Machnamh 100

PRESIDENT OF IRELAND
CENTENARY REFLECTIONS

VOLUME 2

UACHTARÁN NA hÉIREANN

THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

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THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

Machnamh 100

Michael D Higgins

Machnamh 100

Machnaimh ar Chomóradh Céad Bliain

Imleabhar 2

Uachtarán na hÉireann, Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

Machnamh 100

Centenary Reflections

Volume 2

President of Ireland, Michael D. Higgins

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Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Foreword

Machnamh 100 – Part 2

Réamhrá

Machnamh 100 – Cuid 2

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

The research papers from *Machnamh 100* are published in two volumes: Volume 1 contains the contributions to the first three seminars which invited reflections focused on the War of Independence and building on prior, formative contexts and events that commemorated seminal moments in our nation's history. These included the 1913 Lockout and the Easter Rising. Volume 2 contains papers contributed on topics that included the Civil War and the creation of two new administrations on the island of Ireland. These seminars reflected on the social basis of the key events in our history, ones that prevailed at the birth of our nation a century ago.

Over the course of the *Machnamh 100* seminars, I invited scholars from diverse backgrounds and with an array of perspectives to share their insights and reflections on the context and events of that formative period of a century ago, and indeed on the nature of commemoration itself.

Tá na páipéir thaighde ó *Machnamh 100* foilsithe in dhá imleabhar. In Imleabhar 1 tá ábhar a cuireadh i láthair sna chéad trí sheimineár inar cuireadh fáilte roimh mhachnamh dírithe ar Chogadh na Saoirse; cuireadh leis méid a pléadh i gcomhthéacsanna agus in imeachtaí múnlaitheacha a bhí againn roimhe sin nuair a rinneadh comóradh ar bhuaicphointí i stair an náisiúin seo againne. Ina measc sin bhí Frithdhúnadh 1913 agus Éirí Amach na Cásca. In Imleabhar 2 tá páipéir a cuireadh ar fáil ar ábhair amhail Cogadh na gCarad agus bunú an dá riarachán nua ar oileán na hÉireann. Sna seimineáir seo, rinneadh machnamh ar bhunús sóisialta na n-eachtraí ba thábhachtaí sa stair againn, eachtraí a tháinig chun cinn i dtús ár náisiúin céad bliain ó shin.

Ó cuireadh tús le seimineáir *Machnamh 100*, chuir mé cuireadh ar scoláirí a bhfuil cúlraí éagsúla agus meascán tuairimí acu a mbarúlacha agus a machnamh féin a thabhairt dúinn ar an gcomhthéacs agus ar na heachtraí sa tréimhse mhúnlaitheach sin céad bliain ó shin agus, gan amhras, ar thréithe den chomóradh féin.

It has been my aim, through *Machnamh 100*, to facilitate meditations on specific themes, some of which I felt had been overlooked in the historiography, others which merited a return for deeper scrutiny based on new research or revision as to fact. The aim was to explore in depth the various aspects of that seminal period in Ireland's journey, and its legacy for the societies and jurisdictions that were to emerge, a legacy the consequences of which are still playing out today.

In our consideration we were conscious of the role of memory, history and imagination in the task of ethical commemoration. We examined this theme, respecting its inherent complexity, as well as the inevitable aspects of contestation that such a consideration may suggest. We considered specific themes such as those relating to empire, including its instincts, interests, power and resistance, as well as the omnipresent theme of land. We reflected, too, on issues of social class, gender and sources of violence.

Central to our approach was an appreciation and recognition of the importance of taking into account the experience 'from below' which is such a vital historiographical source. We also examined themes from the perspective of their constitutional, institutional and ideological foundations.

The first seminar covered in this publication, Volume 2, took place in November 2021, focusing on the Truce, the Treaty and Partition. It saw Professor Diarmaid Ferriter of University College Dublin provide the principal address, and respondents in addition to myself included Professors Mary E. Daly and Margaret Kelleher, both of University College Dublin, Dr Daithí Ó Corráin of Dublin City University, and Professor Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast.

Is é an aidhm a bhí agam, sa tsraith *Machnamh 100*, spás a chur ar fáil le go ndéanfaí machnamh ar théamaí ar leith, cuid acu nár cíoradh sa staireagrafaíocht go dtí seo dar liom, cuid eile nár dhochar cíoradh ní ba ghrinne a dhéanamh orthu bunaithe ar thaighde úr nó ar athbhreithniú i dtreo an chruinnis. Is é an cuspóir a bhí ann plé a dhéanamh go grinn ar na gnéithe éagsúla den tréimhse thábhachtach sin in aistear na hÉireann agus ar oidhreacht na tréimhse sin i gcás na sochaithe agus na ndlínsí siúd a bhí le teacht chun cinn agus torthaí na hoidhreachta sin fós le haireachtáil sa lá atá inniu ann.

Sa mhachnamh a bhí ar bun againn, d'aithníomar an ról atá ag an gcuimhne, an stair agus an tsamhlaíocht má bhíonn comóradh le déanamh ar shlí atá eiticiúil. Rinneamar scrúdú ar an téama seo, meas á léiriú againn ar an gcastacht a bhaineann go nádúrtha leis, maille leis na gnéithe den gconspóid a thiocfadh ar ndóigh as machnamh den gcineál seo. Rinneamar téamaí ar leith a mheas, iad siúd a bhaineann le cúrsaí impireachta, mar shampla, an claonadh, na leasanna, an chumhacht agus an seasamh a bhaineann léi sin mar choincheap, mar aon le téama uileláithreach na talún. Rinneamar machnamh ar cheisteanna eile leis: aicme shóisialta, inscne agus foinsí foréigin.

Go lárnach sa chur chuige a bhí againn thuigeamar agus d'aithníomar an tábhacht a bhaineann le taithí na ndaoine 'ón bpobal aníos' a chur san áireamh, foinse atá ríthábhachtach i scríobh na staire. Rinneamar téamaí a iniúchadh freisin bunaithe ar na bunchlocha bunreachtúla, institiúideacha agus idé-eolaíocha atá taobh thiar díobh.

Bhí an chéad seimineár atá mar chuid den bhfoilseachán seo, Imleabhar 2, ar siúl i mí na Samhna 2021, ina rabhthas dírithe ar an Sos Cogaidh, an Conradh agus an Chríochdheighilt. Le linn an tseimineáir thug an tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter, an Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath an príomhaitheasc, agus i measc lucht a fhreagraithe, mé féin ar dhuine acu, bhí an tOllamh Mary E. Daly agus an tOllamh Margaret Kelleher, an Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, an Dr Daithí Ó Corráin, Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath, agus an tOllamh Fearghal McGarry, Ollscoil na Banríona, Béal Feirste.

Our penultimate seminar, held in May 2022, considered the constitutional, institutional and ideological foundations of the emerging Irish State a century ago. The principal address was provided by Professor Brendan O'Leary of the University of Pennsylvania, with responses from Professor Henry Patterson of the Ulster University, Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne of University College Cork, Dr Theresa Reidy, also of University College Cork, and myself.

The final seminar, held in November 2022, provided us with an opportunity for looking back across all five of the *Machnamh 100* seminars, while focusing on the events of 1922. The principal address was provided by author and historian Professor Declan Kiberd of the University of Notre Dame. Responses were made by Fergal Keane, author and journalist with the BBC, cultural theorist, practitioner and film producer Lelia Doolan, and academic Professor Angela Bourke of University College Dublin. My own address was entitled '1922 – The Most Significant Year?'

May I thank historian and broadcaster, Dr John Bowman, for agreeing to chair all three seminars, and for doing so with such excellence. May I also thank all those who contributed papers for their time and creativity. I also pay tribute to those who worked 'behind the scenes' assisting with bringing this idea to fruition, including the production staff, and all those within the President's Office. Míle buíochas. May I also pay a special thanks to Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh of the University of Galway, for his advice and support throughout the *Machnamh 100* initiative. It is a support for which I am deeply grateful.

My hope is that you find the papers from these seminars inspiring and thought-provoking, and that, above all, together they constitute a reminder that the work which we have undertaken over these seminars represents an invitation to history, and to the transacting of history which, when its complexity and fullness is respected, can make a valuable contribution to the critical task that is ethical commemoration, helping us to arrive at a profound and comprehensive understanding of our past so that we may achieve a peaceful, harmonious and inclusive shared future on this island.

Bain taitneamh as do léamh.

Sa seimineár leathdheireanach a bhí againn, i mí Bealtaine 2022, rinneadh plé ar na bunchlocha bunreachtúla, institiúideacha agus idé-eolaíocha a bhí faoi Stát na hÉireann agus é ag teacht chun cinn céad bliain ó shin. Is é an tOllamh Brendan O'Leary, Ollscoil Pennsylvania, a thug an príomhaitheasc agus bhí freagraí air sin ón Ollamh Henry Patterson, Ollscoil Uladh, ón Ollamh Lindsey Earner-Byrne, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, ón Dr Theresa Reidy, Coláiste na hOllscoile chomh maith, agus uaim féin.

Sa seimineár deireanach, i mí na Samhna 2022, bhí faill againn féachaint siar ar gach ceann de na seimineáir a bhí againn mar chuid de *Machnamh 100* agus sinn ag díriú ar eachtraí na bliana 1922 ag an am céanna. Is é an t-údar agus staraí an tOllamh Declan Kiberd, Ollscoil Notre Dame, a thug an príomhaitheasc. Chualathas freagraí ó Fergal Keane, údar agus iriseoir de chuid an BBC, an teoiricí cultúrtha, cleachtóir agus léiritheoir scannán Lelia Doolan, agus an scoláire an tOllamh Angela Bourke, an Coláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath. Is é an teideal a bhí ar an aitheasc a thug mé féin ná '1922 – An Bhliain ba Shuntasaí?'

Is mian liom buíochas a ghlacadh leis an staraí agus craoltóir an Dr John Bowman as bheith toilteanach a bheith ina chathaoirleach ar na trí sheimineár agus as obair den scoth a dhéanamh lena linn. Is mian liom buíochas a ghabháil freisin leosan go léir a thug páipéir as ucht a gcuid ama agus a gcuid cruthaitheachta. Lena chois sin, ba mhaith liom aitheantas a thabhairt dóibhsean a bhí ag obair 'sa chúlra' agus iad ag cuidiú linn an smaoineamh seo a thabhairt chun críche, an fhoireann léiriúcháin agus gach aon duine in Oifig an Uachtaráin ina measc. Míle buíochas. Is mian liom buíochas ar leith a ghabháil leis an Ollamh Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, Ollscoil na Gaillimhe, as ucht na comhairle agus na tacaíochta a thug sé i rith an tionscnaimh *Machnamh 100*. Táim go mór faoi chomaoin aige as an dtacaíocht sin.

Tá súil agam go mbeidh na páipéir ó na seimineáir ina spreagadh agat agus go gcuirfidh siad i mbun machnaimh thú agus, thar aon ní eile, go gcuirfidh siad i gcuimhne dúinn gur cuireadh chun staire atá san obair atá déanta againn sna seimineáir seo, agus cuireadh dúinn an stair sin a chur i ngníomh. Nuair atá meas againn ar chastacht agus ar iomláine na staire, féadfaidh an méid sin cur le hobair fhiúntach an chomórtha atá eiticiúil agus, dá bharr, tá seans níos fearr ann go dtiocfaidh muid ar thuiscint dhomhain chuimsitheach ar an stair seo againne sa dóigh is go mbainfimid saol síochánta suaimhneach ionchuimsitheach amach sa mhéid atá i ndán dúinn ar an oileán seo.

Bain taitneamh as do léamh.

Michael D. Higgins
Uachtarán na hÉireann
President of Ireland

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Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Introduction by Dr John Bowman

Chair

Réamhrá leis an Dr John Bowman

Cathaoirleach

Dr John Bowman

An Dr John Bowman

The use of the word *Machnamh* was an inspired choice for this initiative: in the Irish it suggests consideration, meditation, reflection and thought. It does not imply conclusions, finality or agreed outcomes. It is about a tentative, exploratory approach to Irish history as opposed to any presumption that the truth was known and simply needed an injection of propaganda to render it better known.

Such an open-minded approach has been at the heart of the *Machnamh* seminars. For each seminar a broad theme has been suggested with a key-note speaker invited to prepare a paper for further discussion. This initial paper has then been circulated to other scholars – predominantly historians, but not exclusively.

In contributing as respondents, some have chosen to closely engage with the original paper: others have used it as a springboard to prompt their own approach to the broad topic under discussion. This has then been followed by a response from President Higgins; and then a discursive exchange of views between the participants and an invited audience.

Rogha inspioráideach a bhí ann an focal Machnamh a úsáid don tionscnamh seo: is é atá le tuiscint as ná cuimhneamh, smaoineamh, marana, meabhrú. Ní conclúidí, cinnteacht ná torthaí réamhshocraithe a thuigtear as. Is é atá i gceist ann léamh coinníollach trialach a thabhairt ar stair na hÉireann seachas glacadh leis go bhfuiltear ar an eolas faoin bhfírinne agus nach dteastódh lena scaipeadh ach babhta bolscaireachta.

