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What Did Advanced Nationalists Tell Irish Children in the Early Twentieth Century?

Marnie Hay

In April 1900 in honour of Queen Victoria's visit to Ireland, an estimated 5,000 children attended a free treat in Phoenix Park in Dublin. On Easter Sunday of that year a group of nationalist women discussed the event and concluded that they should "organise a counter-treat for those children who had not attended Queen Victoria's" (Ward 1995, 48). In deciding to host the counter-treat, they were also responding to an editorial in the *United Irishman* that criticised nationalists for not making enough effort to provide Irish children with a nationalist education, for instance, by holding an outing to a place of national importance. The women immediately formed what came to be known as the Patriotic Children's Treat Committee, with Maud Gonne (1866-1953) as president (Ward 1995, 48). Inundated with donations of money and food, the committee is reputed to have entertained between 20,000-30,000 children in Clontarf Park, Drumcondra, Dublin on 1 July, 1900, the Sunday after the annual Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-98) commemoration (Pašeta 1999, 494-495; Condon 2000, 173-175). Four speakers, including Gonne herself, addressed the youthful crowd. In her speech she expressed the hope "that Ireland would be free by the time they had grown up, so that they could put their energies into building up a free nation and not 'the arid task of breaking down an old tyranny'" (Ward 1995, 49). Although the event garnered much praise, her admirer W.B. Yeats wondered gloomily: "How many of these children will carry a bomb or rifle when a little under or a little over thirty?" (Ward 1995, 50).

Over the following years some (but not all) prominent Irish nationalists began to recognise the importance of educating children and adolescents for their future role within the Irish nationalist movement. Among them were the women of the Patriotic Children's Treat Committee. Under the [p. 148] nominal leadership of Gonne, they went on to form the nucleus of a new advanced nationalist women's organisation called *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* (Daughters of Erin) in the autumn of 1900. The organisation was committed to the re-establishment of Irish independence, the promotion of Irish culture, and the support of Irish manufacturing (Ward 1995, 50-51; Matthews 2010, 34-35). This chapter will highlight the messages that advanced nationalists communicated to Irish children in the early twentieth century by examining some examples of youth-oriented activities and print propaganda generated by *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* and / or its members.

While *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* worked hard to push the boundaries of the traditional "women's sphere" that had kept women in the home and out of public life, its members also recognised that as a result of this sphere, women wielded great power in relation to children. The organisation encouraged Irish women to use this power to nationalist ends. Thus, one of its first initiatives was to offer free classes in Irish language, literature, history and music for children over the age of nine, mainly in

Dublin and Cork. The Inghinidhe boasted of the popularity of these classes, claiming that hundreds of their former pupils were now working for the Irish nationalist movement (*Bean na hÉireann*, June 1909, 8).

In addition to classes, the Inghinidhe organised events that offered children and adolescents a combination of education and entertainment from an overtly Irish nationalist perspective. Using the surplus money remaining from the patriotic treat, the women held a Christmas treat for the children who attended the organisation's evening classes. At this event Gonne extracted "an enthusiastic promise" from the revellers that they would never "join or consort with members of the British army" (Ward 1995, 52-53). In July 1903, Irish children were used once again in the propaganda war between nationalists and imperialists when the Inghinidhe organised another patriotic children's treat in Jones's Road Park [now Croke Park] to counter the one being held on the same day in Phoenix Park to honour King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra, who were visiting Ireland. This second patriotic treat was less successful, however, having been cobbled together at the last minute and deluged by rainy weather (Ward, 1995, 64-65). About fifty students from the girls' classes later visited Wolfe Tone's grave in Bodenstown where Sinn Féin propagandist Bulmer Hobson (1883-1969) delivered a short address on the nationalist icon's life and work. This outing was described as "a merry as well as instructive day" in *Bean na hÉireann (Women of Ireland)*, the monthly publication of Inghinidhe na hÉireann (July 1909, 8).

