpoint. While not openly supportive of the party the paper continually referred to Lloyd George in a disparaging manner and labelled him 'that tricky little playboy'.⁵³

Meath

Perhaps because of its proximity to Dublin or possibly its limited number of major towns County Meath had not been noted for a substantial amount of local newspapers. A number of nationalist titles emerged in the nineteenth century; the most notable of these was the *Meath People* which lasted from 1857 to 1863. These were succeeded by the *Meath Courier*, *Navan Independent*, *Meath Advertiser*, and *Meath Reporter*, none of which remained in publication for more than a few years.⁵⁴ A more significant

⁴⁸ Ibid, 22 Oct. 1949

⁴⁹ Ibid, 2 Feb. 1941

⁵⁰ Ibid, 7 Mar. 1970; Neco served with the paper for almost sixty years the last twenty of which were as editor until his retirement in 1965.

⁵¹ *Drogheda Independent: Centenary Supplement* (11 May 1984)

⁵² *Drogheda Independent*, 25 Mar. 1938; Casey's obituary credits him with reporting for the *Clonmel Nationalist* on the meeting in Thurles in 1884 that led to the foundation of the GAA though it was more likely the *Tipperary Nationalist*, a forerunner of the *Clonmel Nationalist* which was not established until 1890. Prior to coming to Drogheda Casey worked with the *Western People* (Ballina). According to his obituary he also 'enjoyed the friendship and confidence of the great political leaders' such as Parnell, Davitt, Redmond, and Dillon.

⁵³ Ibid, 4 Jan. 1919; Ted Greene, *Drogheda, its place in Ireland's history* (Julianstown, 2006), p.365;

⁵⁴ *One hundred years of life and times in North Leinster: A Meath Chronicle centenary publication*

publication was the *Irish Peasant*, printed in Navan between 1903 and 1910. Under the editorship of William Ryan it was a prominent supporter of the Irish-Ireland movement and the Gaelic League in particular, though it was probably more national than local in its outlook.⁵⁵ By the 1916-1921 period the only other newspaper published in County Meath was the conservative/unionist *Meath Herald* which had been in publication since 1845.⁵⁶ Like most other papers of this persuasion it went out of existence within the first few decades of the Irish Free State, ceasing publication in 1936.

Wexford

The oldest of County Wexford's four newspapers was the *Wexford People* which had been founded in 1853 by James Johnson (its first editor, who subsequently left journalism to join the priesthood) and William Power. The paper was undeniably nationalist in its sympathies and the most noted of its editors in the first half-century of its existence was Edward Walsh. An Alderman of Wexford Corporation and later mayor of the town Walsh was actively involved in the Land League and served a prison sentence arising out of articles published in support of the movement.⁵⁷ Edward O'Cullen was appointed managing editor following the death of Walsh, a position he occupied from around 1894 until his retirement in 1924. O'Cullen, similar to Walsh, was an enthusiastic supporter of the nascent GAA. Incredibly also, O'Cullen was a virtual invalid from an early age but still edited the paper for over thirty years and also founded the *Ireland's Own* magazine in 1902.⁵⁸

The *People* group of newspapers that produced the *Wexford People* was also the company that printed two of the other County Wexford titles, the *Enniscorthy Guardian* and the *New Ross Standard*. The latter title commenced publication in 1879 while the former first appeared in 1889 and was regarded as 'the voice of mainstream nationalism' in the Enniscorthy area.⁵⁹ The remaining paper in the county was the *Wexford Free Press*; a nationalist title based in Wexford town that had been established by William Corcoran in 1888. William Corcoran died in 1892 following which his wife, the aforementioned Mary

(30 August 1997)

⁵⁵ Hickey et al, p.232; *The Irish Peasant* was founded by James McCann, a Dublin stockbroker and nationalist MP.

⁵⁶ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213

⁵⁷ *Wexford People*, 24 Dec. 2003

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 16 Sept. 1933

⁵⁹ William Murphy, 'Enniscorthy's Revolution' in Colm Tóibín (ed.), *Enniscorthy: a history* (Wexford, 2010), p.399

Agnes Corcoran of the *Wicklow Press*, assumed control of the paper though in later years their son, also William Corcoran, managed the affairs of the paper.⁶⁰

Kilkenny

The *Kilkenny Journal* was the elder of the two nationalist titles serving the county at the start of World War I and could trace its origins back to the eighteenth century. It had first appeared in 1767 as *Finn's Leinster Journal* which was named after its founder, Edward Finn. The titles changed to the *Leinster Journal* in 1802 following a transfer of ownership while another change of proprietor in 1830 resulted in the title being changed to the *Kilkenny Journal*. At this stage the paper became a solid supporter of Daniel O'Connell and assumed a strong nationalist stance. By 1917 it was owned by the Kenealy family, edited by James Upton, and was supportive of Sinn Féin.⁶¹

Other short-lived titles had appeared in Kilkenny such as the *Kilkenny Chronicle* (1812-1813) and the *Kilkenny Independent* (1825-1828) but the second existing newspaper at the time of the establishment of the *Kilkenny People* was the *Kilkenny Moderator*. Founded by Abraham Denroche in 1813 it had a Protestant and unionist ethos. Once edited by author and historian Standish James O'Grady the paper, despite its political outlook, was an enthusiastic supporter of the Gaelic League and at one stage even featured a weekly lesson in the Irish language. At the outbreak of World War I Isabella Browne Lalor, one of the very few women involved at this level of journalism, took over as editor-proprietor following the death of her husband, Michael Wilton Lalor, who had taken control of the *Kilkenny Moderator* thirty-eight years earlier.⁶²

Offaly

The earliest known title to serve any part of County Offaly was actually published in County Tipperary. The *Roscrea Southern Star* first appeared in 1796 but ceased publication two years later due to the destruction of its printing works during the 1798 rebellion. The *Leinster Chronicle or Parsonstown Gazette* was first published in Birr in 1812 but only lasted about two or three years while around the same time *The Harp or King's and Queen's County Advertiser* and later the *Tullamore Packet* also

⁶⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jun. 1892; *Irish Times*, 24 Sept. 1924

⁶¹ O'Dwyer, op. cit., pp 382-6

⁶² *Ibid*, pp 388-391; Like so many other unionist titles in the south of Ireland the *Kilkenny Moderator* went out of existence shortly after the establishment of the Irish Free State, ceasing publication in 1925.

appeared but seem to have had an even shorter lifespan.⁶³ It was really only towards the middle of the nineteenth century that any titles that displayed any degree of longevity were first published.

Undoubtedly the most significant of these was the *King's County Chronicle*. It was launched in 1845 by Henry W. Talbot (who had founded the *Leinster Express* in 1831) in conjunction with F.H. Shields & Sons, a Birr firm of stationers and booksellers. In 1859 the *Chronicle* acquired the *Leinster Reporter*, a title first published in Tullamore a year previously. The latter paper continued to operate under the same name but was effectively the Tullamore edition of the *Chronicle*. In 1873 the *King's County Chronicle* was sold to John Wright.

Born in Armagh in 1837, Wright started his journalistic career at the *Armagh Guardian* before moving to the *Newry Telegraph* and also worked at the *Nenagh Guardian* prior to his move to County Offaly. Wright was a staunch unionist and is reputed to have established the Birr Orange Lodge in the early 1880s.⁶⁴ Despite the conflicting political outlook to that of the *Midland Tribune* Wright and his paper appear to have enjoyed a mostly amicable relationship with its nationalist counterpart. When the *Chronicle's* printing office was destroyed by fire in 1903 the *Tribune's* plant was placed at its disposal. Equally there were instances of the *Chronicle* lending assistance to the *Tribune* when the latter encountered difficulties at its own printing works.⁶⁵ Indeed when John Wright died in 1915 his obituary in the *Midland Tribune* described him as 'courteous and obliging, and ever ready if it was in his power, to help fellow journalists in any difficulty'.⁶⁶

⁶³ *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981)

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ *Ibid*; *Midland Tribune*, 7 Feb. 1914, 29 Jan. 1916;

⁶⁶ *Midland Tribune*, 13 Nov. 1915

Appendix E

Connacht newspapers

Sligo

The first newspaper to be published in the county was the *Sligo Journal* which was founded in 1771 by Michael Parker. It lasted for almost a century, only ceasing publication in March 1866. Other titles that preceded the *Champion* were fairly short-lived. These included the *Sligo Morning Herald* (1789-1793), the *Weekly Selector* (published for six months in 1812), the *Western Luminary* (1823-1829), and the *Sligo Observer* (1828-1831).¹ The *Sligo Champion* was founded in 1836 by Edward Howard Verdon. Dublin-born Verdon had moved to the west of Ireland in 1834 to become editor of the *Ballina Impartial*. The launch of the *Champion* followed his attendance at a meeting of the Liberal Party in Sligo two years later, at which it was decided to publish a party newspaper in the town. Verdon, who became the paper's first editor, was a rather abrasive character. On a number of occasions he was known to have demanded satisfaction, in the form of a duel, from those who questioned the paper's integrity. Similarly Verdon's abrasiveness and determination to assert the *Champion's* independence resulted in frequent confrontations with the authorities. Verdon died in 1858 but not before serving as Mayor of Sligo, having been elected unopposed in 1850.²

In the decades following Verdon's death the paper experienced serious financial difficulties before being acquired in 1885 by Patrick Aloysius (P.A.) McHugh, probably the paper's most celebrated editor. Under his guidance the fortunes of the *Champion* were revived and it became a highly respected nationalist organ. Like so many other provincial editor-proprietors of that era, P.A. McHugh was also elected to parliament, serving as the Irish Parliamentary Party MP for North Leitrim from 1895 to 1906 and for North Sligo from 1906 to 1909. Similar to Verdon, he also served as Mayor of Sligo.³ Known for his 'willingness to suffer imprisonment in defence of the freedom of the press' McHugh's health deteriorated as a result of such terms of imprisonment and he died in 1909 at the relatively young age of 51. Testament to the esteem in which McHugh was held in the region is demonstrated by the fact

¹ *Sligo Champion – Sesquicentenary Issue 1836-1986* (5 December 1986)

² Ibid

³ Ibid; Deignan, op. cit., p.45;

that a memorial to him was unveiled outside Sligo town hall in October 1916 at a ceremony attended by John Redmond.⁴

By the outbreak of World War I the *Sligo Champion* was considered to be 'still firmly loyal to the Irish Party and mouthpiece of Sligo's bourgeois, Catholic establishment'.⁵ During this period the *Newspaper Press Directory* initially recorded the proprietors of the paper as the representatives 'of the late P.A. McHugh, M.P.' but in 1920 his son, Alfred McHugh, assumed sole proprietorship.⁶ Some years previously Alfred McHugh had moved to Canada, during his time there he had enlisted in the Canadian Army and served in France during World War I.⁷ The paper's previously staunch allegiance to the Irish Parliamentary began to subside considerably with the rise of Sinn Féin.⁸ By March 1918 it had even attracted the attention of the Press Censor who deemed its tone 'distinctly bad' and 'likely to cause disaffection'.⁹ This most likely resulted from its virulent opposition to conscription which it warned would have to be enforced 'at the point of a bayonet'.¹⁰ Despite the Press Censor's disapproval no action was taken against the paper though other titles (such as the *Westmeath Independent*, *Mayo News*, and *Clare Champion*) that had also been deemed as having transgressed the Defence of the Realm regulations endured varying terms of suppression. The truce of July 1921 was warmly welcomed by the *Sligo Champion* and it also gave firm support to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921.¹¹

The other main nationalist newspaper in the county was the *Sligo Nationalist*. This title had only been established as recently as 1910 by Bernard McTernan, who had previously served as editor of the *Sligo Champion*. Initially this new publication adopted a similar political stance to that of the *Champion* but in April 1920 it was taken over by a group of Sinn Féin supporters and renamed the *Connachtman* (or *Connachtach*).¹² Thereafter it was recognised as the main republican newspaper in Sligo town.¹³ The

⁴ Owen McGee, 'McHugh, Patrick Aloysius' in McGuire et al (eds.)

⁵ Wheatley, op. cit., p.177

⁶ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.215; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1918*, p.215; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1922*, p.215; *Sligo Champion – Sesquicentenary Issue 1836-1986* (5 December 1986); For a number of years following the death of P.A. McHugh the paper was held in trust by John Tarrent, solicitor and life-long friend of McHugh.

⁷ *Sligo Champion*, 14 Jan. 1966; Alfred McHugh's obituary noted his strong connection to Sligo and particularly that he was a keen angler in the lakes and rivers of County Sligo and also that he was a loyal supporter of Sligo Rovers football club.

⁸ Farry 2012, op. cit., p.7

⁹ Press Censorship Report, March 1918, CO904/166/2

¹⁰ Farry, op. cit., p.40; *Sligo Champion*, 6 Apr. 1918;

¹¹ Michael Farry, *The aftermath of revolution: Sligo, 1921-23* (Dublin, 2000), p.203

¹² Farry 2012, op. cit., pp 7-8

¹³ Deignan, op. cit., p.177

paper was edited by Robert George Bradshaw who was the intelligence officer in the Sligo brigade of the IRA at the time the truce was declared in July 1921.¹⁴ While still operating as the *Sligo Nationalist* it suffered a similar fate to the *Midland Tribune* in that it was closed down in October 1919 following the publication of a full page advertisement for the Dáil Éireann loan.¹⁵ In January 1921 under its new title the paper was fined £250 at a court-martial in Belfast for offences under the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act.¹⁶ The *Connachtman* opposed the Anglo-Irish Treaty and was later suppressed by Free State Forces before finally ceasing publication in 1925.¹⁷

The remaining local title in Sligo was the conservative-unionist *Sligo Independent*. It was founded in 1855 by brothers Alexander and William Gillmor.¹⁸ In common with fellow newspapermen Edward Howard Verdon and P.A. McHugh of the *Sligo Champion*, Alexander Gillmor served as Mayor of Sligo for a time.¹⁹ In 1921 the paper was purchased from the Gillmor family by William David Peebles. A member of the Church of Ireland, Peebles had worked at the *Sligo Independent* as a reporter since the start of World War I, having commenced his journalistic career at the *Mid-Ulster Mail* in his home town of Cookstown, County Tyrone.²⁰ Under the guidance of Peebles the *Sligo Independent* more or less ceased to argue in favour of the Union and accepted the inevitability of Irish self-government.²¹ The paper differed from the vast majority of its contemporary unionist publications in the south of Ireland in that it lasted well beyond the establishment of the Irish Free State, only ceasing publication in 1962.²²

Leitrim

Neighbouring County Leitrim does not share the same depth of newspaper history as County Sligo. This is most probably due to its demographic position as the most sparsely populated Irish county. Another likely contributory factor was that provincial organs based in bordering counties competed for Leitrim's limited circulation potential by devoting a certain proportion of their paper to Leitrim affairs. Hence the aforementioned *Sligo Nationalist* was sub-titled the *Leitrim Leader* while the *Western Nationalist*, based

¹⁴ Farry 2000, op. cit., p.23

¹⁵ Farry 2012, op. cit., p.41; *Sligo Champion*, 4 Oct. 1919; *Sligo Nationalist*, 30 Sept. 1919;

¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 26 Jan. 1921; It was reported that the editor and printer were fined for 'spreading false reports and making false statements' contrary 'to the Restoration of Order in Ireland regulations'.