Gné lárnach de sheimineáir *Machnamh* ná cur chuige leathanaigeanta den chineál seo. Táthar i ndiaidh téama leathan a mholadh do gach seimineár agus cuireadh a thabhairt do phríomhchainteoir páipéar a ullmhú a ndéanfaí tuilleadh plé air. Rinneadh an páipéar tosaigh sin a scaipeadh ar scoláirí eile ansin – staraithe is mó atá iontu ach ní go heisiach.

Agus iad ag tabhairt freagra ar an bpáipéar sin mar fhreagróirí, shocraigh cuid de na daoine plé go docht leis an gcéad pháipéar; rinne daoine eile cinneadh an páipéar a úsáid mar thúsphointe spreagtha lena gcur chuige féin a spreagadh leis an ábhar á phlé. Tar a éis sin uile, d'fhaightí freagra ón Uachtarán Ó hUigínn; ansin bhíodh malartú tuairimí ann idir na rannpháirtithe agus an lucht éisteachta a fuair cuireadh le bheith ann.

The transcription of the exchanges with the audience have been sympathetically edited to include some minor corrections and occasionally some footnotes, where appropriate. Sometimes such exchanges can be reminiscent of how the Victorians introduced to the printed proceedings of their learned societies the innovation of including the comments of distinguished attendees; these contributors might wish to contest what they have heard or offer additional insights from their own research or experience.

Readers – and viewers of the original webcasts – can make their own evaluation of the audience's responses: but I hope it will be considered a positive contribution to the exchanges which are published in these two volumes.

The original intention was to hold these *Machnamh* seminars in a city centre or university location with additional access to a live webcast. Again – as with the first three seminars in *Machnamh* - because of Covid-19 and its aftermath, audience participation has been necessarily circumscribed and the seminars have been held in the Hyde Room in Áras an Uachtaráin.

But equally, it must be allowed that while Covid imposed some limitations, the enforced reliance on a webcast format placed no limits – either geographically or numerically – on the available audience.

Indeed *Machnamh* may be thought of as having enjoyed one of the unintended – and beneficial – consequences of Covid: the increasing familiarity of audiences to the benefits of remote communication.

And because of the format and the individual expertise of such a wide variety of contributors, *Machnamh* should remain as a continuing resource to the ever-increasing numbers of those interested in this most significant decade in modern Irish history. Moreover, it is possible to view the contributions as a part of an open engagement between the participants. But such is the format of the webcast that it is also possible to access individual presentations.

Those engaged in teaching – at second or third level in Ireland or overseas – should consider it as a possible resource either within the classroom or lecture hall or for private access by individual students.

All of these papers are available to view on the '*Machnamh 100*' section of the President of Ireland website, www.president.ie, and are also available on the RTÉ Player.

Dr John Bowman

Tá eagarthóireacht cháiréiseach déanta ar thras-scríbhinní an phlé le mionleasuithe beaga a chur isteach chomh maith le fonótaí uaireanta, de réir mar ba chuí. Tá cosúlacht in amanna idir cur agus cúiteamh mar seo agus an chaoi ar thug na Victeoiriaigh an nós nua úd isteach tuairimí ó dhaoine céimiúla sa lucht éisteachta a chur isteach in imeachtaí clóite na gcumann léinn acu; seans go mbeadh na daoine sin ag iarraidh cur i gcoinne ar chuala siad nó tuilleadh eolais a thabhairt bunaithe ar an taighde nó ar an taithí acu féin.

Beidh lucht a léite – agus lucht féachana na gcraolta gréasáin tosaigh – in ann a mbreithiúnas féin a thabhairt ar fhreagraí an lucht éisteachta: tá súil agam go measfar go bhfuil na freagraí céanna ag cur go dearfach leis an malartú tuairimí atá foilsithe sa dá imleabhar seo.

An sprioc a bhí ann i dtosach ná go ndéanfaí na seimineáir seo mar chuid de *Machnamh* a reáchtáil i lár na cathrach nó in ollscoil agus teacht a bheith ann ar chraoladh gréasáin beo. Arís eile – mar a bhí i gceist leis na chéad trí sheimineár i sraith Machnamh – bhí teorainn le rannpháirtíocht an lucht éisteachta de bharr go raibh Covid-19 ann agus reáchtáladh na seimineáir i Seomra de hÍde in Áras an Uachtaráin.

Chomh maith céanna, cé go raibh teorainneacha áirithe ann de dheasca Covid-19, ní raibh teorainneacha ag baint leis an lucht éisteachta a bhí ar fáil – ó thaobh áite ná líon daoine de – ó tharla gurbh éigean craoladh gréasáin a úsáid mar fhormáid.

Gan amhras, tá Machnamh ar cheann de na nithe sin a bhain leas as toradh a bhain le haimsir Covid-19 nach raibh dúil leis – buntáiste, d'fhéadfá a rá: go ndeachaigh an lucht éisteachta i dtaithí de réir a chéile ar bhuntáistí na cumarsáide cianda.

Ba cheart Machnamh a bheith ann mar áis amach anseo don dream sin atá ag síormhéadú atá ag cur suim sna deich mbliana is suntasaí seo i stair na hÉireann de thairbhe na formáide atá ann agus toisc go bhfuil saineolas ag gach duine i measc an réimse leathan scríbhneoirí ann. Lena chois sin, is féidir féachaint ar na píosaí atá scríofa mar phlé oscailte idir na daoine a bhí páirteach ann. Mar gheall ar an bhformáid a bhaineann leis an gcraoladh gréasáin is féidir teacht ar gach cur i láthair ceann ar cheann.

Ba chóir leis an lucht teagaisc ar an dara leibhéal nó ar an tríú leibhéal in Éirinn nó thar lear é a mheas mar áis a bhfhéadfaí a úsáid sa seomra ranga, sa léachtlann nó mar áis don staidéar príobháideach ag mic léinn ar leith.

Is féidir breathnú ar na páipéir seo go léir ar an rannóg dar teideal '*Machnamh 100*' ar shuíomh gréasáin Uachtarán na hÉireann www.president.ie. Is féidir teacht orthu ar Sheinnteoir RTÉ freisin.

An Dr John Bowman

Beathaisnéisí na gCainteoirí

Speakers' Biographies

Micheál D. Ó hUigínn
Uachtarán na hÉireann

Michael D. Higgins
President of Ireland

Michael D. Higgins, Uachtarán na hÉireann, President of Ireland, is currently serving his second term, having been first elected in 2011 and re-elected in 2018. President Higgins has forged a career as an academic and political representative at many levels, campaigning extensively for human rights, peace and sustainability. He was a member of Dáil Éireann for 25 years, a member of Seanad Éireann for nine years, and Ireland's first Minister for the Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht.

President Michael D. Higgins led the commemorations of the 'Decade of Centenaries', marking the centenary anniversaries of some of the seminal events in Ireland's history 1912-1923. The President attended and spoke at a large number of State and other ceremonial events helping to shape the national effort to explore and examine the background, impact and contemporary significance of the events being recalled.

Since taking office, the President has published many collections of speeches setting out his approach including: *'When Ideas Matter: Speeches for an Ethical Republic', '1916 Centenary Commemorations and Celebrations', 'Reclaiming the European Street - Speeches on Europe and the European Union, 2016-20'* and *Machnamh 100, Volume 1.*

Tá **Micheál D. Ó hUigínn, Uachtarán na hÉireann**, ag feidhmiú sa ról sin don dara huair faoi láthair. Toghadh den chéad uair é sa bhliain 2011 agus arís ansin in 2018. Tá a ghairm bheatha caite ag an Uachtarán Ó hUigínn ina scoláire agus ina ionadaí polaitíochta ar leibhéil éagsúla agus feachtasaíocht go leor déanta aige ar son chearta an duine, na síochána agus na hinbhuanaitheachta. Teachta Dála é ar feadh cúig bliana is fiche, thug sé naoi mbliana ina chomhalta i Seanad Éireann agus ba é an chéad Aire Ealaíon, Cultúir agus Gaeltachta in Éirinn é.

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn a thug ceannaireacht ar na hócáidí le Deich mBliana na gCuimhneachán a chomóradh ina ndearnadh comóradh ar chuid de na himeachtaí is tábhachtaí i stair na hÉireann. D'fhreastail an tUachtarán ar a lán imeachtaí Stáit agus imeachtaí searmanais eile inar féachadh chun cur leis an iarracht náisiúnta plé agus cíoradh a dhéanamh ar chúlra, tionchar agus tábhacht chomhaimseartha na n-eachtraí a bhí á dtabhairt chun cuimhne.

Ón am a ndeachaigh sé i mbun a oifige, tá a lán díolamaí óráidí foilsithe ag an Uachtarán ina dtugtar eolas ar an gcur chuige atá aige, na foilseacháin seo ina measc: *When Ideas Matter: Speeches for an Ethical Republic', '1916 Centenary Commemorations and Celebrations', 'Reclaiming the European Street - Speeches on Europe and the European Union, 2016-20'* agus *Machnamh 100, Imleabhar 1.*

An Dr John Bowman

Dr John Bowman

Dr John Bowman is a broadcaster and historian. He has presented current affairs and historical programmes on RTÉ radio and television since the 1960s. He is author of *Window and Mirror: RTÉ Television, 1961-2011*, the first comprehensive history of Irish television. His PhD, *De Valera and the Ulster Question: 1917–1973*, won the Ewart-Biggs Prize for its contribution to North- South understanding. His latest book, *Ireland: the Autobiography*, is published by Penguin. He was elected an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College Dublin in 2009 and awarded an Honorary Doctorate by UCD in 2010.

Is craoltóir agus staraí é an **Dr John Bowman.** Chuir sé cláir faoi chúrsaí reatha agus cláir stairiúla i láthair ar raidió agus ar theilifís RTÉ ó na 1960idí. Is údar *Window and Mirror: RTÉ Television, 1961-2011* é, an chéad leabhar cuimsitheach staire ar theilfís na hÉireann. Bhuaigh a thráchtas PhD, *De Valera and the Ulster Question: 1917–1973*, Duais Ewart-Biggs as cur leis an tuiscint Thuaidh-Theas. D'fhoilsigh Penguin a leabhar is déanaí: *Ireland: the Autobiography.* Toghadh é ina Chomhalta Oinigh de Choláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath in 2009 agus bhronn UCD Dochtúireacht Oinigh air in 2010.

Fourth Seminar
25 November 2021

Settlements, Schisms and Civil Strife

An Cheathrú Seimineár
25 Samhain 2021

Socraíochtaí, Siosmaí agus Achrann Sibhialta

Professor Diarmaid Ferriter

Professor Diarmaid Ferriter is Professor of Modern Irish History at University College Dublin and author of numerous books, including *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (2004), *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (2009), *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s* (2012), *The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Politics* (2019) and *Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War* (2021). He is a regular television and radio broadcaster and a weekly columnist with the *Irish Times.* In 2019 he was elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy.

An tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter

Ollamh le Nua-Stair na hÉireann sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, is ea an tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter, agus tá an iliomad leabhar scríofa aige, ina measc siúd *The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (2004), *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland* (2009), *Ambiguous Republic: Ireland in the 1970s* (2012), *The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Politics* (2019) agus *Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War* (2021). In minic é ag craoladh ar an teilifís nó ar an raidió agus tá colún aige gach seachtain san *Irish Times*. Toghadh ina chomhalta de chuid Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann é in 2019.

Professor Fearghal McGarry

Professor Fearghal McGarry is Professor of Modern Irish History at Queen's University Belfast. He has written widely on revolutionary and post-independence Ireland. He is the author of *The Abbey Rebels of 1916: A Lost Revolution* (2015) and *The Rising: Ireland, Easter 1916* (2010). His co-edited books, *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, Civil War* (Royal Irish Academy) and *The Irish Revolution: A Global History* (NYU Press) were published in 2022.

With partners at the University of Edinburgh and Boston College, McGarry has recently completed a major AHRC research project, *A Global History of Irish Revolution, 1916-23*, which investigates how the Irish struggle for independence was shaped by international currents.

He has been extensively involved with activities marking the Decade of Centenaries including the development of GPO *Witness History* exhibition. He was a historical consultant for the BBC's recent television documentary series, *The Road to Partition*.

An tOllamh Fearghal McGarry

Ollamh le Nua-Stair na hÉireann in Ollscoil na Banríona, Béal Feirste é an tOllamh Fearghal McGarry. Tá réimse leathan ábhair scríofa aige ar thréimhse na réabhlóide agus ar an tréimhse i ndiaidh an neamhspleáchais in Éirinn. Eisean a scríobh *The Abbey Rebels of 1916: A Lost Revolution* (2015) agus *The Rising: Ireland, Easter 1916* (2010). Foilsíodh *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, Civil War* (Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann) agus *The Irish Revolution: A Global History* (NYU Press), a raibh sé ina chomheagarthóir orthu, sa bhliain 2022.

Agus é ag obair i gcomhar le comhpháirtithe in Ollscoil Dhún Éideann agus i gColáiste Bhostúin, tá tionscadal mór AHRC curtha i gcrích le gairid aige, *A Global History of Irish Revolution, 1916-23*, ina ndéantar cíoradh ar an tionchar a bhí ag imeachtaí idirnáisiúnta ar an streachailt in Éirinn ar son an neamhspleáchais.