The Inghinidhe's early focus on children was in keeping with similar trends elsewhere. By the end of the nineteenth century many people in [p. 149] western countries displayed a preoccupation with the education, training and moral condition of youth. The Enlightenment had bequeathed a view that childhood was a time of education, particularly for boys. With the advent of Romanticism in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came "the notion of childhood as a lost realm that was none the less fundamental to the creation of the adult self" (Heywood 2005, 24-25). The editors of the youth paper *Fianna* acknowledged this notion when they (mis)quoted the *English* Romantic poet William Wordsworth on the masthead of their *Irish* nationalist paper, proclaiming that 'The child is the father of the man' (sic) (July 1915, 12). As the nineteenth century progressed, many western countries became worried that they were losing their competitive edge in industrial and military affairs and that their populations were declining both physically and morally. For instance, the British Army's poor performance against a force of South African farmers during the Boer War (1899-1902) provoked much concern that British men had become decadent. To arrest this perceived decline, many countries took steps to improve the health, education and moral welfare of the coming generation (Heywood 2005, 29-30). Inghinidhe na hÉireann's work with youth is an Irish example of this phenomenon.

Inghinidhe na hÉireann also addressed issues relating to the health, education and moral welfare of Irish youth in print propaganda that was aimed at children and adolescents or the significant adults in their lives, such as parents, teachers and older siblings. This propaganda reflected an overtly Irish nationalist and anti-British imperialist ideology. As John Stephens has noted, writing for children is usually intended to cultivate in the reader a positive view of shared socio-cultural values. He adds:

"These values include contemporary morality and ethics, a sense of what is valuable in the culture's past ... and aspirations about the present and future. Since a culture's future is ... invested in its children, children's writers often take upon themselves the task of trying to mould audience attitudes into

‘desirable’ forms, which can mean either an attempt to perpetuate certain values or resist socially dominant values which particular writers oppose” (1992, 3).

Thus, the Inghinidhe’s print propaganda relating to youth was designed to foster in its readers a concern for the underdog (either Ireland itself or disadvantaged Irish children), a love of traditional Irish culture, and a willingness to play one’s part in a future war of liberation from Britain. It also urged readers to resist or reject anything British.

In order to explore the messages communicated in such print propaganda, the youth-oriented content in *Bean na hÉireann* will be [p. 150] examined, providing a comparison to similar material contained in other Irish advanced nationalist publications of the time. Four aspects of the paper’s youth-oriented content will be discussed: 1) messages related to children that were aimed at adults; 2) reports on the nationalist youth group Na Fianna Éireann; 3) the children’s column “An Grianán”; and 4) the provision of Irish alternatives to British popular culture.

Bean na hÉireann appeared between November 1908 and March 1911. Inghinidhe na hÉireann decided to establish the paper in order to spread the organisation’s views and to fill a perceived gap in the market. Although its members supported certain aspects of Arthur Griffith’s (1871-1922) Sinn Féin (which can be translated as we ourselves) policy, they did not feel that it went far enough. Like other Sinn Féiners, they not only supported anything Irish, such as the Irish language, Gaelic games and home-grown products, but also tried to sabotage and obstruct British government in Ireland whenever possible. However, they were separatists rather than proponents of a dual monarchy and open to the use of physical force to achieve political aims. The paper’s editor Helena Molony (1883-1967) recalled that “there was at that date no paper expressing the view of complete separation from England, or the achievement of National freedom by force of arms, if necessary, and of course no woman’s paper at all, except the British ‘Home Chat’ variety of sheet.” A future Abbey Theatre actress and trade union activist, Molony had joined the Inghinidhe in 1903. She took over the editorship after a short-lived editorial committee proved too cumbersome and later described the paper as “a mixture of guns and chiffon” and “a funny hotch-potch of blood and thunder, high thinking and home-made bread” (Molony, no date [circa 1950]).

By the time *Bean na hÉireann* ceased publication in early 1911, two other papers, *Irish Freedom* and the *Irish Citizen*, were in existence. *Irish Freedom* was a frankly republican and separatist organ linked to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, while the *Irish Citizen* was published by the Irish Women’s Franchise League. Thus, as Molony explained, “the need for our paper was not so urgent and the strain of getting it out was too much in the midst of other activities” (no date [circa 1950]). The paper had also experienced some financial difficulties, having to take a hiatus from publication for several months in 1910.