¹⁷ Farry 2012, op. cit., pp 7-8; *Sligo Champion* – Sesquientenary Issue 1836-1986;

¹⁸ *Sligo Champion* – Sesquientenary Issue 1836-1986 (5 December 1986)

¹⁹ *Irish Times*, 6 Jan. 1962

²⁰ Ibid; *Sligo Champion*, 14 Dec. 1984; Deignan, op. cit., p.176;

²¹ Deignan, op. cit., p.176

²² *Irish Times*, 6 Jan. 1962; In an interview with the *Irish Times* in 1962 Peebles stated that the paper was suspending publication rather than closing down but the *Sligo Independent* did not reappear.

in Boyle, County Roscommon, bore the appendage *Roscommon, Mayo, Leitrim, and Sligo News*. Similarly the *Longford Leader* had the appended title of *Cavan, Leitrim, Roscommon, and Westmeath News* while the Ballyshannon-based *Donegal Vindicator* had the appendage of *Fermanagh, Leitrim, and Sligo Observer*.

The earliest known paper in County Leitrim was the *Leitrim Journal* which was established in Carrick-on-Shannon in 1850 but ceased publication in 1872.²³ The *Leitrim Guardian*, established by the Sinn Féin party in 1907, as detailed in the introduction to this study, only lasted thirty-one editions, the final one appearing on 29 February 1908.²⁴ Accordingly the only provincial title published in the county during the 1914-1921 period apart from the *Leitrim Observer* was the Mohill-based *Leitrim Advertiser*. Little is known of this publication apart from the fact that it was established initially as the *Leitrim Gazette* in 1856 by R. Turner.²⁵ By the second decade of the twentieth century it had been acquired by Bernard McKiernan and was of an independent political outlook.²⁶ It ceased publication in 1924 citing ‘the decay of business generally and the consequent decline in remunerative advertising’ as the reasons for its closure.²⁷

Roscommon

In County Roscommon the earliest known title appears to have been the *Roscommon and Leitrim Gazette* which enjoyed a lifespan of sixty years dating from 1822 to 1882. Some of the other publications launched in the county during the nineteenth century were not bestowed with such longevity. The *Roscommon Constitutionalist* lasted only seven years (1884-1891) with the *Roscommon Reporter* lasting barely a year (1850-1851) while the *Boyle Gazette and Roscommon Reporter* appeared for a mere few months during 1891.²⁸ Nonetheless, three of the other titles established in Roscommon in the same century were gifted with far greater staying power and were numbered among the five provincial organs serving the county at the outbreak of World War I.

²³ This is based on the newspaper database of the National Library of Ireland.

²⁴ Ciarán Ó Duibhir, *Sinn Féin: the first election, 1908* (Manorhamilton, 1993), p.85; Lawrence William White, ‘Dolan, Charles Joseph’ in McGuire et al (eds.); The *Leitrim Guardian* was launched by Charles Joseph Dolan who was the first parliamentary candidate to stand on behalf of Sinn Féin when he unsuccessfully contested the North Leitrim by-election in February 1908.

²⁵ *Leitrim Observer*, 27 Dec. 1924

²⁶ Ibid; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers’ guide 1917*, p.214;

²⁷ *Leitrim Observer*, 27 Dec. 1924

²⁸ This information is taken from the newspaper database of the National Library of Ireland (NLI).

The three newspapers launched the previous century were the *Roscommon Journal* (1828), *Roscommon Messenger* (1848), and the *Roscommon Herald* (1859). These were joined by the more recent arrivals the *Western Nationalist* (1907), and the *Strokestown Democrat* (1913). Three of these publications were generally supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party; the exceptions were the *Strokestown Democrat* and the *Roscommon Herald*.²⁹ The former title, founded by Patrick Morahan, held republican sympathies.³⁰ The political sympathies of the *Roscommon Herald*, owned and edited by Jasper Tully, are closely examined in chapter 4. William Tully, an uncle of Jasper, was the proprietor of the *Roscommon Journal* based in Roscommon town. William Tully died in April 1915 while the paper ceased publication twelve years later. The *Roscommon Messenger*, also based in Roscommon town, was owned by J.P. Hayden, whose main journalistic engagement was with the *Westmeath Examiner*. It outlived its counterpart in the town by seven years, remaining in print until 1935. The *Western Nationalist* was based in Boyle and directed by Joseph Flanagan but only lasted thirteen years before publication ceased in 1920.³¹

Mayo

With three major towns, Ballina, Castlebar, and Westport, within its boundaries, County Mayo boasts a somewhat more substantial newspaper history than some of its Connacht neighbours. Strangely no newspaper was published in Westport until 1892 with the arrival of the *Mayo News*. The earliest recorded newspaper in the county was the *Mayo Constitution* published in Castlebar. It first appeared in 1805 and had a solid Protestant ethos and was staunchly supportive of the British establishment. It remained in print until 1872 though other provincial papers launched in the town did not enjoy such a prolonged lifespan. Captain T.H. Gleeson from Tipperary was proprietor of the short-lived *Mayo Mercury* (1840-1841) while the *Aegis and Western Courier* only appeared for a time during 1841. The latter title supported the Temperance movement (founded by Father Mathew) and much of its content promoted the activities of that movement in the county. The *Mayo Examiner* proved to have considerably greater durability. This paper, owned by the Sheridan family, first appeared in 1868. It developed into a widely respected organ before ceasing publication in 1903.³²

²⁹ Reynolds, op. cit., p.3

³⁰ Ibid; *Irish Press*, 4 Apr. 1949;

³¹ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.209

³² *Connaught Telegraph – Commemorative Issue* (April, 1996)

Ballina is also noted for a number of newspapers of a very limited lifespan during the nineteenth century though there were a few notable exceptions. The town's earliest newspaper was the *Ballina Impartial* which lasted from 1823 to 1835. Its demise coincided with the launch of the *Western Star* which only survived for two years. There followed a number of equally short-lived publications in the mid-nineteenth century, the *Ballina Advertiser* (1840-1843), *Western Gem* (published for a period during 1843), *Ballina Chronicle* (1849-1851), and *Connaught Watchman* (1851-1863). One title of particular note, although similarly short-lived, was the *Ballina National Times* (1864-1867) which is believed to be the first nationalist paper in the town. Newspapers from the town that enjoyed a somewhat longer lifespan were the *Tyrawly Herald* (1844-1870) and the *Ballina Journal* (1880-1895).³³

By the outbreak of World War I County Mayo was served by four different newspapers, the aforementioned *Mayo News*, the *Ballina Herald*, the *Western People* (also based in Ballina), and the Castlebar-based *Connaught Telegraph*. These were later joined briefly (1919-1921) by the *Mayoman*, also based in Castlebar. The *Ballina Herald* was directly descended from the *Tyrawly Herald*. In 1864 R.W. Joynt purchased the latter title from its co-founder, William Richley, and re-launched it as the *Ballina Herald* in 1870. A unionist organ at the outset it appears to have drifted towards nationalism in the late nineteenth century.³⁴ By the 1916-1921 period it was owned by the Duncan family and was neutral in its politics.³⁵ Such neutrality did not prevent the suppression of the paper in December 1918 for printing a Sinn Féin election leaflet.³⁶ The incident led the *Connaught Telegraph* to sardonically remark that 'the only unionist paper in the county has been suppressed'.³⁷ The *Ballina Herald* was purchased by the *Western People* in 1945 and seventeen years later it was incorporated into the latter paper.³⁸

The origins of the *Western People* itself closely mirror those of other provincial titles such as the *Drogheda Independent* and the *Midland Tribune* in that the Catholic Church had a significant involvement. The paper was launched in 1883 following a meeting at St Muredach's Cathedral in Ballina organised by Fr Anthony Finnerty for the purpose of establishing a newspaper that would reflect the town's Catholic ethos. A limited company was formed to oversee the venture; amongst those involved

³³ Ibid; *Western People, 125th Anniversary 1883-2008* (18 November 2008)

³⁴ *Western People, 125th Anniversary 1883-2008* (18 November 2008)

³⁵ Ibid; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.207; The *Ballina Herald* had developed Sinn Féin leanings after the 1916 Rising according to the commemorative issue of the *Western People*.

³⁶ *Irish Times*, 28 Dec. 1918

³⁷ *Connaught Telegraph*, 28 Dec. 1918

³⁸ *Western People, 125th Anniversary 1883-2008* (18 November 2008)

was Terence Devere who became sole proprietor of the paper in 1923.³⁹ Devere was another example of the strong links between the provincial press and the GAA, being one of the founders of the Ballina Stephenites club.⁴⁰ Prior to Devere's assumption of sole proprietorship he had shared the stewardship of the paper with T.A. Walsh who had been editor of the paper from 1888 until his death in 1922.⁴¹ The *Western People*, according to local historian Dominic Price, was 'a little more balanced' than some of its Mayo counterparts in relation to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 in that it published 'some anti-Treaty articles and letters'.⁴²

The *Connaught Telegraph* in Castlebar began life as the *Telegraph or Connaught Ranger* on St Patrick's Day, 1828. Its founder was a titled English Protestant, Lord Frederick Cavendish. Despite such a background Cavendish strongly endorsed nationalist causes such as Daniel O'Connell's repeal movement of the 1840s and he was also an early advocate of tenant rights.⁴³ The title ceased publication in 1870 (fourteen years after Cavendish's death) but was bought by James Daly in 1876 and re-named the *Connaught Telegraph*.⁴⁴ Unlike Cavendish, Daly was staunchly Catholic and a Mayo native though he shared Cavendish's strong desire for land reform. He was a central figure in the formation of the Land League in County Mayo and used the medium of his paper to promote its aims. Nonetheless, Daly did not approve of the direction the Land League was taking as it developed into a national movement and he left the organisation in 1882.⁴⁵ Daly sold his interest in the *Connaught Telegraph* to one of his employees, Richard C. Gillespie, in 1892.⁴⁶ This marked the commencement of a family connection to the newspaper that was still going strong over a century later and is a further illustration of the remarkable sense of continuity within the Irish provincial press.⁴⁷ The son of Richard C. Gillespie, Thomas H. Gillespie, became editor-proprietor of the paper in 1899 and remained in that position until his death

³⁹ Ibid; Meehan 2003, op. cit., pp 206-9; The first editor of the *Western People* was Patrick Smyth who had strong links to the fledgling Gaelic Athletic Association.

⁴⁰ *Western People*, 12 Apr. 1941

⁴¹ *Western People, 125th Anniversary 1883-2008* (18 November 2008)

⁴² Price, op. cit., p.193

⁴³ *Connaught Telegraph – Commemorative Issue* (April, 1996); Cavendish's connection to Mayo stemmed from his marriage to his second wife, Agnes Catherine MacDonnell, who was the daughter of a Castlebar attorney.

⁴⁴ Donald E. Jordan Jr, *Land and popular politics in Ireland: County Mayo from the plantation to the land war* (New York, 1994), p.267

⁴⁵ *Connaught Telegraph – Commemorative Issue* (April, 1996); Moran 1994, op. cit., pp 201-2;

⁴⁶ *Connaught Telegraph – Commemorative Issue* (April, 1996); Daly retired from journalism to become a full-time farmer.

⁴⁷ Meehan, op. cit., pp 206-9

in 1939.⁴⁸ The *Connaught Telegraph* was solidly nationalist in its sympathies though there is little indication of it attracting any unwanted attention from the authorities during the 1916-1921 period and it was broadly supportive of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.⁴⁹

Even though it only appeared for a two year period (June 1919 to June 1921) the *Mayoman* still merits attention when considering provincial titles in the county during these years. It was established by John J. (J.J.) Collins who felt that Castlebar was in need of its own republican newspaper. Under his stewardship it grew to become quite an influential paper during the War of Independence. Collins was a cousin of Archbishop Gilmartin of Tuam whose pronouncements were frequently published in the *Mayoman*.⁵⁰ J.J. Collins was also credited as being an enthusiastic supporter of Irish-Ireland movements and indeed was regarded as an authority on Irish music and dance. He also served as an official on the Connacht Council of the GAA and later worked for both the *Mayo News* and *Connacht Tribune*.⁵¹

Galway

County Galway boasts a rather more substantial newspaper history than the other Connacht counties though most titles were based in the city of Galway. Ballinasloe and Tuam accounted for the remaining provincial organs that had existed prior to 1914. Similar to so many other areas around the country the number of titles that lasted any considerable length of time was clearly outweighed by those that only made a relatively fleeting appearance.⁵² In Galway city those categorised in the former group included the *Galway Weekly Advertiser* (1819-1843), the *Galway Vindicator* (1841-1899), and most notably the *Connaught Journal* which was published between 1754 and 1840 making it one of Ireland's earliest local papers.⁵³ Galway city was also home to what was reputed to be the country's first Home Rule paper, the short-lived *Galway Press*. This paper made a brief appearance in the 1870s and was edited by John St George Joyce who later went on to edit the *Clare Journal*, *Midland Tribune*, and *Leinster Leader*.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ *Connaught Telegraph*, 4 Apr. 1939

⁴⁹ Price, op. cit., p.193

⁵⁰ Ibid, pp 43-7

⁵¹ *Connacht Tribune*, *Mayo News*, 15 May 1948

⁵² This mainly refers to titles that lasted no more than four years such as the *Galway American* (1862-1863), *Galway Chronicle* (1821), *Galway Free Press* (1832-1835), *Galway Packet* (1852-1854), *Galway Patriot* (1835-1839), *Galway Standard* (1842-1843); Oram, op. cit., p.78; This group of titles also includes the *Galway Press* (1860-1861) which according to Oram notes was 'the first home rule paper in Ireland'.