Tá ról suntasach i ndiaidh a bheith aige i dtaobh na n-imeachtaí a reáchtáladh le Deich mBliana na gCuimhneachán a chomóradh, an taispeántas *Witness History* in Ard-Oifig an Phoist a fhorbairt mar chuid de. Bhí sé ina shainchomhairleoir staire don tsraith faisnéise teilifíse ón BBC ar na mallaibh, *The Road to Partition.*

Professor Mary E. Daly

Professor Mary E. Daly is Professor Emeritus in Irish History at University College Dublin, and a member of the Expert Advisory Group on the Decade of Centenaries. She served as President of the Royal Irish Academy from 2014-2017. The author of ten books and co-author/editor of ten volumes, including *Sixties Ireland, Reshaping the Economy, State and Society, 1957-73* (2015) and, with Eugenio Biagini, *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (2016) and *The Struggle to Control Female Fertility in Modern Ireland* (2023).

An tOllamh Mary E. Daly

Ollamh Emeritus le Nua-Stair na hÉireann sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, í an tOllamh Mary E. Daly agus tá sí ina ball den Sainghrúpa Comhairleach atá ag plé le Deich mBliana na gCuimhneachán. Bhí sí ina hUachtarán ar Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann ó 2014 go 2017. Tá deich leabhar scríofa aici, agus í ina comheagarthóir nó eagarthóir ar dheich n-imleabhar, lena n-áirítear *Sixties Ireland, Reshaping the economy, state and society, 1957-73* (2015) agus, i gcomhar le Eugenio Biagini, *The Cambridge Social History of Modern Ireland* (2016) agus *The struggle to control female fertility in modern Ireland* (2023).

Dr Daithí Ó Corráin

Dr Daithí Ó Corráin lectures in the School of History and Geography at Dublin City University and is Chair of the MA in History. He has published widely on the Irish Revolution, 1912-23 and Irish Catholicism. He is the author of *Rendering to God and Caesar: the Irish churches and the two states in Ireland, 1949-73* (2006) and chapters on Irish Catholicism in the *Cambridge History of Ireland* (2018) as well as the forthcoming *Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism* (2023) and *Oxford Handbook of Religion in Ireland* (2024). He is co-editor with Professor Marian Lyons of *The Irish Revolution, 1912-23* series of county histories published by Four Courts Press. He is co-author (with Professor Eunan O'Halpin) of the landmark *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (2020) and (with Gerard Hanley) of Cathal Brugha: *'An Indomitable Spirit'* (2022).

An Dr Daithí Ó Corráin

Léachtóir é an Dr Daithí Ó Corráin i Scoil na Staire agus na Tíreolaíochta in Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath agus is é an Cathaoirleach ar an MA sa Stair é. Tá cuid mhór ábhair foilsithe aige ar Réabhlóid na hÉireann, 1912-23, agus ar an gCaitliceachas in Éirinn. Eisean údar *Rendering to God and Caesar: the Irish churches and the two states in Ireland, 1949-73* (2006) agus caibidlí ar an gCaitliceachas in Éirinn in *Cambridge History of Ireland* (2018) agus san fhoilseachán *Oxford History of British and Irish Catholicism* (2023) atá le teacht, agus san *Oxford Handbook of Religion in Ireland* (2024). Tá sé ina chomheagarthóir i gcomhar leis an Ollamh Marian Lyons ar an tsraith *The Irish Revolution, 1912-23* a bhaineann le stair na gcontaetha atá foilsithe ag Four Courts Press. Eisean atá ina chomhúdar (leis an Ollamh Eunan O'Halpin) ar an saothar ceannródaíoch *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (2020) agus (le Gerard Hanley) ar Cathal Brugha: *An Indomitable Spirit* (2022).

Professor Margaret Kelleher

Professor Margaret Kelleher is Professor and Chair of Anglo-Irish Literature and Drama at University College Dublin. Her publications include: *The Maamtrasna Murders: Language, Life and Death in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (UCD Press) which was awarded the Michael J. Durkan Prize for Books on Language and Culture by the American Conference of Irish Studies in 2019 and shortlisted for the Michel Déon Prize. She is former Chair of the Irish Film Institute, and University College Dublin academic lead for the Museum of Literature Ireland (MoLI).

An tOllamh Margaret Kelleher

Is í an tOllamh Margaret Kelleher an tOllamh le Litríocht agus Drámaíocht Angla-Éireannach, agus Cathaoirleach leis, sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath. Sampla dá saothar foilsithe é *The Maamtrasna Murders: Language, Life and Death in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (UCD Press) ar bhronn Comhdháil Mheiriceá don Léann Éireannach Duais Michael J. Durkin air in 2019 le haghaidh Leabhair a bhaineann le Teanga agus Cultúr. Cuireadh ar an ngearrliosta do Dhuais Michel Déon é chomh maith. Tá sí ina Iar-Cathaoirleach ar Institiúid Scannán na hÉireann agus is í an ceannasaí acadúil thar ceann an Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath í i Músaem Litríochta na hÉireann.

Fifth Seminar
26 May 2022

Constitutional, Institutional and Ideological Foundations: Complexity and Contestation

An Cúigiú Seimineár
26 Bealtaine 2022

Bunús Bunreachta, Institiúideach agus Idé-Eolaíochta: Castacht agus Conspóid

Professor Brendan O'Leary

Professor Brendan O'Leary is the Lauder Professor of Political Science at the University of Pennsylvania. His *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*, won the 2020 James S. Donnelly Sr. prize of the American Conference of Irish Studies. He is an Honorary Member of the Royal Irish Academy and a Member of the US Council on Foreign Relations. O'Leary was the inaugural winner of the Juan Linz Prize of the International Political Science Association. His university education was at Oxford (PPE, BA first class, 1981), and the LSE (PhD, Robert McKenzie Memorial Prize, 1988). *Making Sense of a United Ireland* was published by Penguin on September 1, 2022.

An tOllamh Brendan O'Leary

Is é an tOllamh Brendan O'Leary Ollamh Lauder leis an Eolaíocht Pholaitiúil in Ollscoil Pennsylvania. Bronnadh duais James S. Donnelly Sinsearach 2020 ó Chomhdháil Mheiriceá don Léann Éireannach ar a thráchtas *A Treatise on Northern Ireland*. Comhalta Oinigh de chuid Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann é agus Comhalta é ar Chomhairle na Stát Aontaithe don Chaidreamh Coigríche. Is é O'Leary an chéad duine a bhuaigh Duais Juan Linz de chuid Chumann Idirnáisiúnta na hEolaíochta Polaitiúla. Cuireadh oideachas ollscoile air in Oxford (PFE, BA céadonóracha, 1981), agus in LSE (PhD, Duais Chuimhneacháin Robert McKenzie, 1988). D'fhoilsigh Penguin *Making Sense of a United Ireland* leis ar an 1 Meán Fómhair 2022.

Professor Henry Patterson

Professor Henry Patterson is the Emeritus Professor of Irish Politics at Ulster University. His publications include *The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72* (1979), *Class Conflict and Sectarianism* (1980), *Seán Lemass and the Making of Modern Ireland* (1982), *The Politics of Illusion: Republicanism and Socialism in Modern Ireland* (1989), *Ireland since 1939* (2005), *Unionism and Orangeism in Northern Ireland since 1945* (2007) and *Ireland's Violent Frontier: The Border and Anglo-Irish Relations during the Troubles* (2015). In 2021 he was a member of the Northern Ireland Centenary Historical Advisory Panel.

An tOllamh Henry Patterson

Tá an tOllamh Henry Patterson ina Ollamh Emeritus le Polaitíocht na hÉireann in Ollscoil Uladh. I measc na bhfoilseachán atá scríofa aige tá *The State in Northern Ireland 1921-72* (1979), *Class Conflict and Sectarianism* (1980), *Seán Lemass and the Making of Modern Ireland* (1982), *The Politics of Illusion: Republicanism and Socialism in Modern Ireland* (1989), *Ireland since 1939* (2005), *Unionism and Orangeism in Northern Ireland since 1945* (2007) agus *Ireland's Violent Frontier: The Border and Anglo-Irish Relations during the Troubles* (2015). Bhí sé ina bhall den Phainéal Comhairleach do Chomóradh Céad Bliain Thuaisceart Éireann in 2021.

Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne

Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne is the Professor of Irish Gender History at the School of History, University College Cork and Chair of the Expert Advisory Panel of the 20th Century History of Ireland Galleries at the Museum of Ireland. She has researched and published widely on modern Irish history with a particular focus on poverty, welfare, gender, sexuality, health, and vulnerable and marginalised groups. Most recently she has co-authored a history of Ireland's abortion journey with Professor Diane Urquhart of Queen's University Belfast, *The Irish Abortion Journey, 1920-2018* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019). Her other publications include *Letters of the Catholic Poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland, 1920-1940* (2017) and *Mother and Child: Maternity and Child Welfare in Dublin, 1922-50* (2007) and chapters on the history of the Irish family in the *Cambridge History of Ireland* (2018) and sexuality and religion in the forthcoming *Oxford Handbook of Religion in Ireland* (2022). She has appeared in several documentaries including *Cogadh Ar Mhná – a War on Women* (aired TG4 and RTÉ, May 2020) and *No Country for Women* (aired RTÉ, September 2018).

An tOllamh Lindsey Earner-Byrne

Is í an tOllamh Lindsey Earner-Byrne an tOllamh le Stair Inscní na hÉireann i Scoil na Staire, Coláiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh, agus is í atá mar Chathaoirleach ar an bPainéal Comhairleach maidir le Gailearaithe Stair na hÉireann sa 20ú céad in Ard-Mhúsaem na hÉireann. Tá taighde leathan déanta agus foilsithe aici ar nua-stair na hÉireann agus béim ar leith san obair sin ar an mbochtaineacht, ar chúrsaí leasa, ar inscne, gnéasacht, folláine, agus ar ghrúpa atá leochaileach agus imeallaithe. An saothar is deireanaí léi ná *The Irish Abortion Journey, 1920-2018* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), scéal an ghinmhillte in Éirinn, í mar chomhúdar air i dteannta an Ollaimh Diane Urquhart ó Ollscoil na Banríona, Béal Feirste. I measc na bhfoilseachán eile atá aici tá *Letters of the Catholic Poor: Poverty in Independent Ireland, 1920-1940* (2017) agus *Mother and Child: Maternity and Child Welfare in Dublin, 1922-50* (2007) agus caibidlí ar stair an teaghlaigh in Éirinn in *Cambridge History of Ireland* (2018) agus ar chúrsaí gnéasachta agus reiligiúin sa saothar *Oxford Handbook of Religion in Ireland* (2022) atá le teacht. Bhí sí mar chuid de chláir faisnéise éagsúla, *Cogadh ar Mhná* (ar TG4 agus RTÉ, Bealtaine 2020) agus *No Country for Women* (ar RTÉ, Meán Fómhair 2018) ina measc.

Dr Theresa Reidy

Dr Theresa Reidy is a senior lecturer in the Department of Government and Politics at University College Cork. She has published widely on electoral behaviour and political institutions, and her recent work has been published in *Electoral Studies*, *Parliamentary Affairs* and *Politics*. Theresa has received funding for her research on elections and referendums from the European Commission, Irish Research Council, Irish Aid and the Royal Irish Academy. She has given expert evidence to parliamentary committees in Ireland and internationally, and is a regular contributor to broadcast media. She is co-editor of the *International Political Science Review* since 2016, and is a former editor of *Irish Political Studies*.

An Dr Theresa Reidy

Léachtóir sinsearach í an Dr Theresa Reidy i Roinn Léann an Rialtais agus na Polaitíochta i gColáiste na hOllscoile, Corcaigh. Tá réimse leathan ábhair foilsithe aici a bhaineann le hiompar in aimsir toghchán agus le forais pholaitiúla, agus tá an saothar is deireanaí léi foilsithe in *Electoral Studies*, *Parliamentary Affairs* agus *Politics*. Tá cistiú faighte ag Theresa ón gCoimisiún Eorpach, ón gComhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn, ó Chúnamh Éireann agus ó Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann dá cuid taighde ar thoghcháin agus ar reifrinn. Tá fianaise shaineolach tugtha aici do choistí parlaiminteacha in Éirinn agus go hidirnáisiúnta agus bíonn sí le feiceáil agus le cloisteáil go rialta ar na meáin chraolta. Tá sí ina comheagarthóir ar an *International Political Science Review* ó bhí 2016 ann agus iar-eagarthóir í ar *Irish Political Studies*.

Sixth Seminar
17 November 2022
Memory, History and Imagination

An Séú Seimineár
17 Samhain 2022
Cuimhne, Stair agus Samhlaíocht

Professor Declan Kiberd

Professor Declan Kiberd teaches at University of Notre Dame. He was for many years a Professor of Anglo-Irish Literature at University College Dublin, and has served on the Board of the Abbey Theatre. Among his books are *Inventing Ireland; Synge and the Irish Language*; *Irish Classics*; *Ulysses and Us*; *The Irish Writer and the World*; and *After Ireland*. He co-edited (with PJ Mathews) *Handbook of the Irish Revival* and (with Gabriel Fitzmaurice) *The Flowering Tree: Irish-Language Poetry in Translation*. He has been a visiting Professor at the Sorbonne and Cambridge University.