In a June 1909 *Bean na hÉireann* editorial Molony asked her readers, “[d]o we seriously consider what a force the children are in the country, or are they thought about at all?” She pointed out that it was not enough to teach Irish language, history and economics in school if children were not imbued with a “National Faith – love of Ireland, of everything great and [p. 151] small, that belongs to Ireland, because it belongs to Ireland, and for no other reason”. In order to inspire this faith, she urged

Irish women with leisure time “to spare a few hours every week trying to bring some brightness into the lives of the little children of the very poor”. As an illustration, she raised the example of:

“one young lady, who, although one of the busiest and most hard-working of Nationalists, has a little gathering once a week in her sitting room, where they learn Irish, some simple stories from history, and a verse or two of National songs. This shows what can be done by one earnest woman, but if a number could be got together the work would be easier and more extensive and varied” (8).

Molony’s editorial is indicative of the paper’s messages regarding children that were aimed at its adult readers.

Members of *Inghinidhe na hÉireann* concerned themselves with both the minds *and* bodies of disadvantaged Irish children. For instance, in the October 1910 edition of *Bean na hÉireann* *Gonne* highlighted the issue of Irish children going to school hungry. She praised France’s provision of school dinners, arguing that:

“There is little of that starvation poverty in France that we have in Ireland, because France is governed by the French for the French, and though taxes may be high they do not impoverish people as they do in Ireland; the tax money remains and circulates in France and is not sent to a foreign country.... In Ireland, owing to the extreme poverty which English rule has brought on our nation, the proper feeding of the children is a harder problem than in France, but its importance is even more vital, the need of our children being greater” (6-7).

Gonne, ever the nationalist, blamed the hunger of impoverished Irish school children on the country’s subordinate status within the United Kingdom.

Within two months this article had helped to spark the formation of the School Dinner Committee in Dublin and the provision of daily dinners of meat and vegetables to 250 children at St Audeon’s National School, which fell under the remit of *Gonne*’s friend Canon Kavanagh, who had spoken at the Patriotic Children’s Treat in 1900 (Ward 1995, 81). In December 1910 Molony urged her readers to extend this model to other communities. Not all schools were so welcoming, however. Some rejected the help of such “notorious” women; among the dinner ladies (only some of whom were members of the *Inghinidhe*) were *Gonne* herself, Molony, [p. 152] Countess Constance Markievicz (1868-1927), Hanna Sheehy Skeffington (1877-1946), the Gifford sisters, Muriel (1884-1917), Grace (1888-1955) and Sydney (1889-1974), Kathleen Clarke (1878-1972) and Madeleine French-Mullen (1880-1944) (Ward 1995, 81; Ward 1990, 98-99). *Gonne* informed a friend that some clergy in Ireland secretly opposed the committee because these priests “seem[ed] to think it dangerous and subversive to feed starving school children” (Ward 1990, 98-99).

The school dinner programme was not designed to be merely an act of charity. Instead its organisers hoped to pressurise the authorities into extending the 1906 Provision of Meals Act to Ireland. This act enabled local authorities in England to provide meals for school children. After much intensive lobbying, particularly on the part of these women, the act was finally extended to Ireland in September 1914 (Ward 1995, 80-82). It appears, however, that the legislation was never implemented. In pushing for British legislation to be extended to Ireland, the women of the School Dinner Committee were willing to put the short-term well-being of Irish children ahead of their own long-term nationalist goals.

The developing minds and bodies of Irish boys were also at the heart of an initiative started by two *Bean na hÉireann* contributors in 1909. Markievicz and Hobson launched the youth organisation Na Fianna Éireann (or Irish National Boy Scouts) in Dublin in August of that year as an Irish nationalist antidote to the growing popularity of Robert Baden-Powell's (1857-1941) burgeoning Boy Scout movement and the continuing existence of the Boys' Brigade. Much to the delight of her fellow Inghinidhe members, Markievicz decided to form "a special movement for young boys" after the women's organisation "had abandoned its boys' classes because they were too hard to manage" (Molony, no date [circa 1950]). She brought Hobson on board because he had previous experience organising a boys' hurling club in Belfast, also called Na Fianna Éireann. Their new incarnation of the Fianna offered boys – and later some Belfast and Waterford girls – a blend of scouting, military training and cultural activities. In July 1909 *Bean na hÉireann* announced that the Fianna's promoters hoped to make it "the nucleus of a National Volunteer Army" (8).