⁵³ Oram, op. cit., p.344; Oram notes the publication dates for the *Connaught Journal* as 1813 to 1840 but the NLI newspaper database indicates 1754 to 1840 and indeed the NLI hold copies of this paper dating from 1791.

⁵⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Jul. 1922; *Connaught Telegraph*, 15 Jul. 1922; *Tuam Herald*, 22 Jul. 1922;

Ballinasloe, much like Galway city, reflected a mixture of longevity in the print media distinctly tempered by organs with only a brief lifespan, albeit on a smaller scale. Prior to 1914 the most enduring paper in the town had been the *Western Star* (1845-1902). Most other publications had been fairly short-lived such as the *Western Argus* (1828-1833), *Connaught People* (1883-1886), and the *Connaught Leader* (1904-1907). The situation in Tuam was slightly different with the *Tuam Herald* (which is examined in the next section) serving the town since 1837. Most of the other newspapers previously published in Tuam had managed to last a few decades, such as the *Tuam Gazette* (1800-1824), *Connaught Patriot* (1859-1869), and *Tuam News* (1871-1904).

By 1914 County Galway was served by seven different newspapers. Four of these were located in the city, two in Ballinasloe, and one in Tuam. The aforementioned *Tuam Herald* served that town while the *East Galway Democrat* and the *Western News* were published in Ballinasloe.⁵⁵ The *Western News* was referred to in the introduction to this study as being recognised by Legg as one of the first provincial organs to specifically identify itself as nationalist. Strangely the *Newspaper Press Directory* of 1917 classified it as being of a 'neutral' political stance.⁵⁶ It had been taken over by William Hastings around 1901. Hastings had served a number of terms of imprisonment arising from his journalistic endeavours, particularly in relation to land agitation.⁵⁷ The *Western News* ceased publication not long after Hastings' death in 1926. The other provincial title based in Ballinasloe was the *East Galway Democrat*. It was established in 1910 by Nicholas E. O'Carroll who had previously been associated with the *Connaught Leader*. His obituary described him as belonging to 'the old school of courtly gentlemen of the Irish Party type' who 'never forsook the old type of dress of the period'. His son, also Nicholas E. O'Carroll, assumed control of the paper upon his father's retirement in 1917.⁵⁸ It remained in publication until 1949.

Two of the newspapers based in Galway city, the *Galway Pilot* and the *Galway Express*, did not survive to witness the birth of the Irish Free State. The former title was classified as a 'liberal-independent' organ though the fact that from its foundation in 1883 until 1905 it had the appended title of *Catholic Journal* may give some idea of where its sympathies lay.⁵⁹ It was owned and edited by John N. Sleator

⁵⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, pp 214-6; Tuam was also served by the *Tuam People* but this was a re-issue of the *Western News*. Similarly Loughrea was served by the *Loughrea Guardian* but this was also a re-issue of the *Western People*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p.207

⁵⁷ *Western News, Connacht Tribune*, 13 Mar. 1926;

⁵⁸ *Connacht Sentinel*, 6 Aug. 1935

⁵⁹ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213

but discontinued operations in 1918 due to the illness of both the owner and his brother who had also been heavily involved in the running of the paper since its establishment in 1883.⁶⁰ The case of the *Galway Express* and the reasons for its demise were decidedly different.

This paper had been a unionist organ since its foundation in 1853 by J.C. McDougall, a Scotsman who had settled in Galway. From 1912 until 1918 it was edited by Harry D. Fisher, a Church of Ireland member from Waterford, two of whose sons died while serving in World War I.⁶¹ In September 1917 the paper was sold for £535 to Sinn Féin interests in the city, further demonstrating that party's enthusiasm for acquiring its own voice within the provincial print media.⁶² One of the principal instigators of the acquisition was Thomas Walshe, a pathology lecturer in University College Galway. Walshe, who became managing-director of the paper, was a member of both the Gaelic League and Sinn Féin from any early stage, and from 1912 until 1916 he was honorary secretary of the Galway Volunteers. In the aftermath of Easter 1916 he was arrested and detained at both Wandsworth and Frongoch internment camps.⁶³ The transfer of ownership of the *Galway Express*, in which Walshe was such a central figure, did not go unnoticed by the Press Censor. Soon after the takeover Lord Decies commented that the paper 'will now be found to be one of the strongest Sinn Féin papers'.⁶⁴

It was not long before the newly acquired title incurred the displeasure of the Press Censor. In January 1918 it published content without reference to the Press Censor's office and was warned as to its future conduct.⁶⁵ Over the course of the next eighteen months the paper was required to delete content on six occasions though this related almost entirely to reports of political meetings rather than editorial comment. The office and printing machinery of the *Galway Express* were destroyed by Crown Forces in September 1920 during what the *Connacht Tribune* described as the 'city's night of horror'.⁶⁶ This followed an incident at the city's railway station that resulted in the deaths of two people, an English policeman, Edward Cromm, and local man Seán Mulvoy, who had reportedly attempted to disarm

⁶⁰ *Connacht Tribune*, 26 Jun. 1920; Sleator also assumed control of the *Galway Vindicator* upon the death of its owner, Lewis Ferdinand, and incorporated it into the *Galway Pilot*.

⁶¹ *Irish Times*, 2 May 1939; *Irish Independent*, 3 May 1939; His father, Joseph Fisher, was once editor and proprietor of the *Munster Express*.

⁶² *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Sept., 1917; *Irish Independent*, 22 Sept. 1917; The papers reported that the 'Sinn Féin interest was strongly represented at the auction' and that 'a gentleman from the north of Ireland named Burke' was 'declared the purchaser at £535' and 'he subsequently handed the plant to Dr Walsh, University College'.

⁶³ *Connacht Tribune*, 23 Jul. 1960

⁶⁴ Press Censorship Report, September 1917, CO904/166/1

⁶⁵ Press Censorship Report, January 1918, CO904/166/1

⁶⁶ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 Sept. 1920

Cromm when he had brandished a revolver at a group of people waiting to collect the Dublin papers from the evening train.⁶⁷ Later that year the owners of the paper submitted a claim for £10,000 for damage to premises and loss of business but the *Galway Express* ceased publication around the same time.⁶⁸

The remaining two papers in the city did not suffer such a fate. The *Galway Observer* was owned and edited by Alexander Gaffney Scott who founded the paper in 1881 at the inducement of T.P. O'Connor amongst others.⁶⁹ It was noted as a firm supporter of constitutionalism though by late 1920 it had begun to develop republican sympathies. Much the same can be said of the *Connacht Tribune*, the only newspaper in the city to survive into the twenty-first century.⁷⁰ The *Connacht Tribune* was established in 1909 by Corkman, Thomas J.W. Kenny. Tom 'Cork', as he came to be known, also founded the *Connacht Sentinel* in 1925 and was additionally a founding director of the *Standard*, the well-known Catholic newspaper, though his active interests extended well beyond journalism.⁷¹ During World War I he acted as British Army correspondent at St Omar and in 1918 he was attached to the Belgian Army at La Panne. During this time he contributed articles to the London *Daily News* as well as his own paper.⁷² At the time of its establishment the *Connacht Tribune* was unambiguously supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party with John Dillon writing in one of its early issues of the importance of 'a vigorous and able provincial press'.⁷³ As the political mood began to alter dramatically in Ireland during 1917 the paper drew the ire of Lord Decies who considered its tone as being 'of a nature to cause disaffection' though the *Connacht Tribune* had certainly not transformed into a Sinn Féin organ.⁷⁴

⁶⁷ Ibid; Tomás Kenny, *Galway: politics and society, 1910-23* (Dublin, 2011), p.32; The *Connacht Tribune* reported that later the same night the police took Seamus Quirke from his lodgings 'and riddled his body with bullets'.

⁶⁸ *Connacht Tribune*, 30 Oct. 1920

⁶⁹ *Irish Times*, 16 Aug. 1926

⁷⁰ Kenny, op. cit., p.32; The *Galway Observer* ceased publication in 1966.

⁷¹ *Connacht Tribune*, 11 May 1940; *Connacht Tribune – 100th anniversary: souvenir centenary supplement* (22 May 2009); Amongst many other pursuits Kenny was a member of the local harbour commissioners and was involved in the development of Galway docks. He was also the first chairman of Galway Chamber of Commerce and was the first president of the Irish Tourist Board (later Bord Fáilte). Additionally he was an active member of Galway Archaeological and Historical Society.

⁷² *Connacht Tribune*, 11 May 1940

⁷³ *Connacht Tribune*, 22 May 1909; Kenny, op. cit., p.12; *Connacht Tribune – 100th anniversary: souvenir centenary supplement* (22 May 2009);

⁷⁴ Press Censorship Report, January 1918, CO904/166/1; The paper was censured for reporting a number of speeches made at Sinn Féin meetings during December 1917 without reference to the office of the Press Censor.

Appendix F

Munster newspapers

Clare

County Clare was home to one of the oldest newspapers in the country, the *Clare Journal*. Published in Ennis on a bi-weekly basis the *Clare Journal* was established in 1776 and claimed to circulate ‘largely amongst commercial, professional, and farming classes’.¹ The paper’s most celebrated editor was probably John St George Joyce, a staunch nationalist and also a Land League organiser.² The *Clare Journal* was owned by John B Knox and Sons who also owned the Ennis-based *Saturday Record* which had been established in 1885. In May 1917 the *Clare Journal* suspended publication due to the scarcity of paper and joined forces with the *Saturday Record* to become the *Saturday Record and Clare Journal*.³ The newly amalgamated publication was edited by Owen Tuohy until his death in 1925 while the paper itself ceased publication eleven years later.⁴ County Clare was also served by the *Kilrush Herald* which was described as a liberal and independent organ.⁵ Unfortunately little is known of this newspaper except that it was established in 1877 by Peter J. Boyle who remained as proprietor until publication of the paper was discontinued in 1922.⁶ However, the most significant paper serving County Clare at this time was also the most recently established, the *Clare Champion*, which first made its appearance in 1903.

The *Clare Champion* emerged from the ashes of the *Clareman* newspaper established by Tom Galvin in 1896. As a result of a libel action the *Clareman* was controversially forced to close only seven years after its foundation. However, Galvin was obviously a dogged newspaperman as he seized the printing equipment from his old newspaper and used it to launch the *Clare Champion*, the first issue appearing on 28 March 1903. One hundred years later the Galvin family still held the reins of the paper, once more providing a remarkable example of unbroken family ownership of an Irish provincial newspaper. Tom

¹ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers’ guide 1917*, p.583

² *Freeman’s Journal*, 8 Jul. 1922; *Connaught Telegraph*, 15 Jul. 1922; *Tuam Herald*, 22 Jul. 1922;

³ *Irish Times*, 5 May 1917

⁴ *Limerick Leader*, 1 Apr. 1925; *Nenagh Guardian*, 4 Apr. 1925;

⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers’ guide 1917*, p.213

⁶ *Irish Press*, 29 May 1935; *Nenagh Guardian*, 1 Jun. 1935;

Galvin died only six months after the paper was established at which stage the reins of the *Clare Champion* passed to his sister, Josephine, and her editor husband Sarsfield Maguire.⁷

Like so many other provincial newspapers established around this time the *Clare Champion* was a solidly nationalist organ. Likewise it was unapologetically Catholic in its ethos. This was principally due to the influence of Josephine Maguire, one of the very few women numbered among the senior ranks of the provincial press. Following her death in 1937 her obituary noted her determination that the paper founded by her brother should be 'a most staunchly Catholic journal' and that it should convey 'a virile Catholic tone in every article that appeared in its weekly issue'.⁸ Politically the *Clare Champion* displayed similar traits to several other Irish provincial newspapers – initially supportive of the Irish Parliamentary Party and the United Irish League but later transferring its allegiance to the Sinn Féin party. This reflected the change in political direction of the paper's editor, Sarsfield Maguire. Originally a supporter of William Redmond (who had previously held the seat for East Clare later won by Eamon de Valera in the by-election of July 1917) Sarsfield Maguire subsequently became a champion of the Sinn Féin cause.⁹

The rise in the fortunes of the Sinn Féin party coincided with the time at which the office of the Press Censor began to pay far greater attention to the output of provincial newspapers. In this respect the *Clare Champion* was one of the earliest titles to attract the notice of Lord Decies when he took exception to reports of the drilling of the Irish Volunteers that had appeared in the paper during November 1917. Decies wrote to Sarsfield Maguire informing him that such reports constituted a breach of the Defence of the Realm regulations.¹⁰ Indeed Decies subsequently informed all Irish newspapers 'that reports of the drilling and route marching of Sinn Féin Volunteers should not be published unless when [sic] action of this description forms the subject matter of a prosecution'.¹¹ Sarsfield Maguire replied to the Press Censor protesting that reports of the drilling of volunteers could hardly constitute a breach of regulations as several English newspapers had also carried similar reports.¹² No action was taken against the paper at this stage but it was not so lucky five months later. After deeming the tone of the *Champion* (along with a number of other newspapers) 'distinctly bad, and likely to cause disaffection' the

⁷ *Clare Champion*, 28 Mar. 2003

⁸ *Ibid*, 20 Feb. 1937

⁹ *Irish Times*, 26 Jul. 1945

¹⁰ Police Reports, 1917 Oct-Dec, CO904/122/2-1194

¹¹ Police Reports, 1917 Oct-Dec, CO904/122/2-1198, 1199

¹² Police Reports, 1917 Oct-Dec, CO904/122/2-1183

authorities moved against the paper in early April 1918.¹³ In the same week that action was taken against the *Westmeath Independent* and the *Mayo News* the printing machinery of the *Clare Champion* was seized and removed by police.¹⁴ However, the suppression of the *Champion* lasted considerably longer as it was only allowed to resume publication in late September.¹⁵ No specific reason was given for the original action against the paper and it was still reported, even after its reappearance, to be subject 'to a rigorous censorship by the authorities'.¹⁶

Limerick

The *Weekly Observer* based in Newcastle West in neighbouring County Limerick was one of the other newspapers deemed by Lord Decies at that time to have contravened the Defence of the Realm regulations.¹⁷ Accordingly the paper was similarly suppressed at the same time as the *Clare Champion* but was permitted to resume operations a month later; illustrating what can only be interpreted as a lack of consistency in the implementation of the censorship regulations.¹⁸ Nevertheless, a more serious fate befell the paper barely two years later when its offices were attacked by Crown Forces. Initial reports indicated that the premises were wrecked but it was later reported that the damage was not as serious as originally believed.¹⁹ This nationalist organ had only been established in late 1914 by A.J. Byrnes.²⁰ Its editor was Seán Brouder, who, like Sarsfield Maguire and many other Irish newspapermen of the time, was originally a supporter of the Irish Parliamentary Party but subsequently converted to the Sinn Féin cause.²¹ Indeed Brouder was elected as a Sinn Féin representative to the Newcastle West Town Commission in January 1920 and in September of the same year became a member of the first IRA Flying Column in West Limerick.²²

¹³ Press Censorship Report, March 1918, CO904/166/2

¹⁴ *Irish Times*, 6 Apr. 1918

¹⁵ *Irish Independent*, 30 Sept. 1918

¹⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Sept. 1918

¹⁷ Press Censorship Report, March 1918, CO904/166/2

¹⁸ *Meath Chronicle*, 11 May 1918; *Connacht Tribune*, 18 May 1918;

¹⁹ *Irish Independent*, 29 Jun., 5 Nov. 1920: Under the headings 'Limerick terrorism' and 'A night of terror' the *Irish Independent* reported that 'the offices of the *Weekly Observer* were wrecked by uniformed men' while on the same day the house of the editor (Seán Brouder) 'was broken into by uniformed men' and 'an attempt was made to burn his residence'. However, later that year when the paper made a claim for damages the *Independent* reported that the printing works 'were saved before very great damage was done'.