An tOllamh Declan Kiberd

Tá an tOllamh Declan Kiberd ag teagasc in Ollscoil Notre Dame. Chaith sé a lán blianta ina Ollamh le Litríocht Angla-Éireannach sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, agus tá tréimhse caite aige ar Bhord Amharclann na Mainistreach. Ar na leabhair atá scríofa aige tá *Inventing Ireland; Synge and the Irish Language*; *Irish Classics*; *Ulysses and Us*; *The Irish Writer and the World*; agus *After Ireland*. Bhí sé mar chomheagarthóir (le PJ Matthews) ar *Handbook of the Irish Revival agus* (le Gabriel Fitzmaurice) ar *The Flowering Tree: Irish-Language Poetry in Translation*. Ollamh cuartaíochta in La Sorbonne agus in Ollscoil Cambridge é chomh maith.

Lelia Doolan

Lelia Doolan has worked as an actor, director and producer in various places including the Globe Theatre, RTÉ, the Abbey Theatre and Bord Scannán na hÉireann. Lelia worked for Combat Poverty in Erris, Mayo, founded with others, and attempted to run and teach the first course in film and video in the College of Commerce Rathmines in the early eighties and later in Galway in the then GMIT. Since moving to live in South Galway in the early eighties, she has been involved with various cultural productions, activisms, studies, film festival and Cinemobile activities, cinema building etc. Her writing includes *Sit Down and Be Counted* (co-authored with Jack Dowling) as well as articles on holy wells and Irish culture.

Lelia Doolan

Tá obair déanta ag Lelia Doolan ina haisteoir, stiúrthóir agus léiritheoir in áiteanna éagsúla, an Globe Theatre, RTÉ, Amharclann na Mainistreach agus Bord Scannán na hÉireann ina measc. Chaith Lelia seal ag obair do Combat Poverty in Iorras, Maigh Eo, í ar dhuine de na bunaitheoirí, agus thug sí faoin gcéad chúrsa scannánaíochta agus físe a reáchtáil agus a theagasc sa Choláiste Tráchtála, Ráth Maonais, go luath na hochtóidí agus ansin i nGaillimh in Institiúid Teicneolaíochta na Gaillimhe - Maigh Eo mar a bhí ag an am. Ó bhog sí chun cur fúithi i nDeisceart na Gaillimhe go luath sna hochtóidí tá baint aici le cúrsaí cultúrtha ar shlite éagsúla, bíodh sin léiriúcháin, gníomhachas, staidéir, gníomhaíochtaí na féile scannán agus Cinemobile, tógáil na pictiúrlainne, agus dá réir sin. Ar an saothar atá scríofa aici tá *Sit Down and Be Counted* (í mar chomhúdar le Jack Dowling) chomh maith le hailt ar thoibreacha naofa agus ar chultúr na hÉireann.

Professor Angela Bourke

Professor Angela Bourke is Professor Emerita of Irish-Language Studies at University College Dublin, where she taught for over thirty years. Awarded a National University of Ireland Travelling Studentship in Celtic Studies, her research has focussed on oral traditions and cultural history. Books include *Caoineadh na dTrí Muire*: *Téama na Páise i bhFilíocht Bhéil na Gaeilge*, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story*, and *Maeve Brennan: Homesick at* The New Yorker. With seven colleagues she edited vols IV and V of *The Field Day Anthology: Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*. She has held visiting professorships and fellowships at universities in the US, UK and Japan, and is a Member of the Royal Irish Academy.

An tOllamh Angela Bourke

Tá an tOllamh Angela Bourke ina hOllamh Emerita le Léann na Gaeilge sa Choláiste Ollscoile, Baile Átha Cliath, áit a raibh sí ag teagasc ar feadh breis is tríocha bliain. Bronnadh Staidéaracht Taistil ó Ollscoil na hÉireann uirthi sa Léann Ceilteach agus tá a cuid taighde dírithe ar an mbéaloideas agus ar an stair chultúrtha. I measc na leabhar atá scríofa aici tá *Caoineadh na dTrí Muire*: *Téama na Páise i bhFilíocht Bhéil na Gaeilge*, *The Burning of Bridget Cleary: A True Story*, agus *Maeve Brennan: Homesick at The New Yorker*. Rinne sí féin agus seachtar comhghleacaithe dá cuid eagarthóireacht ar imleabhair IV agus V de *The Field Day Anthology: Irish Women's Writing and Traditions*. Tá ollúnachtaí agus comhaltachtaí cuartaíochta tar éis a bheith aici in ollscoileanna i Stáit Aontaithe Mheiriceá, sa Ríocht Aontaithe agus sa tSeapáin. Comhalta í de chuid Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann.

Fergal Keane

Fergal Keane has covered conflict for the BBC for more than thirty years including the Rwandan genocide, wars in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Iraq, Ukraine and many others. He has also written several award winning books including *Season of Blood* (George Orwell prize for political writing) and *Wounds*, winner of the Irish non-fiction book of the year, and the Ewart Biggs Memorial Prize. He has also won a BAFTA and an EMMY, and awards from the Royal Television Society, the Overseas Press Club of America, as well as an OBE for services to television journalism. His latest book is *The Madness – a Memoir of War, Fear and PTSD* published on November 10, 2022.

Fergal Keane

Tá Fergal Keane tar éis cúrsaí coinbhleachta a chlúdach don BBC le breis agus tríocha bliain, cinedhíothú Ruanda, cogaí sa Liobáin, san Afganastáin, san Iaráic, san Úcráin agus cuid mhór eile ina measc. Tá leabhair scríofa aige chomh maith a bhfuil duaiseanna buaite ar a son, *Season of Blood* (duais George Orwell don scríbhneoireacht pholaitiúil) agus *Wounds* ina measc, a bhuaigh leabhar neamhfhicsin Éireannach na bliana agus Duais Chuimhneacháin Ewart Biggs. Tá BAFTA agus EMMY buaite aige leis, mar aon le duaiseanna ón Royal Television Society, ón Overseas Press Club of America, chomh maith le OBE a bronnadh air as seirbhísí ar son na hiriseoireachta teilifíse. An leabhar is deireanaí dá chuid ná *The Madness – a Memoir of War, Fear and PTSD* a foilsíodh ar an 10 Samhain 2022.

Photo from the Imaging
Conflict Exhibition

Grianghraf ón Taispeántas
Coimhlint a Íomháú

Photo
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Ref: HE-EW-5811A

Machnamh 100
President of Ireland
Centenary Reflections

Fourth Seminar
Settlements, Schisms and Civil Strife

25 November 2021

Opening Words

President Michael D. Higgins

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

All the years covered by the Decade of Centenaries (1912-1923) are significant in their own way, but 1921 is arguably the most critical of all. It was, after all, the year partition was formalised, the two jurisdictions on this island date from this year. They are a culmination of a set of events which can be traced back to the passage of the Home Rule Act in 1912 and the signing of the Ulster Covenant.

1921 saw the establishment, on the 3rd of May, of what was initially termed 'Southern Ireland' (the 26 counties) and 'Northern Ireland' (the six counties), the island partitioned as a result of the Government of Ireland Act (1920). The Northern Ireland parliament had been set up in June 1921, but with Sinn Féin rejecting the Act it was to be replaced in the South by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 which founded the Irish Free State as a self-governing dominion within the British Empire.

The Treaty provoked one of the most consequential debates on the shape of our country and would become a harbinger of civil war. 1921 also saw British forces and the IRA fight themselves to a standstill in the War of Independence, leading to a truce which allowed for negotiations.

While those are some of the events that made the headlines from 1921, I do realise that on the ground there is an important history that deserves far more prominence than it has received in both Northern Ireland and the Free State. I refer to the efforts in the *"Labourist tradition"*, as Henry Patterson puts it, a tradition that consistently sought to achieve advancement for workers, eliminate spurious divisions and

hold the tide against Sectarianism. This is a topic which must be addressed in more detail in a future *Machnamh 100* seminar.

It is our intention in today's seminar to consider the view 'from below', the people's history of the time in question which attempts to account for historical events from the perspective of people 'on the ground', everyday citizens, as well as those recorded as taking a leading part in the course of events.

Bottom-up history instils a respect for, and attention to, people's lives, culture and traditions. It demonstrates how, under the right circumstances, these aspects provide seeds for mass resistance. It shows how new political cultures, based on ideas and values, can come to emerge and become hegemonic and even at times emancipatory.

This feature of the gathering force of demand for change, including the burgeoning movement of resistance 'from below', is an important element of the historiography of Ireland's Independence Struggle that, while not quite overlooked as a theme, would benefit such a further examination in order to give a fuller, richer, more comprehensive account of the lived experience of people as Ireland went from a War of Independence to Truce to Treaty to Civil War – the settlements, schisms and civil strife that occurred in the years leading up to the foundation of the State. Today this will be our focus as we hold our fourth *Machnamh 100* seminar.

Machnamh 100 is an initiative I have undertaken, as Uachtarán na hÉireann, to build on previous work to allow for reflections on the wider context of events including the War of Independence, Civil War and Partition. I have invited leading scholars with diverse perspectives to share their insights on the context and events of that formative period of a century ago and on the nature of the act of commemoration itself.

My motivation in convening *Machnamh 100* is to address the complexity of the period, to engage in the exploration of influences rather than the assertion of conclusions, and even less the generation of demands. Our efforts are aimed at understanding, and I do believe that making such an effort in relation to the past assists in helping us to comprehend the adjustments we may choose to make in addressing our present complexities and our future challenges.

May I thank Dr John Bowman, historian and broadcaster, for agreeing to chair these seminars and for the excellent job he has done to date, and Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh for his ongoing, invaluable advice and assistance. Today to discuss such themes, in what is the fourth in a series of six *Machnamh 100* seminars, we are fortunate to have with us distinguished scholars. The principal address will be given by Professor Diarmaid Ferriter of University College Dublin, and respondents will be Professor Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast, Professor Mary E. Daly of University College Dublin, Dr Daithí Ó Corráin of Dublin City University, and Professor Margaret Kelleher of University College Dublin.

Our inaugural seminar, held in December 2020, examined the nature and concept of commemoration itself in the contexts of today and of the national and global events of a century ago. Speakers included Professors Ciarán Benson, Michael Laffan, Joep Leerssen, Dr Anne Dolan, and myself, and together we set out our intentions for what we are hoping to achieve from this series.

In February 2021, I hosted a second seminar which focused on Empire, imperial attitudes and responses as they related to circumstances in Ireland. The main reflection was given by Professor John Horne, who provided an overview of the international context of the events in 1920s Ireland, including the fall of empires, and the particular status of the British Empire. There were responses from Dr Niamh Gallagher, Professor Eunan O'Halpin, Professor Alvin Jackson, Dr Marie Coleman, and myself.

The third *Machnamh 100* seminar took place in May 2021, and was entitled 'Recovering Reimagined Futures'. This seminar focused on issues of land, social class, gender and the sources of violence, and speakers included Dr Margaret O'Callaghan, Ms Catriona Crowe, Dr John Cunningham, Dr Caitriona Clear, Professor Linda Connolly, and myself.

I hope you find today's seminar interesting, thought-provoking, perhaps even a further reminder of the value of transacting our shared history on this island.

Fáilte romhaibh uilig.

"OGHLAIGH NA h-EIREANN"
(Irish Republican Army)

General Headquarters,
DUBLIN.

April 27th. 1923

Dept. C.S. Ref. No. Special Army Order.
To O.C.'s Commands and Independent Brigades.

"Suspension of Offensive"

I. In order to give effect to decision of the Government and Army Council embodied in attached Proclamation of this date, you will arrange the suspension of all offensive operations in your area as from noon Monday, April 30th.

2. You will ensure that - whilst remaining on the defensive - all units take adequate measures to protect themselves and their munitions.

Frank Aiken.
Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff.

27 April 1923, Anti-Treaty IRA "Suspension of Offensive" order by Frank Aiken, Chief of Staff.

27 Aibreán 1923, Óglaigh frith-Chonartha na hÉireann, ordú "Fionraí an Ionsaí" ó Frank Aiken, Ceann Foirne.

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Principal Address

Professor Diarmaid Ferriter

University College Dublin

Settlements, Schisms and Civil Strife

Professor Diarmaid Ferriter
An tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter

A Uachtaráin, a cháirde, agus a chomh-staraithe. Is pléisiúr agus onóir mhór dom bheith anseo inniu. Ba mhaith liom mo bhuíochas a chur in iúl don Uachtarán, as cuireadh a thabhairt dúinn bheith anseo inniu, agus as a bhfuil déanta aige, agus atá fós á dhéanamh aige, chun na himeachtaí a tharla céad bliain ó shin a chomóradh agus díospóireacht a spreagadh mar gheall orthu.