From the youth group's inception, *Bean na hÉireann* published monthly coverage of the Fianna's views, activities and growth, making the paper an important primary source for the organisation's early history. Most of the Fianna articles were written pseudonymously. In September 1909 a Fianna member reported that "[s]ome Nationalists think that the boys don't count in the nation, but the founders of Na Fianna Éireann rightly consider them of supreme importance. They are the recruits of the [p. 153] future armies of Ireland, and on them the future of Ireland must depend" (8). Pleas for nationalists to support the work of the new youth group appeared in both Fianna articles and Molony's editorials (Nov. 1909; Jan. 1910). Belfast readers were even encouraged to send their younger brothers down to the local Fianna hall to join the organisation (March 1910).

The paper's Fianna articles provided readers of all ages with information about how to join local *sluaighte* (branches) as they spread around the country. They also kept readers abreast of events such as classes in military drill, route marches, camping trips, history lectures and concerts. For instance, an early report from September 1909 described a recent camping trip, recording that the "Red Branch" section, which Markievicz set up prior to the official launch of the Fianna, "spent a most enjoyable six days' camping on the slopes of Three Rock Mountain. On Sunday they were joined by the President [Hobson] and some other members, and 'scouting' games were played. The damp evenings were passed quickly with the singing of Irish songs and talks of Irish heroes" (9).

In some cases reports of these events may have been enticing enough to attract new members to the youth group. A report from November 1910 offered a taste of the excitement in store at the Dublin Fianna's forthcoming inter-*sluagh* scouting games:

"An Chead Sluagh and Sluagh Wolfe Tone will jointly defend the citadel which comprises about 400 square yards of Mr Jolley's land in Scholarstown. The attackers, composed of sluaighte on the north side of the Liffey, shall endeavour to enter the citadel without being captured. When a member of the attacking force enters the precincts of the defender's territory he is free from any molestation from the defenders and cannot be captured. It will be defenders' business to intercept and capture the attackers before reaching the citadel. Marks shall be awarded by the umpires for good scouting work, the capturing of scouts and for those who succeed in entering the citadel uncaptured".

The article went on to boast of the "steady progress" that the Fianna was making throughout Ireland, claiming that "Irishmen who are alive to the needs of their country are slowly realising the necessity of

training the coming generation to be a well disciplined, strong people, imbued with intense national pride in their country's past, and with the proper sentiments as to their rights of independence" (11).

Such extensive coverage of the Fianna in the pages of *Bean na hÉireann* is not surprising. On one level the youth group was started by Markievicz, a member of the Inghinidhe, with support from Molony and [p. 154] fit in with the women's organisation's general ethos and aims. For instance, a pageant and prize-giving at Patrick Pearse's (1879-1916) school, St Enda's, also received favourable coverage and the school was praised as one which would "turn out true Irishmen and true scholars, not mere tape-machines for information" (July 1909, 9). On a more personal level Markievicz, Hobson and Molony ran an abortive agricultural commune at Belcamp Park in Raheny, Dublin during the late summer and autumn of 1909 that generated a variety of romantic rumours about Hobson's relationships with both women. Markievicz and Molony remained lifelong friends, but later fell out with Hobson over political differences (Regan 2001, 144; O'Faolain 1987, 92; Ó Broin 1985, 37).

Similar Fianna coverage also appeared in other advanced nationalist papers such as *Irish Freedom*, the *Irish Volunteer* and *Fianna*. *Irish Freedom* appeared from November 1910 until its suppression in December 1914. The *Irish Volunteer*, which lasted from February 1914 to April 1916, was the weekly organ of the Irish Volunteer movement started in November 1913. Upon reaching the age of eighteen, Fianna members usually transferred into the Volunteers. Although it was not officially connected with the youth group, *Fianna* was established in February 1915 by Percy Reynolds (1895-1983) and Patsy O'Connor (died 1915), two members of Na Fianna Éireann. It began as a youth paper, but later widened its target audience to include adults. These papers kept current and potential Fianna members up to date on the activities of troops around the country and changes to official policy, with the *Irish Volunteer* also publishing instructional articles on topics such as map reading (22 January -12 February 1916).