²⁰ Witness Statement, Seán Brouder (B.M.H., WS1236)

²¹ *Irish Independent*, 5 Apr. 1918

²² WS1236, Seán Brouder

Brouder had commenced his journalistic career in 1909 with another Limerick newspaper, the *Munster News* in Limerick city. This paper was founded as a liberal organ by Francis Counihan in 1851 and remained in the ownership of the Counihan family for most of its eighty-four year lifespan (publication ceased in 1935). Jerome Counihan, son of the paper's founder, served as Mayor of Limerick in the latter part of the nineteenth century.²³ By the second decade of the twentieth century the *Munster News* was considered a solidly nationalist organ and indeed in September 1919 the paper was suppressed as a result of the publication of the Dáil Éireann loan prospectus.²⁴ The paper suffered a fire at its premises in July 1920 and although initial reports did not attribute it to any particular party the *Freeman's Journal*, in a diatribe against the Chief Secretary, Sir Hamar Greenwood, later that year, listed the *Munster News* as one of several newspapers that 'have been bombed, wrecked, or burned by Hamar's disciples during the past few months'.²⁵

Similar to the other nationalist newspapers in County Limerick the *Limerick Leader* did not escape unscathed from this troubled period. Although it did not suffer an attack on its premises the paper was suppressed in September 1919 resulting from the publication of an advertisement for the Dáil Éireann loan. The suppression only lasted one week though this meant the *Limerick Leader* missed three editions, being a tri-weekly publication.²⁶ The paper was established in 1889 as a solidly nationalist organ. In the early 1900s it was acquired by Jeremiah Buckley who is considered the paper's founding father. Originally from County Cork, Buckley qualified both as a barrister and a chartered accountant. In addition to his journalistic pursuits he also assumed ownership of Kean and Company, Chartered Accountants, in Dame Street, Dublin.²⁷ In 1902 he served a prison term resulting from articles relating to a land dispute that had been published in the *Limerick Leader*. In later years he became a strong supporter and close friend of Eamon de Valera. Indeed Jeremiah Buckley assisted de Valera in the establishment of the *Irish Press* and it was from his offices in Dublin that the new paper was launched in 1931.²⁸ The editor of the *Limerick Leader* for most of Buckley's proprietorship and beyond was Cornelius Cregan. Described as a deeply religious man Cregan entered the newspaper business in 1906 as a junior

²³ *Irish Press*, 3 Jun. 1935; *Irish Independent*, 4 Jun. 1935;

²⁴ *Irish Times*, 27 Sept. 1919

²⁵ *Skibbereen Eagle*, 3 Jul. 1920; *Kerryman*, 10 Jul. 1920; *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Dec. 1920;

²⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Sept., 30 Sept. 1919;

²⁷ *Limerick Leader*, 30 Sept. 1989

²⁸ *Ibid*, 18 Sept. 1937, 30 Sept. 1989;

reporter with the *Munster News*. He joined the *Limerick Leader* in 1908 and became editor in 1910, a position in which he remained until his retirement in 1960.²⁹

The remaining nationalist paper in Limerick city, the *Limerick Echo*, was owned and edited by one of Cregan's predecessors as editor of the *Limerick Leader*. Christopher O'Sullivan, similar to Cregan, began his journalistic career with the *Munster News* in the mid-1880s. He then briefly edited the *Limerick Leader* prior to establishing the *Limerick Echo* in 1897. O'Sullivan remained in the dual role of editor-proprietor until his death in 1936.³⁰ Along with its two nationalist counterparts in Limerick city, the *Munster News* and the *Limerick Leader*, the *Limerick Echo* was also suppressed in September 1919 after publishing the prospectus for the Dáil Éireann loan. The three suppressions led the *Freeman's Journal* to remark that 'for the time being Limerick is without a local nationalist paper' and the *Irish Bulletin* to caustically observe that 'the English military have suppressed the entire republican press of Limerick city'.³¹ The remaining newspaper in the county was the moderate-conservative *Limerick Chronicle*. Established in 1766 by a Limerick poet named John Ferrar it was one of the oldest provincial newspapers in the country. Its editorial chair was occupied by John Augustus Baldwin who was appointed to the position in 1908, a role he filled until shortly before his death in 1935. Like so many other unionist organs in the south of Ireland it was ultimately taken over by its local nationalist counterpart, the *Limerick Leader* assuming control of the *Chronicle* in 1953.³²

Waterford

County Waterford was also served by one unionist newspaper, the *Waterford Standard*, based in the city. Its owner was Robert Whalley who had been one of the papers' founders in 1863.³³ However, the curious situation existed at the paper that David Cuthbert (D.C.) Boyd, a journalist with extremely strong republican links, was appointed editor in 1916. Originally from Dundonald, County Down, Boyd was from a Protestant unionist background but became a member of the IRB and Fianna Éireann and was centrally involved in the Howth gun-running in July 1914. He was a lifelong friend of Ernest Blythe who he had known since the early days of their journalistic careers in County Down. Boyd actually spent a period "on the run" following the Easter Rising but obtained a post as a reporter with the *Waterford Standard*

²⁹ Ibid, 2 Jul. 1966

³⁰ Ibid, 9 May 1936

³¹ *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Bulletin*, 24 Sept. 1919;

³² *Limerick Chronicle*, 8 Oct. 1935; *Limerick Leader*, 9 Oct. 1935; Oram, op. cit., p.35, p.260;

³³ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.216; *Irish Times*, 7 May 1921; *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Independent*, 9 May 1921;

which, according to Anthony Keating, afforded him ‘a level of cover from the eyes of the British authorities’. Keating further elaborates that Boyd then effectively withdrew from political activity and settled down to the life of a provincial newspaperman. Shortly after the death of Robert Whalley in 1921 Boyd became editor-proprietor of the *Waterford Standard* which remained in print until 1953.³⁴

Waterford actually boasted a long history of provincial newspapers such as the *Waterford Flying Post* (established in 1729) and the *Waterford Journey* (established in 1765). However, the first paper to display any longevity was the *Waterford Chronicle* or *Ramsey’s Waterford Chronicle* (1765-1849) and it was from this publication that the *Waterford News*, the oldest Waterford title at the start of the twentieth century, traced its origins. Cornelius Redmond had spent several years as editor of the *Waterford Chronicle* before deciding to launch his own newspaper, the *Waterford News*, which first appeared in September 1848. Upon Redmond’s death in February 1898 the paper passed to his son C.P. “Banquo” Redmond, who decided to commence publication of an evening edition of the paper, the *Waterford Evening News*.³⁵ In 1907 the *Waterford News* was purchased by Edmund Downey (by coincidence a school friend of “Banquo” Redmond) who remained at the helm until his death in 1937. Downey, whose father had taken part in the Young Ireland rebellion of 1848, became a strong supporter of Sinn Féin from 1916 onwards and served as an honorary treasurer of the party during the War of Independence.³⁶ Downey was a great admirer of Eamon de Valera resulting in the *Waterford News* adopting an anti-Treaty stance.³⁷

Three other nationalist newspapers served County Waterford, two in the city and one in Dungarvan. The *Waterford Star* was established in 1891 by John E. O’Mahony who had previously worked at the *Southern Star* in his home town of Skibbereen. Both O’Mahony and his wife, Annie, who managed the paper for a number of years following her husband’s death, served prison terms resulting from the publication of articles relating to land disputes.³⁸ Annie O’Mahony died in 1913 at which stage her son, Cornelius, assumed full control of the paper. Like his father before him Cornelius O’Mahony was very

³⁴ Anthony Keating, ‘Criminal libel, censorship and contempt of court: D.C. Boyd’s editorship the *Waterford Standard*’ in Kevin Rafter and Mark O’Brien (eds.), *The state in transition: essays in honour of John Horgan* (Dublin, 2015), p.217; *Irish Independent*, 13 Jul. 1953; *Irish Press*, *Irish Times*, *Munster Express*, 29 Oct. 1965;

³⁵ *Waterford News & Star: 150th Anniversary Supplement* (6 November 1998); *Irish Press*, 22 Jul. 1949, 1 Jan. 1959; It should be noted that this family had no connection to Irish Parliamentary Party leader John Redmond.

³⁶ *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 12 Feb. 1937;

³⁷ *Waterford News & Star: 150th Anniversary Supplement* (6 November 1998)

³⁸ *Irish Independent*, 9 Feb. 1959; *Southern Star*, 14 Feb. 1959;

much a constitutional nationalist and consequently a strong supporter of John Redmond.³⁹ In 1959 the *Cork Examiner* purchased both the *Waterford News* and the *Waterford Star* which were subsequently amalgamated to become the *Waterford News and Star*.⁴⁰ The other newspaper in the city, the *Munster Express*, had even stronger links to constitutional nationalism. Its proprietor, Edward Walsh, was an Irish Parliamentary Party councillor and like so many other politicians, considered the ownership of a newspaper a valuable tool to further his political aspirations. He had acquired the paper from the Fisher family in 1908, the *Munster Express* being established by Joseph Fisher in 1860.⁴¹ Walsh's acquisition of the paper marked the start of over a century of family ownership of the *Munster Express*, once again providing an example of the remarkable degree of continuity within the Irish provincial press.⁴² The remaining newspaper in the county was the *Dungarvan Observer* which had only been in existence since 1912. It was founded by James A. Lynch from Cahir, County Tipperary who had previously worked at the *Drogheda Independent*. Lynch died at the relatively young age of fifty-two but the paper he established has lasted well into the twenty-first century.⁴³

Unlike provincial titles in most other counties Waterford newspapers attracted the attention of both sides during the War of Independence. With a Sinn Féin activist such as Edward Downey at the helm it was always likely that the *Waterford News* would not go unnoticed by the British authorities. In February 1919 an article in the paper that was highly critical of the RIC was deemed by Lord Decies to be 'a gross violation of the Defence of the Realm regulations' and 'calculated to cause disaffection, and prejudicial to the administration of the police force'.⁴⁴ Three months later the paper was suppressed for the 'publication of statements likely to cause disaffection', a suppression that lasted approximately three months.⁴⁵ Accordingly it was understandable that the IRA considered the *Waterford News* 'friendly but intimidated' and that its reporters were supportive of the republican cause.⁴⁶ However, this was certainly not the case with the other three newspapers in the city. The *Munster Express*, *Waterford Star*,

³⁹ *Waterford Star*, 7 Nov. 1941

⁴⁰ *Irish Independent*, 9 Feb. 1950; *Southern Star*, 14 Feb. 1959; Oram, op. cit., p.196;

⁴¹ *Munster Express: Waterford through the ages, 1860-2010* (8 October 2010); *Irish Times*, 2 May 1939; *Irish Independent*, 3 May 1939; Joseph Fisher's son was Harry D. Fisher who was also editor-proprietor of the *Munster Express* and later edited the *Galway Express* as referred to in the previous chapter.

⁴² *Munster Express: Waterford through the ages, 1860-2010, 1860-2010* (8 October 2010); *Munster Express*, 12 Jul. 1946;

⁴³ *Irish Press*, 15 Dec. 1936; *Munster Express*, 18 Dec. 1936;

⁴⁴ Press Censorship Report, February 1919, CO904/167/2-498

⁴⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 May 1919; *Ulster Herald*, 17 May 1919; *Waterford News & Star: 150th Anniversary Supplement* (6 November 1998);

⁴⁶ Schedule No.I - Newspapers, MS31,208

and *Waterford Standard*, were all considered by the IRA as influential forces within the Waterford area but also regarded as hostile organs and doing harm to the republican cause. According to the IRA this reflected the personal views of the three respective editors of these papers, Edward Walsh, Cornelius O'Mahony, and even D. C. Boyd, with his strong republican connections.⁴⁷ Despite the antipathy towards these newspapers there is little indication that any intimidatory action was taken against them.