In August 1921, Jan Smuts, prime minister of the South African Union, a self-governing dominion of the British Empire, was in London on imperial business. Part of his mission was to try to persuade Éamon de Valera, President of Sinn Féin, to accept dominion status for Ireland within the British Empire, rather than insist on an Irish Republic. De Valera claimed such a question was for the Irish people to decide, and Smuts tellingly responded: 'The British people will never give you this choice. You are next door to them.' Writing from the Savoy Hotel, Smuts also noted, 'To you, the Republic is the true expression of national self-determination. But it is not the only expression.'[1]

1 National Archives of Ireland (NAI), files of Dáil Éireann (DE) 2/262, Jan Smuts to Éamon de Valera, 4 August 1921

Anti-Treaty cartoon, 'The Puppets', 1922

Sketch signed by Cathal McDowell (signed C Mac), dated 6 April 1922. Titled 'The Puppets'. Depicting David Lloyd George, British Prime Minister, with ventriloquist puppet versions of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins on his knee. This sketch shows how the anti-Treaty side felt about the agreement.

Cartún i gcoinne an Chonartha, 'Na Puipéid', 1922

Sceitse arna shíniú ag Cathal McDowell (C Mac an síniú atá air), an 6 Aibreán 1922 an dáta atá air. 'Na Puipéid' an teideal air. Le feiceáil sa chartún tá David Lloyd George, Príomh-Aire na Breataine, taobh le hArt Ó Gríobhtha agus Micheál Ó Coileáin ar a ghlúin mar bhalbháin an bholgchainteora. Léiriú ar dhearcadh iad sin a bhí in éadan an Chonartha ar an gcomhaontú atá sa sceitse seo.

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The issues raised by Smuts returned to haunt de Valera and his colleagues in subsequent months, underlining one of the great divisions of 1921 and 1922; the gulf between those who could find flexibility in defining national self-determination, and those who struggled to or resolutely refused to abandon unqualified republicanism. The settlement represented by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921 forced a degree of introspection many were unused to; a requirement to reflect on what the label 'Irish Republic' meant. For all its robustness as a rallying call, it was not deeply interrogated during the war of independence. As historian Charles Townshend has noted, those who propelled the war were more focused on the idea of separation from Britain 'rather than implementing any concrete political programme'. Ideology does not feature strongly in most accounts of the war and 'the new nationalist leaders did not see it as necessary to analyse the 'self' that was to exercise self-determination.'[2]

When he was interviewed in 1920 by the US journalist and British spy Carl Ackerman, Michael Collins admitted 'no one has ever defined a republic.'[3] By the summer of 1921, in view of the possibility of Anglo-Irish dialogue, deliberate vagueness was also tactical. Prior to the Treaty negotiations, on 16 August, de Valera told the second Dáil that the inauguration of the first Dáil in 1919 had been in response to a vote for freedom and independence rather than for a particular form of government, 'because we are not republican doctrinaires.'[4]

So what precisely were they? De Valera was afforded the title President of the Irish Republic by the Dáil in late August, which was partly a defensive reaction to the assertion of British prime minister David Lloyd George that an Irish republic would not be countenanced by his government. Was de Valera, as he characterised Erskine Childers, 'an intellectual republican'? Or was he, as he put it in September, when defending his decision not to be part of the delegation to negotiate the Treaty, 'the symbol of the Republic' (desiring to be left apart from the negotiators as 'the symbol untouched'?[5]). When de Valera corresponded with Frank Pakenham about this period in 1963, and referred to his 'external association' proposals, by which Ireland would be an independent country within the Commonwealth, associating with it for defence

2 Charles Townshend, *The Republic: The Fight for Irish Independence 1918-23* (London, 2013), pp. 50-55

3 Peter Hart, *Mick: The Real Michael Collins* (London, 2007), p. 293

4 F.S.L.Lyons, 'The Meaning of Independence' in Brian Farrell (ed), *The Irish Parliamentary Tradition* (Dublin, 1973) pp. 223-234

5 Ronan Fanning, *Éamon de Valera: A Will to Power* (London, 2013), p. 105

purposes, and recognising the crown as 'external' head, he observed that he knew such proposals would probably be 'unacceptable to those whose political upbringing had been based on 'separatism''. Was this de Valera distinguishing between himself and 'separatists'?[6]

De Valera's decision to stay in Dublin led to another of the most significant divides of 100 years ago – that between the Sinn Féin negotiators in London and those who remained behind. While Robert Barton, one of the negotiating team, accepted de Valera's argument that he needed to be in a position, uncontaminated by negotiations, to reopen dialogue in case of a breakdown in talks, or to rally the people in the event of resistance, or to act as a kind of 'final court of appeal to avert whatever Britain might attempt to pull over'[7], Barton thought his decision 'should have been reversed by the time we reached the final stage'.[8]

Reaching that final stage was of course tortuous. Conferences, subconferences, prime ministerial skulduggery, exhaustion, theatrics, bluff, the scaring and soothing of Ulster unionists and genuine effort at compromise all played their part. The stakes were high, as was the likelihood of failure. The chairman of the Irish delegation, Arthur Griffith, was under exceptional strain due to the oppressiveness of what de Valera referred to as the 'London atmosphere'. Griffith was ultimately to become impaled on the Ulster cross, and perhaps hammered more nails into it than were necessary. But given the danger of offering hostages to fortune, the fault for the absence of a vigilant enough wordsmith surely lies with de Valera, and the archive of his excuses for not attending does not vindicate his assertion that the reasons for him staying away were 'overwhelming'.[9] He maintained, 'my intention was to be as close almost as If I were in London,' but consider also his parallel observation: 'There was to my mind, always the danger that those involved in the discussions would give to the words and phrases used in any document arising out of them, such special and limited meaning as might not have occurred or been attached to those words and phrases in the discussions themselves.'[10]

Given de Valera's fastidious care with words and phrases, it is clear this was the kind of experience needed in London, rather than just what de Valera referred to as 'Griffith's political experience and his republican aims.'[11] In any case, returning to an earlier question, to what extent did Griffith really have 'republican aims'? Didn't de Valera also insist it was important to have Griffith there because 'he would have the confidence of the moderates'?[12] Griffith was no republican ideologue, and in the words of his biographer Owen McGee, 'took umbrage at any attempt to place labels upon him'; he was largely driven by the need to challenge British economic manipulations and wanted Ireland to look outside the UK to understand its place and potential in the world.[13] In tandem, de Valera made the assertion that while the negotiations were held, at home waited 'a determined people, ready to accept a renewal of the war'.[14] This was a dubious contention; of 2,344 people who died in Ireland due to political violence between January 1917 and December 1921, 919 or 39% were civilians.[15]

The arrogance of de Valera in wanting to stay at home yet fully participate in the negotiations led to growing frustration, as was apparent in correspondence in October and November, including in relation to the powers of the delegates. In late October, Griffith made it clear to the British side he had no authority to accept the Crown but that if they could reach accommodation on the "essential unity" of Ireland, he could recommend some form of association with the crown. De Valera responded, 'we are all here at one that there can be no question' of allegiance to the Crown, and 'If War is the alternative, we can only face it, and I think the sooner the other side is made to realise that the better.' That prompted a thunderous reply from the delegates: 'Obviously, any form of association necessitates discussion of recognition in some form or other of the head of the association,' they wrote; 'Our instructions

6 University College Dublin Archives (UCDA), Papers of Maurice Moynihan, P122/119, De Valera to Frank Pakenham (Lord Longford), 24 February 1963

7 Patrick Murray, 'Obsessive Historian: Éamon de Valera and the policing of his reputation', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy* 101 C, 2001, pp. 37-65

8 Irish Military Archives (IMA), Bureau of Military History Witness Statement 979, Robert C. Barton

9 UCDA, P122/119, De Valera to Pakenham, 24 February 1963

10 Ibid

11 UCDA, Papers of Éamon de Valera, P150/3620, De Valera to Pakenham, 25 February 1963

12 UCDA, P122/119, De Valera to Pakenham, 24 February 1963

13 Owen McGee, *Arthur Griffith* (Dublin, 2015), pp. 347-8 and p. 387

14 UCDA, P122/119, De Valera to Pakenham, 24 February 1963

15 Eunan O'Halpin and Daithí Ó Corráin, *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (New Haven, 2020), pp. 1-25

Portrait of Mary MacSwiney, Scoil Ita c.1930.

Portráid de Mháire Mhic Shuibhne, Scoil Íde timpeall 1930.

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conferred this power of discussion but required, before a decision was made, reference to the members of the Cabinet in Dublin. The powers were given by the Cabinet as a whole and can only be withdrawn or varied by the Cabinet as a whole... We strongly resent, in the position in which we are placed, the interference with our powers. The responsibility, if this interference breaks the very slight possibility there is of settlement, will not, and must not, rest on the plenipotentiaries.'[16]

Ultimately, it was British rather than Irish draft papers that drove the negotiations. The Irish determination to only break off the negotiations if the Ulster question was unresolved was not maintained, as instead the link with the Crown became the focus. Lloyd George's secretary Tom Jones suggested the response of the Irish delegates to a draft Treaty, including proposed new wording about the link with the Crown, was 'so worded as to leave the position far too ambiguous and uncertain'.[17] Lloyd George decided, 'this is of no use.' The irony, however, was that when it came to the clauses relating to the proposed boundary commission to review the border, they too were deliberately vague. Jones had previously spoken to Griffith alone and suggested that if Sinn Féin co-operated with Lloyd George's boundary commission strategy, 'we might have Ulster in before many months had passed.'[18] The impression created of such a commission during the talks, as also recorded by Jones, was that it would involve 'so cutting down Ulster that she would be forced in from economic necessity'.[19]

Meanwhile, James Craig, as prime minister of the new Northern Ireland, spoke of the betrayal of unionists because of the inclusion of the Boundary Commission clause and wrote to Lloyd George after the Treaty was signed, reminding him that he had promised on 25 November that 'the rights of Ulster will be in no way sacrificed or compromised... at our meeting on December 9 you complained that it was only intended to make a slight readjustment of our boundary line, so as to bring in to Northern Ireland loyalists who are now just outside our area and to transfer correspondingly an equivalent number of those having Sinn Féin sympathies to the area of the Irish Free State.' But since then, members of the British government had 'given encouragement to those endeavouring to read into it a different interpretation'.[20] The contention of Griffith that the promised boundary commission amounted to a commitment to plebiscites was naïve and delusional, but it was deliberate ambiguity that allowed for settlement.

Lloyd George, as he remarked mid negotiations, was 'after a settlement', and he got one, but it was a wild exaggeration to maintain, as British historian AJP Taylor later did, that 'a terrible chapter in British history was closed... the Irish question had baffled and ruined the greatest statesmen. Lloyd George conjured it out of existence.' Taylor was correct in contending 'of course times favoured him. Men were bored with the Irish question.'[21] But Lloyd George had not conjured it out of existence; or as he put it himself 'got rid of it'.[22] It had just been kicked down the road, or down a long, 300-mile border.

16 NAI, DE 2/304 (1) Letter from combined delegation to de Valera, 26 October 1921
17 Keith Middlemas (ed), *Thomas Jones, Whitehall Diary, Vol.III: Ireland 1918-1925* (London, 1971), p. 170, 22 November 1921
18 Ibid, pp. 163-4, 7 November 1921
19 Ibid, p. 178, 5 December 1921
20 NAI DE2/304/1/386, Craig to Lloyd George, 14 December 1921
21 A.J.P. Taylor, *English History 1914-1945* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 161
22 Middelmas (ed), *Thomas Jones*, p. 187, 9 December 1921

During the Treaty debates, over the course of 15 days between December 1921 and January 1922, TDs spoke of sovereignty, partition, social justice, legitimacy, betrayal, loyalty, honour, conscience, violence and Ireland's international relations. They did not dwell too deeply on ideology.[23] There were few references to class issues and the TDs were 'broadly representative of the upwardly mobile Catholic middle class'.[24]

The text of the Treaty debates runs to 440,000 words, and these words matter in seeking to understand the political mindsets of a century ago, the depth of convictions, the nature of the schisms and the rationale behind settlements. Cork TD Mary MacSwiney pointedly stated, in contrast to de Valera's assertion in August, that she *was* a 'doctrinaire republican', while Galway TD Frank Fahy asked 'have we just been playing at republicanism?'[25] The divisions between MacSwiney and de Valera also played out in exasperated, sometimes fond and often emotive personal correspondence. De Valera admitted he could not, unlike MacSwiney, 'keep on the plane of Faith and Unreason and maintain that position consciously'.[26] He clearly struggled to make common cause with some of those on the same side of the Treaty divide as him, a reminder that the divisions of 1922 were not just between those who voted for and against the Treaty, but within those two blocs.