In addition to its political content, which remained constant throughout its existence, *Bean na hÉireann* initially published articles on Irish fashion, cookery and housekeeping as well as a regular column for children entitled "An Grianán" (the sunroom of youth). Written under the pseudonym Dectora [the mother of legendary Irish hero Cúchulain] by Madeleine French-Mullen, the future co-founder of St Ultan's Children's Hospital, this column appeared for about a year between April 1909 and March 1910 (Ward 1990, 96; Bryan 2009). The column's main focus was a monthly competition in which young people no older than their early teens could compete for book prizes, such as *Nuala* (1908) by Lily McManus (1894-1941) and *Old Time Stories of Éire* (1907) by Alice Dease.

The competitions in "An Grianán" were designed to encourage entrants to explore aspects of Irish history and heritage, often by submitting 200-word essays. For example, in May 1909 Dectora asked readers to write about their favourite Irish heroine: [p. 155]

"Some little girls are clever with their needle, and Emer of the beautiful embroideries appeals to them. Others prefer the great Macha who subdued the giants and drew with her breast pin the outline of a great palace she wished them to build for her, or the warlike Grainia Máol (sic). Choose any character you like, and you may search for information about them in histories or other books, or ask grown ups to tell you about them, but you must tell it to me in your own words" (10).

Other essay topics included the feats of Cúchulain, the escape of Red Hugh O'Donnell, and the life of St Patrick (September 1909; December 1909; February 1910). Not surprisingly, the latter subject

proved particularly popular with entrants (March 1910). Dectora, however, was unable to award a prize for the best account of a battle fought on Irish soil: two readers “complained that they did not know enough about an Irish battle to write a long account of one”, while the only essay deemed worthy of a prize was disqualified because it was written by a girl over the age of sixteen (December 1909, 10).

The competitions also encouraged readers to develop their Irish language skills. For instance, the very first prize that Dectora offered was for the longest list of Irish words formed from the letters making up the paper’s title “*Bean na hÉireann*” (April 1909). A few months later she expressed disappointment after her request for letters written in Irish generated only one missive, which arrived after the deadline. “Perhaps it was too much to ask, as I suppose the majority of you are only beginners,” she lamented (July 1909, 5).

Unlike Neasa, the author of *Irish Freedom*’s youth column, “*Grianán na nÓg*”, Dectora rarely dictated ways in which young people could further the struggle for Irish independence. On only one occasion did she suggest a practical way in which her readers could help Ireland and its economy and, by extension, disadvantaged Irish children. She asserted: “I hope all the Christmas cards and presents which are sent out by you will be of Irish manufacture. This is the very best way that little people can help Ireland at present” (December 1909, 10). Dectora’s “buy Irish” message was in keeping with *Inghinidhe na hÉireann*’s aim “to support and popularise Irish Manufacture” (*Bean na hÉireann*, March 1911, 14).

Also in contrast to *Irish Freedom*, *Bean na hÉireann*’s youth column was occasionally accompanied by children’s fiction written by M. O’Callaghan.¹ For instance, a short story entitled “The Land of Why” tells the tale of Katrina, a little girl who annoys people by constantly asking “why”. She gets her come-uppance when she has a dream about a land where she is surrounded by dwarves demanding “why” (July 1909, 5-6). [p. 156] Although written for children, the story may have had more resonance for the relatives of inquisitive three-year-olds.

Another example is O’Callaghan’s serial entitled “Campbella: Or the Tale of a Proud Princess”, which appeared between October 1909 and March 1910. It relates the exploits of a snobbish princess who learns the error of her ways and attracts a handsome prince, but only after being kidnapped and forced to live like a beggar. Concern for those less fortunate than oneself was a theme that ran through the pages of *Bean na hÉireann*, reflecting the *Inghinidhe*’s (and Molony’s) combined national and social conscience.