Cork

Possibly no other publication epitomises the difficulty newspapers faced during this time more than the *Cork Examiner*. During these years this moderately nationalist paper found itself being targeted by both sides in the Anglo-Irish conflict and its experiences are comprehensively documented by Ian Kenneally in *The paper wall: newspapers and propaganda in Ireland 1919-1921*. The *Examiner* had actually been established in 1841 but it was far from the first newspaper to be published in the county. In fact Cork can lay claim to being the place of publication of Ireland's first known newspaper, the *Irish Monthly Mercury*. This title was published on two occasions in 1649 and 1650 by the armies of Oliver Cromwell.⁴⁸ However, as the paper was directly linked to a figure regarded with such opprobrium in Ireland it is no surprise that the *Irish Monthly Mercury* does not hold an endearing place in the annals of the country's journalistic history. The first Cork newspaper without such a controversial association was the short-lived *Cork Idler* in 1715. This was followed by several similarly short-lived titles with the earliest organs to display any staying power being the *Cork Evening Post* (1754-1791) and the *Hibernian Chronicle* (1769-1835) though the latter experienced a number of name changes during its lifetime.⁴⁹ By the early twentieth century Cork city was served by three different newspapers. The most prominent of these was the *Cork Examiner*, which was published in the city but was also widely read across Munster.⁵⁰ Since 1892 the city was also served by the *Cork Evening Echo*, which had been launched by Thomas Crosbie, owner of the *Cork Examiner*.⁵¹ Significantly the remaining newspaper in the city, the *Cork Constitution*, was not only the oldest, but also solidly unionist.

⁴⁷ Schedule No.I - Newspapers & Schedule No.II - Correspondents, MS31,208

⁴⁸ Oram, op. cit., p.21

⁴⁹ *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989)

⁵⁰ Kenneally 2008, op. cit., p.119

⁵¹ Oram, op. cit., p.58; *Southern Star 1889-1989: Centenary Supplement* (11 November 1989);

Tipperary

Unlike many other Irish counties, Tipperary boasted a newspaper history that was spread over a variety of towns. By the outbreak of World War I Cashel, Clonmel, Nenagh, Thurles, Roscrea, and Tipperary town, had all sustained at least one or more local newspapers for at least a decade or two. Carrick-on-Suir had also been served by a number of publications though none that lasted for more than a year or two. *Lord's Munster Journal*, dating back to 1778, was Cashel's earliest newspaper. However, by early 1915 the town was without a local paper following the closure of the *Cashel Sentinel*. Owned by Thomas Walsh, it had commenced publication in 1885 and was supportive of Home Rule and the Gaelic League. It was believed to have ceased publication due to a fall in advertising revenue.⁵²

The first newspaper to serve Roscrea also dated back to the eighteenth century though it was quite a short-lived publication, the *Southern Star* only lasting from 1795 to 1798. By 1914 no nationalist paper was published in the town. This was probably due to the North Tipperary area being served from Birr in neighbouring County Offaly by the *Midland Tribune*.⁵³ Nonetheless, Roscrea was home to one publication, the unionist *Midland Counties Advertiser*. It had been established in 1854 by Francis H. Shields but by the early twentieth century it was regarded as a localised edition of the Birr-based *King's County Chronicle*.⁵⁴

The first recorded newspaper to be published in Tipperary town did not appear until the middle of the nineteenth century. The *Tipperary Weekly News* was launched in 1857 but only lasted a year.⁵⁵ By the early twentieth century the nationalist *Tipperary People* was the only local organ serving the town. It was established in 1875 by John R. McCormack who was described as 'one of the greatest strategists of the Fenian movement'.⁵⁶ Following his death ownership passed to his wife, Eliza, one of the very few women involved at any level of the Irish provincial press.⁵⁷ The *Tipperary People* continued to operate after Eliza McCormack's death in 1916 but was sold in 1920 and re-launched as the *Tipperaryman*.⁵⁸ The

⁵² Hayes, op. cit. pp 3-4

⁵³ *Midland Tribune: 1881-1981 – 100 years of a family newspaper* (7 November 1981)

⁵⁴ Ibid; Hayes, op. cit., p.10; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.215;

⁵⁵ Hayes, op. cit., p.11

⁵⁶ *Cork Examiner*, 7 Jun. 1920

⁵⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Sept. 1916

⁵⁸ *Cork Examiner*, 16 Jan. 1934

re-named publication only survived until 1934, however, lack of capital and stiff competition forcing it out of business.⁵⁹

Although the towns of Carrick-on-Suir, Cashel, Roscrea, and Tipperary had sustained their own local titles at one stage or another, the county's principal newspaper trade was concentrated on the towns of Nenagh, Thurles, and Clonmel. The oldest paper in the county was the *Nenagh Guardian*, founded in 1838 by John Kempston. It was established as a firmly conservative organ and accordingly was highly critical of Daniel O'Connell and the repeal movement of the 1840s. Following Kempston's death in 1857 the paper was acquired by George Prior and remained in the ownership of the Prior family until 1916.⁶⁰ In late 1916 the *Nenagh Guardian* transferred to new ownership that was far more nationalist in sympathy. The paper's editorial of 16 December 1916 declared that it could now be considered as a 'supporter of the Home Rule movement' though it also called for an amnesty for those imprisoned after the Easter Rising while also articulating its strong support for the 'Irish language and Irish games'.⁶¹ One of the principal figures involved in the purchase of the *Guardian* was Jeremiah Ryan who subsequently became editor, a position he occupied until his death in 1928.⁶² Two years prior to Ryan's death the *Guardian* acquired the *Nenagh News*, the other paper operating in the town during the 1914-21 period. The *Nenagh News*, established in 1894 by John F. Power, had emerged from the ashes of the *Tipperary Vindicator* (1858-1889), a solidly nationalist title that had been founded by Peter Gill.⁶³ Like its predecessor, the *Nenagh News* was a nationalist organ though it claimed to be 'read by all classes – the peer and the peasant'.⁶⁴

Thurles was home to County Tipperary's youngest newspaper at this time, the *Tipperary Star* which commenced publication in 1909. Up to that time the town had failed to sustain a local paper for any considerable length of time. Only the strongly nationalist *Tipperary Leader* (1882-1885) had managed to survive more than a year.⁶⁵ The town's apparent reluctance to embrace the print media did not deter Edward Long from establishing the *Tipperary Star*. A native of County Kilkenny, Long had previously worked at the *Wexford Free Press* and the *New Ross Standard* before launching his new venture in Thurles. The paper that he owned and edited for sixteen years was solidly nationalist and followed the

⁵⁹ Hayes, op. cit., p.12

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.8

⁶¹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 16 Dec. 1916

⁶² Ibid, 24 Nov. 1928

⁶³ *Cork Examiner*, 19 Jun. 1926

⁶⁴ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.584

⁶⁵ Hayes, op. cit., pp 10-11

lead of so many other provincial organs in being highly supportive of both the GAA and the Gaelic League. Edward Long died in 1925 at the relatively young age of fifty-one. However, the paper he founded proved to have far greater durability than all of its Thurles predecessors by becoming one of several nationalist titles launched during this period to be still in existence over a century later.⁶⁶

Although the newspaper history of County Tipperary encompasses a variety of towns, Clonmel, in the south of the county, unquestionably makes the greatest contribution in this regard. Newspapers were first published in the town in the latter part of the eighteenth century and by the start of the twentieth century Clonmel had already sustained several publications that had demonstrated admirable staying power. The *Hibernian Gazette* was the town's first newspaper in 1771 and although it ceased publication the same year it reappeared in different guises over the next thirty years. The first publication to display any degree of longevity was the conservative *Clonmel Herald* (1802-1840) while the *Clonmel Advertiser* (1811-1843) also demonstrated a reasonable level of resilience as well as being of similar political sympathy. In 1826 James Hackett launched the liberal *Tipperary Free Press* which remained in publication until 1881. In its early years it supported Daniel O'Connell and the campaign for Catholic Emancipation and was believed to have reached a circulation of over 43,000 around this time.⁶⁷ During the second half of the nineteenth century a few relatively short-lived publications made an appearance such as the *County Tipperary Independent* (1880-1892) and the *Tipperary Champion* (1899-1910) but by the start of World War I the two newspapers serving the town were the *Clonmel Nationalist* and the *Clonmel Chronicle*.

The *Clonmel Nationalist* was first published in June 1890 after a large group of local businessmen had raised sufficient funds to purchase the plant and machinery of the defunct *Tipperary Nationalist*. This group included Thomas J. Condon, MP for Tipperary East from 1885 until 1918.⁶⁸ James J. Long from Dingle, County Kerry, who had assisted in the establishment of the paper, became its first editor. Long had previously worked at the *Munster News*, *Freeman's Journal*, and *Kerry Vindicator* and like so many other newspaper editors of this era he served a prison term resulting from the publication of articles relating to land agitation.⁶⁹ James J. Long remained as editor until his death in 1909 when he was succeeded by his son Brandon J. Long. Similar to his father before him Brandon J. Long was an

⁶⁶ *Tipperary Star*, 7 Nov. 1925

⁶⁷ Hayes, op. cit., pp 6-7; *The Nationalist – Centenary Supplement 1890-1990* (29 December 1990);

⁶⁸ *The Nationalist – Centenary Supplement 1890-1990* (29 December 1990); The paper's first directors were John Russell, David O'Connor, Thomas Hally, Edmond Smyth, Daniel Phelan, John Davin, and Edward J. Dillon.

⁶⁹ Martin O'Dwyer, *A biographical dictionary of Tipperary* (Cashel, 1999), p.221

enthusiastic advocate of the Gaelic League and a lifelong supporter of the GAA.⁷⁰ However, a number of other significant figures also served at the *Clonmel Nationalist*.

Richard Stapleton was a long-time servant of the paper and shared Long's enthusiasm for the GAA and indeed played football for Tipperary. A trade union activist from an early stage he also became a member of Clonmel Corporation and South Tipperary County Council, served two terms as Mayor of Clonmel and was elected a Labour Party TD in 1943.⁷¹ John Griffin joined the *Nationalist* around 1919 and ultimately succeeded Brandon J. Long as editor upon the latter's retirement in 1935. Originally from Boyle, County Roscommon, Griffin gained his early journalistic experience under the redoubtable Jasper Tully at the *Roscommon Herald*.⁷² Nonetheless, probably the most interesting character to work at the *Nationalist* during the 1916-21 period was William Myles.

Myles joined the paper as a cub reporter at the age of fourteen and later joined the South Tipperary Brigade of the IRA under the command of Seán Treacy and Seamus Robinson.⁷³ In June 1917 he was appointed secretary of the first Sinn Féin club formed in Clonmel while two years later he became vice-commandant of the fifth battalion of the South Tipperary Brigade of the IRA.⁷⁴ After the Treaty of 1921 William Myles attained the rank of Captain in the Free State Army. Nevertheless, he soon returned to journalism, succeeding the aforementioned Edward Long as editor of the *Tipperary Star* in 1925, a position in which he remained until his retirement in 1975.⁷⁵

The brand of nationalism espoused by William Myles differed significantly to that of his editor Brandon J. Long. The *Clonmel Nationalist* was a solid supporter of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party which reflected the views of Brandon J. Long and his father before him. However, this began to change in the aftermath of Sinn Féin's resounding general election victory of December 1918. By mid-1919 many of its editorials reflected the ideology of Arthur Griffith and within another year the *Nationalist* 'was sounding like a Sinn Féin apologist'.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ O'Donnell, op. cit., , p.243; *Clonmel Nationalist*, 20 Apr. 1938; Brandon J. Long's brother, John, was a member of the Clonmel Shamrocks team that won the All Ireland Senior Football Championship in 1900.

⁷¹ O'Dwyer, op. cit., p.402; *Clonmel Nationalist*, 6 Aug. 1949;

⁷² *Clonmel Nationalist*, 7 Feb. 1942

⁷³ WS795, William Myles

⁷⁴ O'Donnell, op. cit., pp 314-5

⁷⁵ *Tipperary Star*, 25 Sept. 1976

⁷⁶ O'Donnell, op. cit., p.321

Kerry

County Kerry's newspaper history up to 1914 was almost entirely based around Tralee. From the late eighteenth century to the early twentieth century the county, but more specifically Tralee, was home to the usual mixture of provincial titles displaying varying degrees of longevity such as *Chute's Western Herald* or *Kerry Advertiser* (1791-1835), *Tralee Mercury* (1829-1839), *Kerry Examiner* (1840-1856), *Tralee Chronicle* (1843-1881), *Kerry Independent* (1880-1884), and *Kerry Evening Star* (1902-1914). By 1914 Kerry was served by as many as nine different titles though five of them were to cease publication before the foundation of the Irish Free State in 1921.⁷⁷

One of these was the county's first paper, the *Kerry Evening Post*, which was established in 1774. It was a conservative organ that only ceased publication in 1917 at which stage its editor was George Raymond. The Raymond family had owned the paper for the entirety of its existence.⁷⁸ Maurice P. Ryle was a central figure behind two of the other papers serving the county at the time. The *Kerry People* was launched as a nationalist title in 1902 and remained in publication until 1928.⁷⁹ In 1914 Ryle launched the *Kerry Advocate* in conjunction with Thomas O'Donnell, MP for West Kerry. This title was engaged significantly in countering what was perceived as the growing republican threat in Kerry but the paper only lasted until May 1916 when it went bankrupt.⁸⁰ The year also saw the departure of the *Kerry Press* in the face of legal proceedings. It was also a nationalist title that had similarly only been launched two years previously and was edited by John Savage.⁸¹

The *Kerry Sentinel* had been in existence for considerably longer but it ceased publication in 1918. It was founded by Timothy Harrington in 1878 as a solidly nationalist organ and was later managed by his brother, Edward. Timothy and Edward Harrington also served as MPs for Dublin (harbour division) and West Kerry respectively. The *Kerry Sentinel* suspended publication in September 1918 citing 'the stringent conditions under which the newspaper trade is labouring at present' but did not re-appear

⁷⁷ The nine titles in question were the *Kerry News*, *Kerry People*, *Kerry Weekly Reporter*, *Kerryman*, *Killarney Echo*, *Kerry Advocate*, *Kerry Evening Post*, *Kerry Press*, and *Kerry Sentinel*. The county was also served by the *Liberator* which was an evening edition of the *Kerryman*.

⁷⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Oct. 1917; *Connaught Telegraph*, 6 Oct. 1917; *Irish Times*, 6 Sept. 1933;

⁷⁹ *Cork Examiner*, 29 Sept. 1902; *Irish Times*, 4 Oct. 1902; Patrick Maume, 'Ryle Maurice P.' in McGuire et al (eds.); Ryle's extremely close links to John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party resulted in the decline in popularity of the *Kerry People* which, by 1928, was effectively only an advertising sheet.