Writer George Russell (AE) was later to maintain both sides embraced 'the one-dimensional mind . . . beaten by the hammer of Thor into some mould or shape when they cling to one idea'.[27] Likewise, Historians and political scientists in subsequent decades sought to make much of the chasm. At the time of the fiftieth anniversary of the Treaty, Leland Lyons warned of 'the perils that lie in wait when men fall under the sway of ideology', in contrast to those who, he suggested, in the midst of exhaustion and having won relatively good terms, arguably 'had a moral duty to sign'. His analysis was clearly coloured by the outbreak of the Troubles, or the extent to which 'the dire past' was still overhanging 'the dire present'.[28] Decades later, Tom Garvin's reflections as the 75th anniversary of the Treaty approached were more strident. Pinpointing 1922 as the 'Birth of Irish Democracy', Garvin argued that 'moderate and realistic' nation-builders had triumphed over militant republicans contemptuous of 'democratic principles of legitimacy'. The pro-Treaty leaders were 'unconditional democrats and they killed people for the nascent Irish democracy that they saw menaced by the anti-Treatyites' who saw the Republic as a 'transcendental, moral entity'.[29]

Such a hero and villain school of interpretation is inadequate, a point forcefully underlined by David Fitzpatrick in 2011 when he wisely advised those commemorating the revolutionary period to 'avoid the use of simplistic and exclusive dichotomies, or facile attributions of motive'.[30] His stance, I suspect, was strongly influenced by his sustained engagement with the life of Harry Boland, who he characterised as 'at once a dictator, an elitist, a populist and a democrat . . . whether we consider that he was driven by a laudable conviction in the inalienable rights of nations, or a grotesque delusion, the sincerity of his struggle cannot be impugned.'[31]

Are we too prone to characterising those on opposite sides of the Treaty debates as entrenched in their certainty and righteousness? And what of those who wavered in between, or opted out of the subsequent Civil War? In 2015, Jimmy Wren traced the political progression of some veterans of the 1916 Rising; of 572 people identified as active with the General Post Office garrison, the largest single portion, 41 per cent, were neutral during the Civil War.[32]

Others grew tired of dogmatism and began to feel detached; writer Frank O'Connor, for example, initially resolute (saying of himself 'I rarely thought, I felt'), came to decry those who insisted 'the Irish Republic was still in existence and would remain so, despite what its citizens might think.' Out of the fray, he went into himself deeply, and took advantage of enforced solitude to listen to his 'interior voices'. He did not want

23 Jason K Knrick, *Imagining Ireland's Independence: The debates over the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921* (London, 2006) pp. 175-6; Mícheál Ó Fathartaigh, Liam Weeks (eds.), *The Treaty: Debating and Establishing the Irish State* (Dublin, 2018)

24 Brian Hanley, '"Merely Tuppence Half-Penny Looking down on Tuppence?": Class, the Second Dáil and Irish Republicanism', in Ó Fathartaigh and Weeks, *The Treaty*, pp. 60–70

25 Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: The Sinn Féin Party 1916-1923* (Cambridge, 1999) pp. 355-60

26 UCDA, P150, De Valera to Mary MacSwiney, 11 September 1922

27 Diarmaid Ferriter, *Between Two Hells: The Irish Civil War* (London, 2021) p. 2

28 F.S.L. Lyons, 'The Great Debate' in Farrell (ed), *Irish Parliamentary Tradition*, pp. 246-256

29 Tom Garvin, *1922: The Birth of Irish Democracy* (Dublin, 1996), p. 205

30 David Fitzpatrick, 'Historians and the Commemoration of Irish Conflicts, 1912-23' in John Horne and Edward Madigan (eds), *Towards Commemoration: Ireland in War and Revolution 1912-1923* (Dublin, 2013) pp. 126-134

31 David Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution* (Cork, 2003), pp. 326-7

32 Jimmy Wren, *The GPO Garrison Easter Week 1916: A Biographical Dictionary* (Dublin, 2015), p. 389

martyrdom as too many mythical abstractions reduced life to 'a tedious morality'.[33]

Patriotism was both an expensive currency and a contested, confused concept in Ireland in 1922, and no side of the Treaty divide or the Civil War had a monopoly of it. But O'Connor's reference to what the people 'might think' also raises the question of the extent to which many TDs were 'unrepresentative of the country at large, and some of the republicans came under intense pressure from angry constituents'. Seán MacEntee admitted 'the unanimous wish of Monaghan was that I should vote for the Treaty.'[34] But he did not. Likewise, Harry Boland referred to the 'chorus of approval' for the Treaty from his constituents in Roscommon, but this only heightened, as he saw it, the contrast between his own reliance on 'conscience' and the hypocrisy of his opponents who signed the Treaty 'with a mental reservation that it is not a final settlement'. Mental reservation, however, was also employed by the anti-Treatyites a few years later when entering the Free State Dáil.[35]

Deep emotion was on display because friendships were fraying. Boland, according to Fitzpatrick, 'never abandoned the dream of negotiating the growing political and military split through the restoration of fraternal unity'.[36] Even for those who turned away in disgust, 1922 marked them. Liam Ó Briain, incarcerated for much of the second half of the war of independence, supported the Treaty and took no part in the Civil War, but 1922 left him, in his own words, 'a permanently disappointed man'. We also, I think, need to consider quieter reflections alongside the grandiose rhetoric; Ó Briain was very much under the spell of Arthur Griffith, but as he saw it, 'the unremitting intensity of his patriotism had to be felt in quiet social intercourse to be believed rather than on big public occasions.'[37] Those caught up in the emotion of the Treaty divide did not necessarily do justice to their own complexity, and one of the consequences of the propaganda that hardened was that the questions – and the answers – became too conveniently short and polarised.

And what of the divisions between soldiers and politicians? Cathal Brugha pointedly referred during the Treaty debates to 'the men who count'.[38] Calton Younger's history of the Civil War in 1968 argued 'the Irish Civil War ought to have been fought with words on the floor of the Dáil, and it could have been.'[39] Perhaps it could have been in a fantasy post-Treaty Ireland, where the Dáil was regarded as the prime national and final arbiter, but that regard did not exist in 1922. As Liam Lynch, soon to be chief of staff of the anti-Treaty IRA characterised it, up to 75 per cent of IRA members opposed the Treaty, though not all of them would take up arms against it. They had not been adequately prepared for compromise. In any case, some IRA members regarded politics as moribund, or irrelevant, and saw themselves as 'in charge'. In Peter Hart's words, 'the guerrillas thought of themselves as sovereign . . . they had brought the republic into being . . . nobody else had the right to give it away.'[40] If the Dáil was going to jettison that declared republic, the IRA was not required to be answerable to it and, as Lynch stated emphatically, 'the army had to hew the way to freedom for politics to follow.'[41]

Let us understand rather than dismiss that contention; it was violence that had forced the British to negotiate, and the 1916 rebels had not waited for endorsement from the public.[42] And let us return to the Smuts letter in July and his words about 'choice'. In April 1922, Winston Churchill, as Secretary of State for the Colonies, told the provisional government seeking to implement the Treaty that it 'must assert itself or perish and be replaced by some other form of control'[43]. It was a typical Churchillian bullying flourish and a reminder of the British shadow and threat that hung over Ireland in 1922; that the Civil War was not just an internal Irish matter. With the British-assisted attack on anti-Treaty IRA members in Dublin in June 1922 that began the Civil War, was it Churchill's policy rather than an Irish policy

33 James Matthews, *Voices: A Life of Frank O'Connor* (Dublin, 1983) pp. 29-33

34 Laffan, Resurrection *of Ireland*, p. 356

35 Fitzpatrick, *Harry Boland's Irish Revolution*, pp. 265-8

36 Ibid p.262

37 Liam Ó Briain, *Self-Portrait* (Dublin, 2016; translation by Fran O'Brien and Arthur McGuinness. Originally published in the Irish language in 1950), p. 120

38 Laffan, *Resurrection of Ireland*, p. 359

39 Calton Younger, *Ireland's Civil War* (London, 1968) p. 506

40 Peter Hart, *The IRA and its Enemies, Violence and Community in Cork, 1916-1923* (London, 1998) p. 169

41 Meda Ryan, *The Real Chief: The Story of Liam Lynch* (Cork, 1986) p. 9

42 Laffan, *Resurrection of Ireland*, pp. 350-358; Ronan Fanning, *Fatal Path: British Government and Irish Revolution 1910-1922* (London, 2013) pp. 1-7

43 NAI, Department of Taoiseach, S1322, Winston Churchill to Michael Collins, 12 April 1922

that 'had effectively triumphed'?[44] And could the Irish general election that same month, during which pro-Treaty candidates prevailed, be seen as fully free, given the lingering British pressure?

Many northern nationalists felt abandoned, and the division between south and north was a heavy burden for them to carry, as was the scale of the violence that caused 557 deaths there between July 1920 and July 1922. Arguably, the mental partition predated the physical one; indeed, Charles Townshend's recent history of partition contends 'the Dáil's attitude to Ulster oddly resembled the baffled indifference to Ireland so long evident at Westminster.'[45] As de Valera put it in a private Dáil session on 15 December, in offering his alternative to the Treaty, 'the difficulty is not the Ulster question... as far as we are concerned this is a fight between Ireland and England... I want to eliminate the Ulster question out of it... we will take the same things as agreed on there.'[46]

Leading Ulster Sinn Féiner Cahir Healy came to share the belief that the proposed boundary commission would deliver, but he was also conscious that this rested on thin ice and complained of 'no light or leading' from Dublin, and that none of the Sinn Féin leaders understood 'the Northern situation or the Northern mind'.[47] Within six months he found himself interned on the prison ship *Argenta* in Belfast, feeling tormented and betrayed. Derry's Joseph O'Doherty, active in the IRA there and in Donegal, and Sinn Féin TD for North Donegal, had warned the Sinn Féin executive before the Treaty not to allow unionist control over 'things affecting life, liberty and civil rights' or 'our grievance will be against Ireland generally for her desertion of her highlanders.'[48]

And yet, James Craig, while determined to make the north impregnable, was perhaps less sure privately than his public rhetoric would suggest. Craig met Collins in January 1922 at his own initiative 'to discover his future intentions towards Ulster'. Cabinet papers record that 'For three hours he was alone with Mr Collins and made it clear to him that for the present, an all-Ireland Parliament was out of the question. Possibly in years to come – ten, twenty or fifty years, Ulster might be tempted to join with the South.' Collins said 'he had so many troubles in Southern Ireland that he was prepared to establish cordial relations with NI . . . hoping to coax her into a union later.'[49] From the inception of the Government of Ireland Act to its passage by parliament in late 1920, 'the official line was always that its essential principle was not division but union,' but the Council of Ireland to assist that never, in the words of Townshend, 'cast off its air of forlorn hope.[50] Ulster unionism hardened and failed to adapt or mature, while British governments of different hues deliberately turned blind eyes to the reality of sectarian discrimination in Northern Ireland. The British Labour party bogusly insisted in 1925 that the Irish question was one that was 'practically settled'.[51]

The Civil War had further dissipated hope and enfeebled Ulster republicans; as one of them put it about the prioritisation of southern objectives in 1922: 'we were sadly disappointed . . . we had started something which we could not hope to carry out successfully alone.' Antrim Volunteers during the Civil War, he lamented, 'filtered back to be arrested or allowed to resume their ordinary lives under stringent enemy conditions'.[52] Some, he continued, were 'able to return to their homes later. But the majority were forced to find employment in other parts of Ireland or abroad'. Clearly, the Civil War had compounded their isolation, captured in the stinging assertion 'We never knew if our position was clearly understood in Dublin.'[53]

Leland Lyons was accurate in maintaining in 1972 that 'most people, I suspect, do not live by the hard, clear light of abstract dogmas, explicitly stated.'[54] But some who did were unfairly pilloried, none more so than the women who were militantly anti-Treaty. What was it that prompted Cork Sinn Féin TD Liam de Róiste to record in his diary in late 1922 of Mary MacSwiney: 'I do not regard her or some of the other women engaged in public affairs as normal

44 Paul Bew, *Churchill and Ireland* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 113-31

45 Charles Townshend, *The Partition: Ireland Divided, 1885-1925* (London, 2021) pp. 156-63

46 *Dáil Eireann Debates*, Vol. T, no.3, 15 December 1921

47 Ferriter, *Between Two Hells*, p. 29

48 John Bowman, 'Sinn Féin's perception of the Ulster Question', *The Crane Bag*, 1980/81, Vol.4, no.2, The Northern Issue, pp. 50-56

49 Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), Cabinet Papers (CAB) 4/30, Draft conclusions of cabinet meeting, 26 January 1922.

50 Townshend, *The Partition*, pp. 134-

51 Diarmaid Ferriter, *The Border: The Legacy of a Century of Anglo-Irish Relations* (London, 2019) p. 19

52 Fearghal McGarry, '"Living under an alien despotism", The IRA Campaign in Ulster', in Cecile Gordon (ed.), *The Military Service (1916–23) Pensions Collection: The Brigade Activity Reports* (Dublin, 2018), pp. 84–108

53 ibid

54 Lyons, 'The Meaning of Independence' p. 225

beings, with normal human mentality. They are monomaniacs... there is a moral sore in the soul of Ireland.'[55] Sheila Humphreys, one of the Civil War prisoners released after a thirty-one-day hunger strike, left us with this image: 'we were flattened. We felt the Irish public had forgotten us. The tinted trappings of our fight were hanging like rags about us.'[56]

Lyons also approvingly quoted Kevin O'Higgins's assertion during the Treaty debates that the welfare of the people 'must take precedence of political creed and theories'.[57] But did it? For academic Liam Ó Briain there was some comfort to be found in what be described as '42 years of peaceful professorship'.[58] He was one of the fortunate ones, and here is where one of the great divisions occurs; for those without a stake in the new State and on the losers' side, a bleakness calcified and for far too many the Civil War's afterlife was brutally disordered and fractured at a time when 'an insecure and inexperienced elite found itself presiding over a population that wanted unheroic things'.[59]

This is where the voluminous files of the Military Service Pension archive become so illuminating about both a well-meaning effort to compensate those bereft, but also the cruel lotteries in operation. A government memorandum in 1957 revealed that 82,000 people applied for pensions under the main 1924 and 1934 pensions acts; of these, 15,700 were successful and 66,300 were rejected. How to define active service remained contested and contentious. Consider, too, the fate of those bereaved and the gulf they felt existed between the cause that had been died for and the reality of their post 1922 existence.