An examination of the monthly contest winners provides some sense of Dectora’s audience, who were most likely the children or younger siblings of the paper’s adult readers. Seven prize winners were female, three were male, and one was only identified by a first initial and surname. Eight successful entrants used the Irish version of their names. Six hailed from Dublin, while the others resided in Tuam, Skibbereen, Ennis, Cork, and Co. Wexford. Only the ages of the first two winners –

¹ Since this article was published in 2012, Dr Sylvie Kleinman has identified M. O’Callaghan as a pseudonym of Madeleine ffrench-Mullen on the basis that her mother’s maiden name was Margaret O’Callaghan (personal communication to author, 27 Nov. 2018). See the genealogical entry on Madeleine ffrench-Mullen available from <https://www.geni.com/people/Madeleine-Ffrench-Mullen/6000000025358474917> (accessed 22 April 2019).

fourteen and twelve – were published. The bias towards girls is not surprising given that the paper was geared towards women, although young men of advanced nationalist views also read it.

Similar children's columns appeared in other advanced nationalist newspapers, suggesting that editors sought to appeal to readers of all ages. As noted earlier, *Irish Freedom* published “Grianán na nÓg”, which suggested ways in which young people under twenty could further the struggle for Irish independence and featured monthly competitions. It generated a higher number of winning and commendable entries than “An Grianán”, with 82 names being published between December 1910 and 1911, over half of which belonged to boys (Hay 2006, 34). After its re-launch in July 1915, *Fianna* began to publish a column by the same author; “Neasa’s Nook: A Corner for the Lads and Lassies” included competitions for youth between the ages of six and seventeen. Competitions were clearly seen as a way of piquing children’s interest and generating two-way communication with young readers.

An Gaedheal, a short-lived weekly paper published in early 1916, also included a youth column entitled “Éire Óg” (Young Ireland). Written by someone identified as Maev, its target audience was fourteen to eighteen-year-olds. This paper aimed to reach “the men and women, boys and girls of the country districts and provincial towns whose only literature at present consists of cross-Channel garbage and khaki-tinted West British press” (19 February 1916, 8). [p. 157]

As the previous quotation suggests, Irish nationalists were keen to generate home-grown alternatives to prevalent examples of British popular culture, which, in their opinion, threatened the perceived moral superiority of the Irish people. In producing *Bean na hÉireann*, the Inghinidhe hoped to provide Irish women with a substitute for “the deluge of thrashy [sic] foreign literature in Ireland”. “The fact that it is published and printed in England is the least of its faults,” asserted Molony in an April 1909 editorial, explaining that:

“The English atmosphere it brings with it, and the false and mean standard of life that it inculcates is the real evil. The chance of marrying a very rich, and very much titled suitor, the triumph of being able to hold a larger number of fellow creatures in servitude than your neighbour – the dishonest pleasure of having command of a huge income, sweated out of the bones of less fortunate human beings – these are the paltry ideals set before our young Irish women” (8).

This concern for the moral welfare of impressionable Irish readers also led to the establishment of papers aimed at Irish youth. Possibly the best-known and most successful example is the Christian Brothers’ *Our Boys*, which combined Catholicism with Irish nationalism (Flanagan 2006, 43-52). Less successful examples include *Fianna* and *Young Ireland*. *Fianna* published fiction, poetry and jokes, articles on Irish history and folklore, and *Fianna* news and views, though it was not an official organ of Na Fianna Éireann. *Young Ireland* first appeared on 21 April 1917 under the editorship of Aodh de Blácam (1890-1951), who declared that the paper would “always be stoutly Irish and devotedly Catholic from cover to cover” (1). Its content included fiction, poetry, and such regular features as “The Handyman’s Corner”, the “Cailín’s Column” and “Our Professor’s Corner by our tame scientist”. These two youth papers were later forced to widen their target audience to include adults in order to survive, suggesting that it was extremely difficult to compete with the seductive allure of British youth periodicals such as the *Boys’ Friend*.