⁸⁰ Gaughan, op. cit., p.105; Maume (Ryle, Maurice P.), op. cit.;

⁸¹ *Irish Independent*, 30 Sept. 1916

thereafter.⁸² The *Killarney Echo* was the fifth Kerry newspaper to cease publication prior to the establishment of the Irish Free State though the reason for its demise was quite different. The paper was published by Quinnell and Sons whose printing plant was burned down in August 1920 in the aftermath of an attack in Tralee on a number of police constables.⁸³ Although the publishers announced at the time that the *Echo* would resume publication at the earliest opportunity, the paper did not re-appear.⁸⁴ Quinnell and Sons also published the *Kerry Weekly Reporter* and the *Kerry News*, both of which survived the fire to remain in print until 1936 and 1941 respectively. These two titles had been edited for the previous ten years by Cornelius O'Mahony who moved to the *Midland Tribune* at this time (as noted in chapter 3). O'Mahony was an active member of Sinn Féin from a very early stage.⁸⁵ The political views held by O'Mahony clearly differed from that of the owners of the paper, the Quinnell family, who supported the British involvement in Ireland.⁸⁶

⁸² Ibid, 7 Sept. 1918; *Cork Examiner*, 2 Sept. 1918;

⁸³ *Irish Times*, 16 Aug. 1920

⁸⁴ *Kerryman*, 21 Aug. 1920

⁸⁵ *Irish Press*, 30 May 1939; *Midland Tribune*, 3 Jun. 1939; This was obviously not the same Cornelius O'Mahony, editor of the *Waterford Star*.

⁸⁶ *The Kerryman 1904-2004* (5 August 2004)

Appendix G

Ulster newspapers

Antrim

County Antrim's eight local papers were spread across the towns of Ballymena, Ballymoney, Carrickfergus, Larne, and Lisburn. The *Ballymena Observer* was established in 1855 and was owned by John Wier who had assumed proprietorship in the late 1870s, a position he retained until his death almost fifty years later. Wier was a devout Presbyterian and a staunch unionist throughout his life.¹ Ballymena's other newspaper was the *Ballymena Weekly Telegraph*, established in 1867 it was classified as a neutral organ.² Thomas Boyd was managing editor of the paper from 1915 until his death thirty-three years later.³

Ballymoney was also home to two newspapers, the *Ballymoney Free Press* and the *North Antrim Standard*, established in 1863 and 1887 respectively. The former title was published by John Shannon whose principal journalistic venture was the *Coleraine Chronicle* with which the *Ballymoney Free Press* later merged. In a very similar vein the *North Antrim Standard* was owned by James Mercer (J.M.) Russell who was also proprietor of the Coleraine-based *Northern Constitution* into which the former paper was incorporated in 1922.⁴ The *Carrickfergus Advertiser* was the sole newspaper serving that town and was categorised as a neutral organ.⁵ Its proprietor was James Bell who was also the editor of the *Newry Reporter*.⁶ The *Larne Times* was owned by W&G Baird Ltd who also owned the *Belfast Telegraph*. The political affiliation of the former paper was unstated and in 1962 it was re-named the *East Antrim Times*.⁷

The remaining two non-Belfast based papers in County Antrim were both located in Lisburn. The elder of these was the *Lisburn Standard* which commenced publication in 1876. It was owned by Victor

¹ *Ballymena Observer*, 4 Feb. 1927

² *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.207

³ *Irish Independent*, 8 May 1948

⁴ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.207; Oram, op. cit., p.149;

⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.209

⁶ *Newry Reporter*, 21 Jul. 1927

⁷ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213; Oram, op. cit., p.287;

McMurray and edited by Joseph Kennedy.⁸ The town's other newspaper was the *Lisburn Herald* which was established in 1891 and owned by Robert McMullen.⁹ Its editor was James McCarrison who comfortably emulated many of his nationalist counterparts by serving as editor of the paper for forty-seven years. A staunch unionist, McCarrison was also a member of the South Antrim Battalion of the UVF and in 1921 was elected to Lisburn Board of Guardians.¹⁰

Down

County Down boasted the highest number of provincial papers of any of Ireland's thirty-two counties. Its ten separate titles were spread across the towns of Banbridge, Bangor, Downpatrick, Dromore, Newry, and Newtownards. The *Banbridge Chronicle* was an independent organ founded by John Edmund Emerson in 1870. Emerson died in 1912 and was succeeded as proprietor by his son, Arthur Waldo Emerson, who remained at the helm of the paper until his death in 1951.¹¹ Bangor was served by two unionist titles, the *North Down Herald* and the *County Down Spectator*, established in 1871 and 1904 respectively. The former paper was owned by Robert Delmage (R.D.) Montgomery and was the publication at which two noted republicans began their journalistic career. Both Ernest Blythe and Seán Lester worked as reporters at the *North Down Herald* prior to their involvement in the IRB, Gaelic League, and Sinn Féin.¹² Blythe's ability as a journalist obviously impressed the proprietor, R.D. Montgomery, as he wrote Blythe a glowing reference upon the latter's departure from the paper in 1913.¹³ One of the *Herald's* previous editors, Scotsman David E. Alexander, established Bangor's other newspaper, the *County Down Spectator*, in 1904. Alexander had served his journalistic apprenticeship in Scotland before coming to Ireland in 1894 to take up the position as editor of the *Leitrim Advertiser* in Mohill.¹⁴

⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213; *Irish Times*, 16 Sept. 1916;

⁹ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213

¹⁰ *Lisburn Herald*, 9 Nov. 1940

¹¹ *Banbridge Chronicle*, 2 Jun. 1951

¹² *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.208; *Irish Press*, 15 Jun. 1959; Patrick Buckley, 'Blythe, Ernest (de Blaghd, Earnán)' and Michael Kennedy, 'Lester, Seán (John Ernest)' in McGuire et al (eds.);

¹³ Letter from R.D. Montgomery, Proprietor, *North Down Herald*, 5 Apr. 1913 (U.C.D., Ernest Blythe papers, P24/1213); Montgomery described Blythe as a 'clever descriptive writer' whose character was 'above reproach and would satisfy the most exacting employer'.

¹⁴ *Leitrim Observer*, 4 Dec. 1943

Both the *North Down Herald* and the *County Down Spectator* produced localised editions to serve the town of Newtownards, the *Newtownards Herald* and *Newtownards Spectator* respectively.¹⁵ The unionist *Newtownards Chronicle* was the only paper solely serving the town and provided yet another example of familial ties with individual publications. It was established by William Henry in 1873 and remained under the control of the Henry family until 1948. It was then acquired by three sons of the aforementioned David E. Alexander meaning that ownership of the *Newtownards Chronicle* was held by only two families during the first century or so of its existence.¹⁶

The *Down Recorder* was the only title serving the town of Downpatrick but it provides an even more striking example of prolonged family association with one newspaper. On the occasion of its one hundred and seventy-fifth anniversary in 2012 its managing-director was Marcus Crichton, great-grandson of William Young (W.Y.) Crichton, who had become editor of the paper in the early 1890s. In 1894 W.Y. Crichton married the widow of the previous owner (Joseph Clarke) and remained at the helm of the paper until his death in 1957. The *Down Recorder* began life as the *Downpatrick Recorder* in 1836 when it was established by Conway Pilson.¹⁷

Dromore's two newspapers were of a far more recent vintage, the *Dromore Weekly Times* was established in 1900 while the *Dromore Leader* was first published in 1916. The former title was regarded as a neutral organ and was edited by Robert J. Hunter. It remained in publication until 1952 when it was merged with the *Mourne Observer*.¹⁸ The unionist *Dromore Leader* was established by Joseph Lindsay in 1916 as a rival to the *Dromore Weekly Times* and proceeded to display the remarkable staying power of so many Irish provincial newspapers by lasting well into the twenty-first century.¹⁹

Newry was home to County Down's only nationalist newspaper, the *Frontier Sentinel*. It was launched in 1904 by the North-West of Ireland Publishing Co Ltd whose other publications included provincial titles in Derry, Fermanagh, and Tyrone. Upon commencing publication the paper received the blessing of Cardinal Michael Logue and Bishop Henry O'Neill of Dromore.²⁰ About four years after its establishment Joseph Connellan was appointed editor, a post he held for almost sixty years. Connellan mirrored the attributes of so many editors of nationalist titles in his enthusiasm for both the Gaelic League and the

¹⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, pp 208-215

¹⁶ *Newtownards Chronicle*, 19 Jul. 1973

¹⁷ *Down Recorder*, 4 Jan. 2012

¹⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.210; Oram, op. cit., p.243;

¹⁹ Oram, op. cit., p.332

²⁰ *Ulster Herald*, 15 Oct. 1904; *Derry People*, 29 Oct. 1904;

GAA, the former no doubt greatly inspired by his meeting with Padraic Pearse in 1912. Connellan was also an early supporter of Sinn Féin and was elected to the Newry Board of Guardians in the early 1920s. He later served as nationalist MP in the Stormont Parliament, representing the South Armagh constituency between 1929 and 1933 and the South Down constituency from 1949 until his death in 1967.²¹ The *Frontier Sentinel* only outlived Connellan by five years, citing increased production costs as the reason for its closure in August 1972.²²

The solidly unionist *Newry Telegraph* was one of the town's other two newspapers. Established in 1812 it was owned for many years by the Henderson family who also owned the *Belfast Newsletter*.²³ However, in January 1916 the paper was purchased by Alex Fisher, a Newry solicitor.²⁴ About one year later, James Brown, originally from Dungannon, joined the *Newry Telegraph*, became editor soon afterwards and, in due course, assumed proprietorship of the paper. Brown was a Presbyterian and a member of the Orange Order and later served in the Stormont Parliament for the South Down constituency. He was elected as a Farmers' and New Industries candidate and held a seat between 1938 and 1945. Upon his retirement in 1958 Brown sold the *Telegraph* to the *Newry Reporter*, the remaining newspaper in the town.²⁵

The *Newry Reporter* was founded in 1867 by James F. Burns who had actually commenced his journalistic apprenticeship as a fourteen-year-old with the *Newry Telegraph*. Burns launched the *Reporter* as a liberal organ though he became a unionist as a result of his opposition to William Gladstone's home rule policy in the 1880s.²⁶ Following the death of James Burns in 1900 his son, Arthur Ross Burns (later the editor of the *Clonmel Chronicle* as detailed in the previous chapter), carried on the business of the paper for a short time before it was acquired by Joseph Wright of the Newry Printing and Lithographic Works. Wright's ownership of the *Reporter* was cut short by a serious fire at its premises which resulted in the non-publication of the paper for almost four months. On its return it had been acquired by Robert Sands, a Newry merchant, and although he died in 1915 his executors continued to manage the paper for another twelve years following his death.²⁷ The editor from 1902 until his death in 1927 was James A. Bell who, in addition to serving under three different proprietors, was a member of

²¹ *Irish Times*, 12 Apr. 1967; *Frontier Sentinel*, 15 Apr. 1967;

²² *Irish Independent*, *Irish Press*, 5 Aug. 1972

²³ *Newry Reporter*, 16 Nov. 1967; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.215;

²⁴ *Irish Independent*, 19 Jan. 1916

²⁵ *Newry Reporter*, 17 Jul. 1969; *Newry Telegraph*, 19 Jul. 1969;

²⁶ *Irish Times*, 19 May 1900; *Newry Reporter*, 16 Nov. 1967;

²⁷ *Newry Reporter*, 16 Nov. 1967

Newry Board of Guardians for twenty-one years and was also appointed a magistrate for County Down.²⁸

Armagh

County Armagh's five newspapers were comprised of two in the city of Armagh, two in Portadown, and one in Lurgan. Curiously the two titles based in the city, the *Ulster Gazette* and the *Armagh Guardian* were both established in 1844. Mathew Small, a Newry veterinary surgeon, is credited with the foundation of the *Ulster Gazette* which, by the late nineteenth century, was deemed to be an advocate of 'sound evangelical Protestantism' and a supporter of the Church of Ireland.²⁹ By the early twentieth century it was owned by William J. Greer and declared itself 'the official organ of the mid-Armagh Conservative Association and the County Grand Lodge of Armagh'.³⁰ Its editor at the outbreak of World War I was John W. Clarke who subsequently joined the Royal Irish Fusiliers.³¹

Clarke's enlistment would surely have received the warm approval of Samuel Delmege Trimble, editor-proprietor of the city's other newspaper, the *Armagh Guardian*. Trimble took a keen interest in the welfare of local men who had enlisted and indeed he established a comforts fund for soldiers which included appeals for food and clothing. He also acted on behalf of the families of soldiers in their liaison with the War Office to ascertain the status of those that had been reported missing.³² By this stage Samuel Delmege Trimble was very much a veteran newspaperman. He was a brother of William Copeland Trimble, editor-proprietor of the *Impartial Reporter* and had actually worked at *Saunders Newsletter* in Dublin before it ceased publication in 1879. This title is described by Oram as 'Ireland's first commercially successful daily paper'.³³ Samuel Delmege Trimble had also worked as district reporter for the *Freeman's Journal* in Donegal, Fermanagh, Sligo, and Leitrim prior to acquiring the *Armagh Guardian* in 1893.³⁴

The Trimble family also had a connection to the *Portadown News* which was established in 1859. Its founder, John Henry (J.H.) Farrell, a distiller from Westport County Mayo, was a stepson of William

²⁸ Ibid, 21 Jul. 1927

²⁹ *Ulster Gazette:150th Anniversary Supplement* (22 December 1994)

³⁰ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.207 and p.585;

³¹ *Derry People*, 20 Feb. 1915; *Irish Independent*, 25 Mar. 1915; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Mar. 1915;

³² *Belfast Newsletter*, 2 Apr. 1947; Colin Cousins, *Armagh and the Great War* (Dublin, 2011), p.80;

³³ Oram, op. cit., p.34

³⁴ *Belfast Telegraph*, 1 Apr. 1947; *Irish Independent*, 2 Apr. 1947;

Trimble who was the founding father of the *Impartial Reporter* in Enniskillen.³⁵ Upon the outbreak of World War I the proprietor of the *Portadown News* was John Young who had purchased the paper about twenty years earlier. Young's obituary described him as 'a staunch unionist and a liberal subscriber to the funds of the Ulster Volunteers'.³⁶ James Campbell, the paper's editor, more than adequately emulated so many of his counterparts within the Irish provincial press by serving in the position for over forty years.³⁷ The town was also served by the *Portadown Express* which was established in 1906. It was owned and edited by Alfred Shannon though it appears to have been a fairly short-lived publication and ceased operations around 1920.³⁸ The editor-proprietor of County Armagh's remaining newspaper, the *Lurgan Mail*, was equally noted for his staunch unionism. Louis Richardson established the paper in 1890 as an unapologetic unionist journal. In a somewhat similar vein to Samuel Delmege Trimble he actively undertook work for the Lurgan Comforts Committee and the Prisoners of War Parcels Committee during the course of World War I.³⁹

Monaghan

Neighbouring County Monaghan provided something of a contrast to the plentiful supply of provincial newspapers serving Antrim, Down, and Armagh. Although Monaghan had been home to one of the first identifiably nationalist papers (the *People's Advocate* as detailed in the introduction to this study) by 1914 no nationalist title was published in the county. The moderately nationalist *Monaghan Democrat* served the region but this was a localised edition of the *Dundalk Democrat*.⁴⁰ Accordingly the unionist *Northern Standard* was the only provincial titles published in the county at the time. It was founded in January 1839 by Dubliner Arthur Wellington Holmes and was acquired by William Swan in 1872. Swan's grandson, Philip McMinn, succeeded him as proprietor in 1917.⁴¹

³⁵ *Irish Press*, 25 Apr. 1959

³⁶ *Irish Times*, 15 Dec. 1914

³⁷ *Irish Press*, 4 Jul. 1932

³⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.215; The 1911 census lists Alfred Shannon as editor of the *Portadown Express* while the *Newspaper Press Directory* for 1917 indicates Shannon as proprietor. However there is no listing for the *Portadown Express* in the *Newspaper Press Directory* for 1922, which would seem to suggest that it ceased publication at some stage within the previous two years.