Women faced additional barriers. Nora Martin, a leading light in Cumann na mBan in Cork, castigated the exclusively male overseers of the pensions process for failing to do justice to the claims of Cumann na mBan veterans: 'They risked their jobs, their homes and their lives . . . in justice to them, one woman at least should be on that advisory board . . . lawyers and civil servants, no matter how sympathetic, can never visualise the feelings of these women during the period 1920 to 1924.'[60] Martin was writing on behalf of Ellen Carroll, active with Cumann na mBan in Cork during the Civil War through intelligence and dispatch work which compromised her health due to regular soakings. Carroll was diagnosed with TB in 1924 and spent three months in a sanatorium. She was described, by end of the war, as 'a complete wreck'.[61] She was turned down for a disability pension and eventually, after an appeal, received a paltry Grade E service pension in 1943. Working in a sorting office in Shepherd's Bush as London endured the Blitz, her letters to Nora Martin, under whose direction she had served in Cumann na mBan, depicted her mental demise: 'From hour to hour you are only waiting for death, it is just hell on earth. I must say I am very unlucky and think I am stuck over here for this, but I may thank the Irish government for that. I could be home now if they granted me that service pension.'[62]

In 1942, the list of the contemporary positions of John O'Neill's fellow 1922 anti-Treaty IRA column members in Cork made for stark reading:

'Dead'

'Dead'

'Dead'

'USA'

'USA'

'USA'

'USA'

'Dead.'[63]

Following an appeal, O'Neill was awarded a Grade D military pension of just under £80 for almost eight years' active service, and eventually, a disability pension of £150 p.a. In 1935 he reminded fellow Civil War veteran Tom Hales, elected a Fianna Fáil TD for West Cork in 1933, that 'From 1916 on I was never able to sleep one night in my own home until 1923.' Ten years after the end of the Civil War, and only seven years

55 Ferriter, *Between Two Hells*, p. 86

56 Margaret Ward, *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: Women and Irish Nationalism* (London, 1995) p. 198

57 Lyons, 'The Great Debate', p. 256

58 Ó Briain, *Self-Portrait*, p. 121

59 Garvin, *1922*, p. 62

60 Irish Military Archives (IMA), Military Service Pensions Collection (MSPC), 34 REF 39909, Ellen Carroll, Letter of Nora Martin to Army Pensions Board, 12 October 1942

61 Ibid, Nora Martin to Army Pensions Board, 28 April 1937

62 Ibid, Ellen Carroll to Nora Martin, September 1940

63 IMA, MSPC, 34 REF 9778, John O'Neill, F. Begley to Office of the Referee, 11 November 1942

after his marriage, now a father of three children, John was suffering 'breathlessness on exertion, weakness, spitting of blood and inability to do work of any kind' and had 'severe heart disease'. But he still had to engage in protracted correspondence with the minister for defence: 'I am a complete wreck, living with 3 children on 10 acres of ground . . . I ask you in the name of honour, in fair play and as far as charity's sake.'[64] Fourteen months after a medical examination had established 100 per cent disability, a decision had still not been reached and he wondered, 'How in God's name can I pay my doctor?' At the age of 49, John O'Neill died of 'chronic endocarditis, cirrhosis of liver. Disease attributable to service in IRA.'[65]

The shadow cast by the death of Edward Stapleton, a National Army soldier killed at Knocknagoshel in Kerry in March 1923, was also distressing. From Lower Gloucester Street in Dublin, he was a foreman at Eason's bookseller. His mother, Julia, aged 66, in poor health and having lost two other children to illness, was trying to survive on her daughter-in-law Mary's allowance, and living with her and her two infant grandsons. In May 1924 Julia secured a weekly allowance of £1 while Mary was awarded £90 per annum with a yearly allowance of £24 for each child until they reached eighteen. There was yet further tragedy in 1926 when Edward and Mary's youngest son died aged five. The Army Finance Office made sure to recoup the overpayment of £1.17s.5d. that had been made for the month after the child's death.[66]

As he faced death in the 1950s, IRA veteran Ernie O'Malley recorded that the British were no longer his enemies: 'each man finds his enemy within himself.'[67] He was able to explore and write about that personal interior deeply, helped by an annual military service pension of £258 from 1934 and an annual disability pension of £120 which was hard earned. The National army soldier killed during O'Malley's capture in Dublin in 1922 was Peter McCartney, the eldest of nine children aged from ten to twenty-three at the time of his death, from a farm comprising thirty acres of poor land in Leitrim.

In 1923, his father Patrick was awarded a £40 gratuity for Peter's death; as a self-described 'poor man', he pleaded in 1925, 1926 and 1927 for more when he had 'no employment . . . people having plenty of money seldom think of the poor . . . my son left his employment for the freedom of the State.'[68] As an 86 year-old in 1955, Patrick was still corresponding with the pension authorities, to be told the £40 from 1923 'was in full and final settlement of your claim'.[69]

We need to appreciate and understand the depth of conviction that drove people in Ireland in the early 1920s, but also how, for many, the idealism became so cruelly compromised.

64 Ibid, John O'Neill to Tom Hales, 3 January 1935 and O'Neill to Minister for Defence, 29 November 1933

65 Ibid, O'Neill to Department of Defence, 5 April 1934 and posthumous medical report on John O'Neill, 24 October 1944

66 IMA, MSPC, 3D 70, Edward Stapleton, Mary Stapleton to Army Finance Office, 19 July 1926 and Army Finance Office to Mary Stapleton, 11 August 1926

67 Cormac O'Malley and Nicholas Allen (eds), *Broken Landscapes: Selected Letters of Ernie O'Malley 1924-1957* (Dublin, 2011), p. 363

68 IMA, MSPC, W2D164, Peter McCartney, Patrick McCartney to W.T. Cosgrave, 7 February 1927

69 Ibid, Patrick McCartney to Army Pensions Board, 9 May 1955

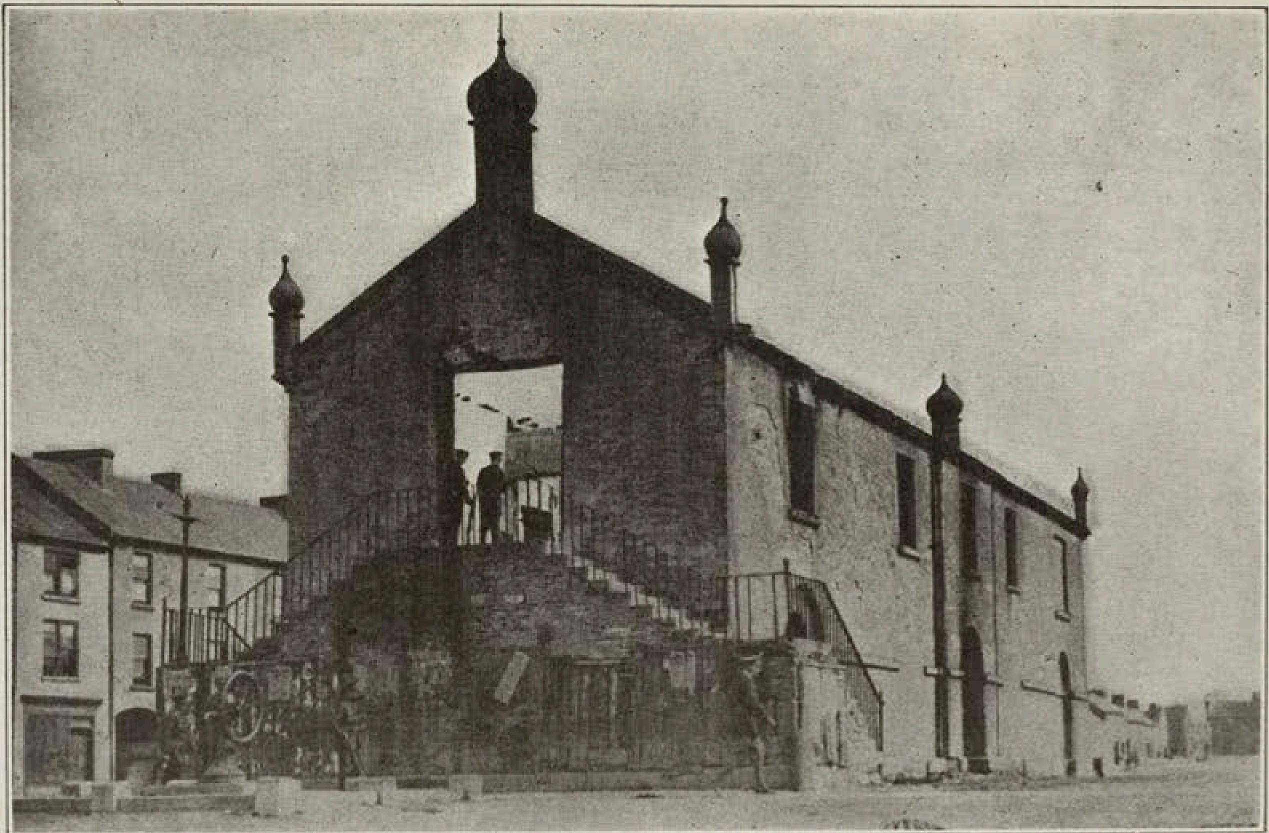

Photo EXHIBIT 22 *International*

TEMPLEMORE REPRISAL. TOWN HALL BURNED BY IMPERIAL BRITISH FORCES, UNDER CAPTAIN BEATTIE, WHO PERISHED IN THE FIRE.

Photo from the Imaging Conflict Exhibition

Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Respondent

Professor Fearghal McGarry

Queen's University Belfast

Ireland's Global Revolution

Professor Fearghal McGarry
An tOllamh Fearghal McGarry

Professor Ferriter began today's seminar by raising two questions central to understanding the conflicts and settlements of 1921-22. Why were so many Irish revolutionaries committed to a republic rather than some other form of independence? And what did they understand the 'Irish Republic' to mean? Thinking about how the world was changing in the aftermath of the First World War provides useful insights into both of these questions. I want to develop three arguments here. First, that the global context is central to understanding the rhetoric, aims, and strategies of Irish republicans during the Revolution.[1] Second, that international developments shaped the settlements imposed on Ireland in important ways. Third, that these global influences, particularly the impact of the First World War on ideas about sovereignty and empire, have contemporary relevance as we commemorate these centenaries.

Easter 1916 was central to the emergence of republicanism as a popular movement. The legacy of the rebellion, as much emotional as ideological, saw the cause of the republic unite almost every faction of advanced nationalism by 1917 when Sinn Féin adopted the republic as its goal. Despite a long tradition of republican thought among Irish insurrectionaries, the decision to proclaim a republic in 1916 owed much to the international wartime context, as well as the example provided by the United States (which five of the Easter Proclamation's seven signatories had visited). When the Cumann

1 This paper draws on research from the UK AHRC–funded project, 'A Global History of Irish Revolution, 1916–1923' (2017–2021) led by historians at Queen's University Belfast (myself and Dr Darragh Gannon) and the University of Edinburgh (Prof Enda Delaney; Dr Brian Hanley; and Dr Patrick Mannion) in collaboration with the Irish Studies Program at Boston College (Prof Rob Savage). Project publications include Patrick Mannion and Fearghal McGarry (eds), *The Irish Revolution. A Global History* (New York, 2022); 'A Global History of the Irish Revolution', a special issue of *Irish Historical Studies* 44/165 (2020); and Enda Delaney and Fearghal McGarry (eds), *The Irish Revolution 1919–21: A Global History* (Dublin, 2019).

Mary Manning Walsh

Republican protester, Mary Manning Walsh, questioned by American policeman, Captain Robert Emmet Doyle, Washington, D.C., 2020.

Mary Manning Walsh

An t-agóideoir poblachtach Mary Manning Walsh, á ceistiú ag póilín Meiriceánach, an Captaen Robert Emmet Doyle, Washington DC, 2020.

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na mBan activist Min Ryan asked Tom Clarke, the most senior of the rebellion's organisers, in the General Post Office why the Rising had gone ahead under such unfavorable circumstances, Clarke had told her that 'a rebellion was necessary to make Ireland's position felt at the Peace Conference so that its relation to the British Empire would strike the world.' When she asked him, 'Why a republic'? Clarke explained: 'You must have something striking in order to appeal to the imagination of the world.'[2] Both international events and global opinion were central to the thinking of Irish revolutionaries from the outset of their struggle for independence.

Although it seemed quixotic to many in 1916, the Republic was an idea whose time had come by 1919 when, following the collapse of the great empires, republics rapidly become the political norm across Europe. Sinn Féin, as Diarmaid has noted, did not outline a clear sense of what the Irish Republic might entail but it did propose a remarkably clear strategy of how it would be achieved. The party identified four means to secure a republic in its 1918 election manifesto: abstention from Westminster; political agitation; the establishment of an Irish parliament (leading, in time, to the development of a republican counter-state); and an appeal for recognition to the Paris Peace Conference.