Concern about the reading material available to Irish youth was also expressed in book reviews published in nationalist papers aimed at adults. Writing in *Bean na hÉireann* in January 1909,

Máire de Buitléir (1872-1920) heaped praise on *Nuala*, Lily McManus's 1908 novel aimed at teenage girls:

“Our young people's imagination will be kindled by this tale of gallant deeds and high surprises, and they will find it a rich store of those adventures which are so dear to the hearts of the young and eager. We all remember how we used to revel in 'adventure stories' of red Indians and pale faces. Éire Óg will enjoy still more stories of Irish princesses and [p. 158] chieftains, for their hearts will leap to recognise the touch of kinship in *Nuala*, their own charming compatriot” (4).

The importance of providing Irish youth with specifically Irish literature was also highlighted in a 1907 review published in *The Republic*, the organ of the Dungannon Clubs, which promoted the Sinn Féin policy in Ulster and beyond. The reviewer complained about the publication of *A Young Patriot* (1906), an adaptation of the G.A. Henty (1832-1902) novel *Orange and Green: a tale of the Boyne and Limerick* (1888), as “a reader for senior standards in Irish National Schools”. Although he viewed the book as “harmless” in that “it contain[ed] no immoral tendency”, the reviewer (probably Hobson) opined that “surely there are enough writers in Ireland without introducing the inanities of Mr G.A. Henty to Irish boys”. He went on to suggest that the publisher should “secure the copyright of some of Standish O'Grady's [1846-1928] stories” because this would offer Irish boys “immeasurably better” books and perhaps lead to higher profits (17 January 1907, 7). Such book reviews highlight the advanced nationalist movement's concern with not only moulding the minds of Irish youth but also influencing their consumer choices.

An examination of the youth-oriented activities and print propaganda generated by Inghinidhe na hÉireann and / or its members provides a sense of what advanced nationalists tried to tell Irish children in the period 1900 to 1917. Members of the Inghinidhe reached out to youth through the organisation of the Patriotic Children's Treats, free classes in Irish language, literature, history and music, the youth group Na Fianna Éireann, the school dinner programme, and *Bean na hÉireann* articles aimed at children and adolescents. In doing so, they told Irish youth that their minds and bodies were of supreme importance to the future of the nation. They also told children that their primary allegiance – both political and cultural – should be to Ireland not Britain. They told them to embrace and cherish their unique Irish heritage by learning about their country's history and heroes, speaking its native tongue, reading literature written by and about fellow Irish people, and singing the songs of their homeland. They told them to boost their country's economy and foster the well-being of fellow Irish children by only buying Irish goods. They told boys to join the Fianna so that they could become trained to fight in a future struggle for Irish independence.

Although it is difficult to provide an empirical assessment of the success of these messages, there are some indications that they had a positive impact. Gonne claimed that even in the 1930s middle-aged men and women were coming up to her in the street and saying “I was one of the patriotic children at your party when Queen Victoria was over”, [p. 159] suggesting that participation in the event had made a lasting impression on them (MacBride 1994, 270). In June 1909 *Bean na hÉireann* boasted that hundreds of children who took the Inghinidhe's free classes later began working in the nationalist movement. The truth of this boast is, of course, open to question. That members of the Fianna served as leaders, combatants, scouts and messengers during the 1916 Easter Rising and the War of Independence (1919-1921) attests to the effectiveness of the Fianna's training programme and

propaganda. As a result of the Easter Rising, nine Fianna members died, including Con Colbert (1888-1916) and Seán Heuston (1891-1916), who were executed for their roles in the rebellion. Twenty-one others lost their lives during the War of Independence (Holland, no date). Advanced nationalist educational initiatives and print propaganda like those generated by Inghinidhe na hÉireann and / or its members probably contributed to the predominance of young men and women within the Irish Volunteers (later known as the Irish Republican Army) and Cumann na mBan respectively, which has been noted in recent studies of the Irish revolution (Hart 1998; Augusteijn 1996; Coleman 2003; Fitzpatrick 1998; Matthews 2010).

In conclusion, had W.B. Yeats reflected on the messages that advanced nationalists communicated to Irish youth in the early twentieth century, he might have asked himself a similar question to the one he posed after the Patriotic Children's Treat of July 1900: "How many of these children will carry a bomb or rifle when a little under or a little over twenty?" (cited in Ward 1995, 50).

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