³⁹ *Lurgan Mail*, 29 Aug. 1936

⁴⁰ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.214

⁴¹ Peadar Livingstone, *The Monaghan story: a documented history of the County Monaghan from the earliest times to 1976* (Enniskillen, 1980), p.661

The *Northern Standard* principally catered for the Protestant population of north and west Monaghan and cherished the union with Britain that was ultimately severed in 1921.⁴² Nonetheless, the paper occupies a rather unique place in the Irish print media as it was almost the only provincial title of a unionist persuasion to survive past the first few decades of the Irish Free State and indeed well beyond. Much of the credit for this achievement was attributable to John Joseph Turley who was appointed editor in 1928. Turley, who had been the unsuccessful Irish Parliamentary Party candidate for the North Monaghan constituency in the general election of 1918 (in opposition to Ernest Blythe), succeeded in gradually making a paper that had previously been run 'along strictly Presbyterian lines', more acceptable to Catholics.⁴³

Tyrone

County Tyrone's impressive total of seven newspapers was spread across the towns of Cookstown, Dungannon, Omagh, and Strabane. The *Mid-Ulster Mail* was a steadfastly unionist organ reflecting the views of brothers John and Henry Little (H.L.) Glasgow who established the paper in 1891. The unswerving unionism of the two brothers was equally matched by their devout Presbyterian faith. H.L. Glasgow served as editor for fifty-eight years proving that remarkably long editorial tenures were far from being the sole preserve of those in charge of nationalist papers.⁴⁴ H.L. Glasgow also had a connection to one of the two newspapers serving Dungannon. From 1893 until around 1916 he conducted the affairs of the *Dungannon News* which was then amalgamated with the *Tyrone Courier*. Established in 1880, the *Tyrone Courier* was also a unionist organ. The paper went through a number of changes of ownership before being acquired by Reverend Robert Taylor (R.T.) Simpson, a Presbyterian clergyman, in 1897. The close family ties to individual publications that was so pronounced within the provincial print media was again in evidence at the *Tyrone Courier*. Simpson's son, John C. Simpson, subsequently became editor-proprietor while his grandson was the paper's owner when it celebrated its centenary in 1980.⁴⁵

The town's other newspaper was the nationalist *Dungannon Democrat* though it appears to have enjoyed only a brief lifespan. It was launched in February 1913 and seems to have ceased publication

⁴² Ibid, pp 661-2

⁴³ Ibid; Oram, op. cit., p.158; *Northern Standard*, 22 Dec. 1961;

⁴⁴ *Irish Times*, 25 Dec. 1950, 9 Apr. 1957;

⁴⁵ *Irish Independent*, 7 Jul. 1944; *Tyrone Courier*, 5 Mar. 1980;

about ten years later.⁴⁶ Despite its relatively curtailed existence the paper received considerable attention during the summer of 1913 when one of its reporters, Bernard Conway, was attacked while attending an Orange demonstration at Castlecaulfield, at which, by coincidence, one of the speakers was Reverend R.T. Simpson of the *Tyrone Courier*. The incident was widely covered in nationalist newspapers with the *Cork Examiner* reporting that Conway was 'set upon by a mob' who 'violently kicked and struck him, tearing his clothes, and taking his notebooks, money and other things from his pockets'.⁴⁷

County Tyrone's other nationalist newspaper, the *Ulster Herald* based in Omagh, proved to have considerably greater durability than the *Dungannon Democrat*. Its founding father was Michael Lynch, who, as outlined in chapter one, met with John Redmond at the House of Commons prior to the paper's establishment in order to seek the latter's backing for the project. The *Ulster Herald* replicated the trend of numerous nationalist organs in promoting the GAA while Lynch shared the devout Catholicism of so many of his fellow nationalist newspapermen. He had taken part in many Land League activities in County Tyrone and was elected to Omagh Urban Council in 1898, eventually serving as chairman for twenty-five years. Ultimately, Lynch transferred his political allegiance to Sinn Féin following which he became closely acquainted with Arthur Griffith. The launch of the *Ulster Herald* in 1901 only slightly predated the foundation of the North-West of Ireland Printing and Publishing Company for which Lynch served as managing-director until his death in 1935. The company's stable of newspapers in addition to the *Herald* ultimately included titles such as the aforementioned *Frontier Sentinel*, the *Strabane Chronicle*, *Fermanagh Herald*, and *Derry People*. The *Ulster Herald* provided yet another example of a family-run newspaper as the Lynch family still held a controlling interest in the paper upon its centenary in 2001.⁴⁸

A number of different journalists edited the *Herald* in its early years but the most notable figure to fulfil the role was Anthony Mulvey who was appointed to the position in 1917. Mulvey, who remained in the editorial chair for thirty years, had a considerable journalistic pedigree. Originally from Ballynagleragh, County Leitrim he started his career working under Patrick Dunne at the *Leitrim Observer* before moving

⁴⁶ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.212; Oram, op. cit., p.344; Oram records this paper as ceasing publication around 1923. It should not be confused with the *Democrat* newspaper which was launched in Dungannon some years later.

⁴⁷ *Cork Examiner*, 14 Jul. 1913; *Derry People*, *Ulster Herald*, 19 Jul. 1913; *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Jul. 1913; *Irish Independent*, 30 Jul., 1 Aug. 1913;

⁴⁸ *Ulster Herald*, 20 Apr. 1935, 3 Jan. 2002; Pádraig Ó Baoighill, 'The Irish language in Tyrone' and Éamon Phoenix, 'Nationalism in Tyrone, 1880-1972' in Charles Dillon and Henry A. Jefferies (eds.), *Tyrone: history and society* (Dublin, 2000), p.676 and p.781;

to the *Roscommon Herald* where he served under Jasper Tully. Prior to his appointment to the editorship of the *Ulster Herald* Mulvey worked at the *Wexford People* where he came into contact with Robert Brennan, a noted republican then working at the *Enniscorthy Echo*. In 1935 he was elected to Westminster for the Tyrone-Fermanagh constituency and in 1947 he retired as editor in order to concentrate on his public duties. He was re-elected in 1945 and was elected in 1950 for the newly formed Mid-Ulster constituency but decided not to contest the 1951 general election for health reasons.⁴⁹

The foundation of Omagh's other newspaper, the *Tyrone Constitution*, pre-dated that of the *Ulster Herald* by almost sixty years. The paper was established by John Nelis, an Omagh businessman, in 1844. The *Constitution* went through a number of ownership changes over the next sixty years before being acquired by Thomas Johnston in 1904 following which it became a private limited liability company. Thomas Johnston was a committed unionist as were his sons, William Johnston and Thomas Ernest Johnston, both of whom served in the British Army during World War I and later became directors of the Tyrone Constitution Ltd. Philip Cruickshank, who became editor of the paper in 1905, was an equally fervent unionist. He later became highly involved in the organisation of the Ulster Volunteers in County Tyrone and resigned his post as editor around 1914 following his enlistment with the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers. Cruickshank was killed at the Battle of the Somme in July 1916. He was succeeded as editor of the *Tyrone Constitution* by Robert A. Parke, another passionate unionist and also a devout Presbyterian. Parke provided a further example of the remarkable longevity of Irish provincial editors, remaining in the position until his retirement in 1968.⁵⁰

County Tyrone's two remaining newspapers were located in Strabane and had direct links to the two Omagh publications. The unionist *Strabane Weekly News* was launched in 1908 by the Tyrone Constitution Ltd.⁵¹ The *Strabane Chronicle* was the other title serving the town and was owned by the aforementioned North West of Ireland Printing and Publishing Company which also owned the *Ulster Herald* and accordingly was nationalist in sympathy. The paper had existed as an independent title since

⁴⁹ Ibid, 19 Jan. 1957

⁵⁰ *The Tyrone Constitution: 150 years in print* (3 November 1994); *Tyrone Constitution*, 5 Apr. 1957, 2 Feb. 1968, 13 Sept. 1974; *Ulster Herald*, 21 Mar. 1942;

⁵¹ *The Tyrone Constitution: 150 years in print* (3 November 1994); *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.215;

its establishment in 1896 but was purchased for the sum of £25 in 1908 by the proprietors of the *Ulster Herald*.⁵²

Fermanagh

In contrast to counties like Antrim and Down whose local titles were spread over a variety of towns, County Fermanagh's newspapers were almost entirely centred on the town of Enniskillen. Nonetheless, the earliest newspapers in the county date back to the early nineteenth century. Fermanagh's first newspaper, the *Enniskillen Chronicle and Erne Packet*, was established in 1808 by Edward Duffy along with his brother-in-law John Macken. The paper was co-edited by both men in the first ten years of its existence until Macken, who was also a poet, travelled to London and Paris with the unsuccessful intention of furthering his literary career. The title of the paper was later changed to the *Fermanagh Mail* which survived until 1893 when it was incorporated into the *Impartial Reporter* following a libel action taken against W.G. Cobbe, its editor at the time.⁵³ Another notable title to emerge in the first half of the nineteenth century was the *Enniskillener or Fermanagh Constitution*. It was established in 1830 by William Caddy and William Gabbett and remained in publication until 1840. Despite its relatively short lifespan and its rather cumbersome title the paper achieved some degree of success with its sales reaching 8,000 copies a year at one stage.⁵⁴

By 1914 County Fermanagh was served by five provincial titles though two of these were localised editions of publications based in other counties. The *Irish Daily Telegraph* was effectively a Fermanagh issue of the Derry-based paper of the same name while the *Fermanagh News* performed the same function for the Ballyshannon-based *Donegal Vindicator*.⁵⁵ Accordingly this left three solely Enniskillen-based newspapers serving the county, one of which was nationalist and two were unionist. The nationalist organ was the *Fermanagh Herald* which was owned by the aforementioned North-West of Ireland Printing and Publishing Company whose stable of newspapers included the *Ulster Herald* plus a

⁵² *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.215; *Ulster Herald*, 3 Jan. 2002;

⁵³ MacAnnaidh, op. cit., pp 26-8, pp 51-2, and pp 89-90; William Copeland Trimble of the *Impartial Reporter* took the libel action against Cobbe as a result of claims made in the *Fermanagh Mail* that Trimble 'had gone to England to promote the unionist cause for personal financial gain'. Trimble was successful in his action and was awarded £100. The amount was not paid and the *Fermanagh Mail* was subsequently merged with the *Impartial Reporter*.

⁵⁴ Ibid, p.21 and p.33; Livingstone 1969, op. cit., p.397

⁵⁵ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.212

number of other nationalist titles in the province.⁵⁶ The paper's editor for over thirty years following its launch in 1902 was Patrick A. (P.A.) MacManus, a fervent nationalist and devout Catholic.⁵⁷

Despite his wholehearted Catholicism and his resolute nationalism P.A. MacManus was a very close friend of Robert Hill (R.H.) Ritchie, editor-proprietor of the *Fermanagh Times*, one of Enniskillen's two unionist newspapers. R.H. Ritchie was a member of the Orange Order and had assumed control of the *Fermanagh Times* in 1916 following the death of his father, William Ritchie.⁵⁸ It was described as a 'thorough Protestant and Conservative paper' and had been established by local Conservative leaders to thwart the influence of the town's other unionist paper, the *Impartial Reporter*.⁵⁹

Derry

County Derry was home to eight newspapers during the 1914-1921 period. Some of these dated back to the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries while others had only commenced publication in the previous few decades. Even though a considerable number of titles were published in the county they were divided between only two centres, the city of Derry, and Coleraine. This contrasted significantly to counties Antrim and Down whose numerous local titles were spread across eleven different towns. Six of Derry's eight newspapers were based in the city while two were based in Coleraine.

Both titles based in Coleraine were unionist publications and were relatively well established by the early twentieth century. The *Coleraine Chronicle* was founded in 1844 by George Valentine Robinson who had started a printing business in the town the previous year.⁶⁰ The paper's editor for thirty years from around 1895 was John Shannon who was also the publisher of the aforementioned *Ballymoney Free Press* in neighbouring County Antrim.⁶¹ The town's other paper was the *Northern Constitution* which had started out as the *Coleraine Constitution* in 1875 before assuming the former title early in the twentieth century. It claimed a circulation of 11,000 across counties Derry, Antrim, and was owned by

⁵⁶ Ibid

⁵⁷ *Impartial Reporter*, 20 Dec. 1934; *Ulster Herald*, 22 Dec. 1934; *Fermanagh Herald*, 29 Dec. 1934;

⁵⁸ *Irish Times*, 5 Aug. 1943; *Fermanagh Herald*, 7 Aug. 1943;

⁵⁹ Barton, op. cit., p.310

⁶⁰ *Coleraine Chronicle*, 14 May 1994: In an obvious effort to maximise the catchment area Robinson gave his paper the extremely elongated title of the *Coleraine Chronicle and Ballymena, Ballymoney, Ballycastle, Bushmills, Dervock, Draperstown, Garvagh, Kilrea, Maghera, Magherafelt, Money more, Newtownlimavady, Portrush, and Portstewart Weekly Advertiser*.

⁶¹ *Fermanagh Herald, Ulster Herald*, 27 Jun. 1925; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.209;

Scotsman, J.M. Russell, who had taken over as editor in 1883 and was later to establish a successful linen business in Belfast.⁶²

The three most recently established newspapers serving Derry city also formed part of larger newspaper concerns. The *Irish Daily Telegraph*, which also had an Enniskillen edition, was owned by W&G Baird Ltd whose principal venture was the *Belfast Telegraph*, and indeed the *Irish Daily Telegraph* merged with the latter paper in 1952.⁶³ The *Derry People*, launched in 1902, was one of the Ulster newspapers owned by North West of Ireland Printing and Publishing Co. The company's other titles included the *Frontier Sentinel*, *Ulster Herald*, and *Fermanagh Herald*.⁶⁴ The first editor of the *Derry People* was Patrick Joseph (P.J.) Flanagan who was a Gaelic League enthusiast from a very early stage and was later associated with the leaders of the republican movement.⁶⁵ The foundation of the *Derry Weekly News* pre-dated that of the *Derry People* by a decade. Its owner was the North of Ireland Publishing Co. whose other publications included nationalist titles such as the *Donegal Vindicator* and *Fermanagh News*.⁶⁶ The city's three remaining newspapers had all been in circulation for considerably longer periods of time.

The oldest of these, and indeed one of the oldest papers in the country, was the *Derry Journal* which had been launched in 1772 as the *Londonderry Journal*. Its founder was George Douglas, a Scottish Protestant, who was a printer by trade, having originally owned a stationery shop in the city. The paper started out as a conservative organ with a firm allegiance to the British monarchy. Nonetheless, this began to change somewhat in the first half of the nineteenth century as the *Journal* supported Catholic Emancipation.⁶⁷ In July 1858 the *Journal* was acquired by Thomas McCarter Senior which marked the commencement of a family association with the paper that was to last sixty years. It was under the ownership of the McCarter family that a distinctly nationalist editorial outlook began to evolve, while in 1880 the name of the paper was shortened to the *Derry Journal*.⁶⁸

⁶² *Irish Independent*, *Irish Times*, 28 Oct. 1927; *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.585;

⁶³ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213

⁶⁴ *Ibid*

⁶⁵ *Derry Journal*, 21 Feb. 1961; P.J. Flanagan went on to edit *Irish Opinion* and *The Irishman*, the latter publication being suppressed by the Dublin Castle authorities. He was also a member of the Dublin Brigade of the IRA and following the Treaty he launched *The Plain People*, a republican Sunday paper, that achieved the distinction of being banned by both the Northern Ireland Government and the Free State Government.

⁶⁶ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.584

⁶⁷ *Derry Journal*, 9 Jun. 1972; *Derry Journal: 225th Anniversary Supplement* (6 Jun. 1997);

⁶⁸ *Derry Journal: 225th Anniversary Supplement* (6 June 1997); Brian Lacy, *Siege city: the story of Derry and Londonderry* (Belfast, 1990), p.204;

In 1908 a limited company was formed to take over the business of the *Derry Journal*. The prominent Catholic dimension to the history of many nationalist newspapers was again evident upon this change of ownership as 56 of the initial 198 shareholders were members of the Catholic clergy.⁶⁹ Although the McCarter family retained an interest in the paper it was James Joseph (J.J.) McCarroll who emerged as the main driving force of the *Journal*. McCarroll had previously worked at the *Ulster Gazette*, *Fermanagh Herald*, and *Derry People*, before moving to the *Derry Journal* where he was eventually appointed managing-director. Like so many of his nationalist counterparts within the provincial press, McCarroll was noted for his firm Catholic faith and his strong support for both the Gaelic League and the GAA.⁷⁰

The *Derry Standard* catered to an altogether different cohort of readers than that of the *Derry Journal*. First appearing in 1836 the paper became the main public organ of the Presbyterian community in Derry. It developed into a powerful voice in the city and it was stated of many of its readers that 'the bible and the *Standard* were the only literature they read'⁷¹ At the start of World War I its owner was John Clements (J.C.) Glendenning who had inherited the paper from his father and remained as proprietor until 1932. Glendenning was one of the first senators appointed to the Stormont parliament, a role in which he served for twenty-five years.⁷² The *Derry Standard* was a tri-weekly publication and claimed a greater circulation than any other unionist title in Ulster with the exception of the *Belfast Newsletter* and *Northern Whig*.⁷³

Cavan

Unlike most other regions in Ulster, County Cavan did not appear to embrace a local print media to any great extent until the mid-nineteenth century. Also, any newspapers established during this time were published solely in Cavan town. The *Cavan Herald* was the county's first newspaper but only lasted from 1818 to 1825. By the second decade of the twentieth century only one paper served the county apart from the nationalist *Anglo-Celt*. This was the unionist *Irish Post* which had only been established in 1910. It was owned by the previously mentioned W&G Baird Ltd, whose principal journalistic concern was the *Belfast Telegraph* though the company also owned the *Irish Daily Telegraph* which published editions in

⁶⁹ *Derry Journal: 225th Anniversary Supplement* (6 June 1997)

⁷⁰ *Derry Journal*, 3 and 5 Mar. 1937; *Fermanagh Herald*, 6 Mar. 1937; *Londonderry Sentinel*, 4 Mar. 1937; J.J. McCarroll was elected to the Stormont parliament in 1929 when he was returned for the Foyle constituency. He was also a close friend of Éamon de Valera and a strong supporter of the first Fianna Fáil government.

⁷¹ Lacy, op. cit., pp 179-80

⁷² *Irish Independent*, *Irish Press*, 20 Dec. 1949;

⁷³ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.584

both Enniskillen and Derry. The *Irish Post* was the only newspaper venture launched by W&G Baird Ltd outside what was to become the Northern Ireland state. However, the paper barely lasted ten years, ceasing publication in 1920.⁷⁴

Donegal

Similar to County Cavan the provincial print media only established a foothold in County Donegal at a relatively late stage. This may well have been due to its remote geographical location or the fact that it was well served by a number of newspapers based in neighbouring County Derry. The first paper to make an appearance in the county was the *Ballyshannon Herald* in 1831 whose first editor was Andrew Greene and which was broadly unionist in outlook.⁷⁵ This appears to have been the forerunner of the *Donegal Independent*, the oldest title in the county by the start of World War I. The *Ballyshannon Herald* remained in publication until 1883, at which stage it was acquired by the aforementioned Samuel Delmege Trimble, and re-launched as the *Donegal Independent*.⁷⁶

With a committed unionist such as Trimble at the helm the traditional political sympathies of the paper were hardly likely to change. However, such a change of direction clearly took place in the aftermath of Trimble's departure to assume control of the *Armagh Guardian* in 1893. By the late 1890s the *Donegal Independent* has been acquired by Patrick Aloysius (P.A.) Mooney who remained as editor-proprietor until his death in 1907. Mooney played a significant role in local politics and also served as vice-president of the county GAA committee.⁷⁷ Although the paper remained a nationalist organ following Mooney's death its status had changed once again by the second decade of the twentieth century. By

⁷⁴ Oram, op. cit., p.120

⁷⁵ *Donegal Democrat: Anniversary Supplement* (27 August 2009); John Jude Devenney, *Donegal: a chronicle of the twentieth century* (Letterkenny, 2000), p.23; Another newspaper based in Ballyshannon, the *Liberator*, was somewhat more nationalist leaning but barely lasted a year following its initial publication in January 1839.

⁷⁶ *Donegal Democrat: Anniversary Supplement* (27 August 2009); McCabe ('Trimble, William'), op. cit.; *Belfast Telegraph*, 1 Apr. 1947; *Belfast Newsletter*, *Irish Independent*, 2 Apr. 1947; The ninetieth anniversary issue of the *Donegal Democrat* records the *Ballyshannon Herald* as being 'merged into the *Donegal Independent* in 1884 with Samuel Delmege Trimble as proprietor' while the *Dictionary of Irish biography* indicates that Trimble founded the *Donegal Independent* around 1883. The obituaries that were published following his death in 1947 stated that Trimble had purchased a title called the *Donegal Herald* at some stage during the 1880s.

⁷⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, *Irish Times*, 10 Jun. 1907; Conor Curran, *Sport in Donegal: a history* (Dublin, 2010), p.118

this time it had become the Letterkenny edition of the other newspaper published in the county, the *Donegal Vindicator*.⁷⁸

The *Vindicator* was one of four titles in stable of the North of Ireland Publishing Company.⁷⁹ The paper was owned and edited by John McAdam from its foundation in 1889 until his death in 1925. McAdam was born in Glasgow to Irish parents and had written for the *Greenock Telegraph* and *Glasgow Observer* before coming to Ireland around 1885. He worked for a number of other provincial newspapers prior to the establishment of the *Donegal Vindicator* four years later. The strong Catholic faith that characterised so many senior figures of the Irish provincial press was similarly held by John McAdam.⁸⁰ This wholehearted Catholicism was shared by two of his daughters who also followed him into journalism. Marie McAdam, who succeeded her father as editor-proprietor of the paper, was noted for always expressing 'the Catholic viewpoint' while her sister, Eily, worked for several years at the *Catholic Herald* in London after, moving there following her marriage.⁸¹ Around 1920 Eily McAdam was centrally involved in the publication of a republican newspaper, *An Dáil*, which resulted in her arrest and imprisonment in Armagh Gaol.⁸² Despite Eily McAdam's clear republican sympathies the *Donegal Vindicator* was more noted as an organ of the Irish Parliamentary Party. It was the absence of a local paper reflecting a more separatist brand of nationalism that led to the foundation of the *Donegal Democrat* in 1919.⁸³

⁷⁸ *Newspaper Press Directory and advertisers' guide 1917*, p.213

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, p.584; The other titles were the *Donegal Independent*, *Derry Weekly News*, and *Fermanagh News*.

⁸⁰ *Donegal Vindicator*, 13 Jun. 1925

⁸¹ *Ibid*, *Donegal Democrat*, 7 May 1938

⁸² *Irish Independent*, 25 Jan. 1964

⁸³ Oram, *op. cit.*, p.140

Appendix H

The following are the principal texts that constitute the historiography of the Catholic Church in Ireland from the nineteenth century onwards:-

Collins, Kevin, *Catholic churchmen and the Celtic Revival in Ireland, 1848-1916* (Dublin, 2002).

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- *The Roman Catholic Church and the creation of the modern Irish state, 1878-1886* (Philadelphia, 1975).
- *The Roman Catholic Church and the emergence of the modern Irish political system, 1874-1878* (Washington, 1996).
- *The Roman Catholic Church in Ireland and the fall of Parnell, 1888-1891* (Liverpool, 1979).
- *The Roman Catholic Church and the Home Rule movement in Ireland, 1870-1874* (Chapel Hill, Carolina, 1990).
- *The Roman Catholic Church and the Plan of Campaign in Ireland, 1886-1888* (Cork, 1978).

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Whyte, John Henry, *Church and state in modern Ireland, 1923-1979* (2nd ed., Dublin, 1980).

Appendix I

The following are the principal texts that constitute the historiography of the Gaelic Athletic Association:-

Cronin, Mike, Rouse, Paul, and Duncan, Mark, *The GAA: a people's history* (Cork, 2014).

- *The GAA: county by county* (Cork, 2011).

Cronin, Mike, Rouse, Paul, and Murphy, William (eds.), *The Gaelic Athletic Association 1884-2009* (Dublin, 2009).

De Búrca, Marcus, *Michael Cusack and the GAA* (Dublin, 1989).

- *The GAA: a history* (Dublin, 1980).

Ó Riain, Seamus, *Maurice Davin (1842-1927): first president of the GAA* (Dublin, 1994).

Appendix J

Attitudes to conscription, the ceasefire of July 1921, and the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921:-

<u>Title</u>	<u>Attitude to conscription</u> <u>(Positive/ Negative/Neutral)</u>	<u>Attitude to ceasefire 1921</u> <u>(Positive/ Negative/Neutral)</u>	<u>Attitude to Anglo-Irish</u> <u>Treaty 1921</u> <u>(Positive/ Negative/Neutral)</u>
<i>Anglo-Celt</i>	Negative	Positive	Positive
<i>Clonmel Chronicle</i>	Neutral	Positive	Positive
<i>Cork Constitution</i>	Positive	Positive	Positive
<i>Donegal Democrat</i>	Only founded in 1919	Neutral	Neutral
<i>Enniscorthy Echo</i>	Negative	Positive	Positive
<i>Impartial Reporter</i>	Positive	Negative	Positive
<i>Kerryman</i>	Negative	Not published from April 1921 to August 1923	Not published from April 1921 to August 1923
<i>Kilkenny People</i>	Negative	Positive	Positive
<i>Leitrim Observer</i>	Negative	Not published from November 1920 to January 1923	Not published from November 1920 to January 1923
<i>Londonderry Sentinel</i>	Positive	Negative	Neutral
<i>Mayo News</i>	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Meath Chronicle</i>	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Midland Tribune</i>	Negative	Neutral	Neutral
<i>Roscommon Herald</i>	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Skibbereen Eagle</i>	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Southern Star</i>	Negative	Positive	Positive
<i>Tuam Herald</i>	Negative	Positive	Positive

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Connaught Telegraph

Cork Constitution

Daily News

Derry Journal

Derry People

Donegal Democrat

Donegal Vindicator

Down Recorder

Drogheda Argus

Drogheda Independent

Dundalk Democrat

Enniscorthy Echo

Fermanagh Herald

Freeman's Journal

Frontier Sentinel

Impartial Reporter

Irish Bulletin

Irish Independent

Irish Journalist

Irish Press

Irish Times

Kerryman

Kilkenny People

Killarney Echo

Leinster Express

Leitrim Observer

Limerick Leader

Lisburn Herald

Londonderry Sentinel

Lurgan Mail

Mayo News

Meath Chronicle

Midland Tribune

Munster Express

Nationalist and Leinster Times

Nenagh Guardian

Newry Reporter

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