Sinn Féin's appeal to a Peace Conference that had declared its intention to organise 'the future of the Nations of the world . . . on the principle of government by consent of the governed' was astute.[3] Republicans and imperialists alike understood the potentially incendiary implications of President Wilson's 'Fourteen Points' speech which seemed to herald a new world order based on national self-determination and the rule of international law rather than military might. Towards the end of the war, Britain and France had even felt it necessary to affirm – albeit insincerely – that governments should derive 'their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous population'.[4] In demanding a republic, Irish revolutionaries believed that history was on their side. In the weeks prior to the 1918 general election, republics were proclaimed in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Sinn Féin's election leaflets highlighted how its demands had been achieved by other peoples: 'Poland free! An object lesson for Ireland. Poland is now Sinn Féin.'[5]

2 Quoted in Fearghal McGarry, *The Rising. Ireland: Easter 1916* (Oxford, 2016), p. 154.

3 Sinn Féin standing committee, 'The Manifesto of Sinn Féin as prepared for circulation for the General Election of December 1918' (available at: https://celt.ucc.ie/published/E900009/index.html).

4 Kristian Coates Ulrichsen, 'The British Occupation of Mesopotamia, 1914–1922', *Journal of Strategic Studies* 30/2, (2007), p. 366.

5 Sinn Féin, 'Poland Free' (1918), National Library of Ireland, ILB 300 p 1 [Item 33] (https://catalogue.nli.ie/Record/vtls000088562).

Declaring independence, as republicans did when the Dáil met in January 1919 was one thing: achieving it another. Whereas the Irish Parliamentary Party's efforts to win self-government under John Redmond had centred on Westminster, Irish republicans saw international recognition as the key to achieving independence. The Irish Declaration of Independence, intended for a global as much as an Irish audience, demanded 'the recognition and support of every free nation in the world'. The Dáil's Message to the Free Nations of the World called 'upon every free nation to support the Irish Republic by recognising Ireland's national status and her rights to its vindication at the Peace Congress'.[6]

In retrospect, what is striking about early 1919, the period we now recall as the beginning of the War of Independence, was the extent to which propaganda and politics – rather than violence – were central to republican strategy. For many in Sinn Féin, the killing of policemen by Irish Volunteers at Soloheadbeg, on the same day as the Dáil first met, came as an unwelcome distraction from the performance orchestrated at the Mansion House before an audience of international press correspondents. But in practical (as opposed to propaganda) terms, the Peace Conference strategy was clearly flawed. The 'Big Four' powers that determined its outcome were never likely to side – against one of their own – with a movement that had identified its cause with that of its 'gallant' German allies in 1916. Self-determination, moreover, was intended for the oppressed peoples of the defeated empires rather than those of its victors.

So, rather than the Poles or the Czechs, the position of the Irish was in some ways more analogous to that of non-European anti-colonial nationalists who were, like the Irish, excluded from the Peace Conference. With their hopes initially raised – and then dashed – by what Erez Manela has described as the 'Wilsonian moment', Indian and Egyptian revolutionaries (the countries with which Ireland was most frequently compared abroad) embarked on similar campaigns.[7] They rejected offers of limited self-government, protested at home and abroad, and drew on Wilsonian rhetoric to articulate longstanding grievances in drawn-out campaigns that eventually led to partial independence.

Surveying Irish efforts within this context, what is perhaps most striking is the extent to which similar strategies were used by nationalist revolutionaries. For example, it was not only the Irish but also the Koreans who declared independence; established a republican government; appealed to the Peace Conference, sent revolutionary diplomats to Washington; mobilised diasporic support; issued revolutionary bonds in the United States, and organised presidential tours across America.[8] What most marked out the Irish among these other movements was the relative size and influence of its diaspora, a product of the post-Famine migration that had scattered almost two million people across the globe, but that was concentrated in the emerging global superpower that was the United States. Consequently, the Irish were perhaps the best connected and most influential of the international revolutionary movements frustrated by their failure to secure recognition at Paris. Not for nothing did President Wilson later blame the Irish for wrecking his presidency when he failed to win domestic political support for American membership of the League of Nations.[9]

How did international factors shape the settlements that brought the Irish conflict to an end? I would argue that the way we remember and commemorate the independence struggle places more emphasis than is warranted on the domestic and military dimensions of a campaign that prioritised political struggle, revolutionary diplomacy, and international propaganda. As Michael Collins advised the Dáil's representative in Rome, 'Real progress is much more to be estimated by what is thought abroad than by what is thought at home.'[10] The commander-in-chief in Ireland, General Neville Macready, similarly acknowledged that 'This propaganda business is the strongest weapon [Sinn Féin] has.'[11]

Military events within Ireland, such as the sacking of Cork by the Black and Tans, were as

6 The Message to the Free Nations of the World and Declaration of Independence are included in the first volume of *Documents on Irish Foreign Policy* (available at: https://www.difp.ie/). 21 Jan. 1919, *Minutes and Proceedings of the First Dáil of the Republic of Ireland 1919-1921* (Dublin, 1994).

7 Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford, 2007).

8 Fearghal McGarry, '"The Ireland of the Far East?" The Wilsonian Moment in Korea and Ireland', in Mannion and McGarry (eds), *Irish Revolution*, pp. 61-92.

9 Robert Schmuhl, *Ireland's Exiled Children: America and the Easter Rising* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 115–116.

10 Michael Collins to George Gavan Duffy, 18 June 1921, quoted in Peter Hart, *Mick: The Real Michael Collins* (London, 2005), p. 274.

11 Macready to General Sir Peter Strickland, 1 Jan. 1921, quoted in M. A. Doherty, Kevin Barry and the Anglo-Irish Propaganda War', *Irish Historical Studies*, 32/126 (2000), p. 225.

significant for their international consequences as their impact at home. British actions in Ireland provoked dismay and outrage (including within England), whilst international press coverage devastated Britain's global reputation. The mobilisation of the Irish diaspora ensured that events at home resonated across the world, with the result that the 'Irish question' often transcended narrow ethnic politics. One striking example was the impact of the hunger strike by Terence MacSwiney who became a global icon whose cause prompted international protests and strikes involving anti-imperial, anti-colonial, socialist, suffrage, and trade-union movements. Despite considerable Irish-American racism, and the tendency of some Irish republicans to base their claim to self-government in part on their 'whiteness', such displays of solidarity included prominent black-rights activists such as W. E. B. Du Bois and Marcus Garvey (as has been explored by scholars such as Brian Hanley, David Brundage and Miriam Nyhan Grey).[12]

Imperialists also believed that the Irish question was rooted in broader struggles. Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Imperial General Staff, linked the challenge from Irish republicans with labour unrest in Britain, Bolshevism, and anti-colonial agitation. Britain, he noted in his diary, 'is fighting New York & Cairo & Calcutta & Moscow who are only using Ireland as a tool & lever against England, & nothing but determined shooting on our part is any use'.[13] Imagined or real, these connections shaped British decision-making as to how the Irish war should be conducted and concluded, with the implications for imperial rule in Egypt and India frequently cited by figures such as Wilson who declared: 'If we lose Ireland we have lost the Empire.'[14]

For British politicians, as Maurice Walsh has noted, among 'the most discomfiting feature of events in Ireland was that tactics of imperial repression usually concealed were now being documented and described in the daily press.'[15] The condemnation of the Black and Tans' reprisals, by conservative as well as liberal British newspapers, prompted concerns about the morality and efficacy of David Lloyd George's Irish policy, undermining his government's resolve to sustain its counter-insurrectionary campaign despite increasing military success in the final months of the conflict. An awareness that it was losing the propaganda war, not least in America, helps to explain the British government's humiliating decision to open formal negotiations with the leaders of a movement that it had previously denounced as a 'murder gang'.

The settlements that followed were similarly shaped by international pressures and imperial calculations. The fateful decision to devolve political power from London to a Unionist-controlled northern state (rather than merely excluding Ulster from an Irish settlement) resulted, in part, from a desire to be seen to conform to the gospel of self-determination. Like the Treaty settlement to follow, partition was also shaped by concerns about other troublesome parts of the empire such as Palestine and Egypt. New political structures such as the League of Nations mandate were developed by the victors of the First World War to contain the aspirations for independence of nationalists in former colonies within reconfigured imperial frameworks.

Wider shifts in liberal political thought, as Arie Dubnov has observed, also shaped the appeal of partition as a means for resolving national differences within imperial structures.[16] The 'un-mixing of peoples' through the creation of national self-governing states was regarded positively by the international community, as was demonstrated by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne where the redrawing of borders was accompanied by mass population transfers. The perceived success of Irish partition influenced Britain's partition plans in Palestine and later, with horrific consequences, in India. Only after the Second World War was it widely conceded that partition was a violent process that intensified rather than resolved conflict over identities and the mistreatment of minorities within partitioned states.

The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 was similarly the product of international developments and imperial considerations. Pressure from the United States, and from sympathetic dominions within the British Empire, contributed to London's decision to concede an Irish dominion, a form of statehood defined in the Treaty's first article of agreement as having 'the same constitutional status' as Canada, Australia, New

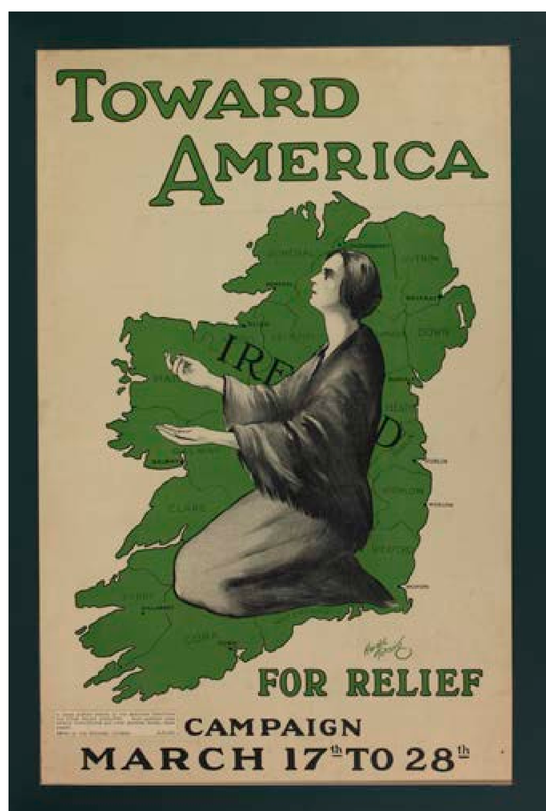
12 On race, see Bruce Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race* (Princeton: NJ, 2012). Essays by Brundage and Nyhan Grey on Du Bois and Garvey can be found in Mannion and McGarry (eds), *Irish Revolution*. See also Brian Hanley, 'Why Irish revolutionaries had to go global' (https://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/index.php/articles/why-irish-revolutionaries-had-to-go-global).

13 Keith Jeffery, 'The Road to Asia, and the Grafton Hotel, Dublin: Ireland in the "British World"', *Irish Historical Studies*, 36/142 (2008), p. 252.

14 Quoted in Kevin Kenny, 'The Irish in the Empire,' in Kevin Kenny (ed.), *Ireland and the British Empire* (Oxford, 2004), p. 91.

15 Maurice Walsh, *The News from Ireland: Foreign Correspondents and the Irish Revolution* (London, 2008), p. 104.

16 Arie Dubnov and Laura Robson (eds), *Partitions: A Transnational History of Twentieth-Century Territorial Separatism* (Stanford: CA, 2019).



‘Toward America for Relief’, c. 1920-21

Poster issued by The American Committee For Irish Relief between 1920 and 1921. Such posters were very widely distributed all over America during those years. Titled ‘Toward America for Relief’. Campaign from 17 to 28 March. Depicting Ireland with an Irish woman on her knees reaching out towards America. Artwork by Harald Toksuig.

‘Go Meiriceá chun Fóirithinte’, c. 1920-21

Póstaer a d’eisigh Coiste Mheiriceá ar son na Fóirithinte in Éirinn idir 1920 agus 1921. Scaiptí póstaeir mar seo go forleathan ar fud Mheiriceá sna blianta sin. An teideal air ná ‘Go Meiriceá chun fóirithinte’. Feachtas ón 17 go dtí an 28 Márta. Tá Éire á léiriú ann mar mhná Éireannach ar a glúine agus a lámha á síneadh aici i dtreo Mheiriceá. Saothar ealaíne le Harald Toksuig.

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Zealand, and South Africa. As Diarmaid has noted, imperial figures such as the South African statesman Jan Smuts, through their influence on King George V, helped to facilitate the Treaty settlement.

Through the leverage provided by its diaspora, Irish republicans influenced Britain’s Irish policy. Explaining to British MPs the necessity for the unpopular concession of dominion status to Ireland, Winston Churchill noted how Britain’s ‘great interests in India and in Egypt’, the Dominions, and the United States had been damaged ‘by the loud insistent outcry raised by the Irish race all over the world’.[17] In his influential Caird Hall speech advocating a Treaty that extended his government ‘to the utmost limit possible’, Churchill argued that it would ‘not only be a blessing in itself inestimable, but with it would be removed the greatest obstacle which has ever existed to Anglo-American unity . . . far across the Atlantic Ocean we should reap a harvest sown in the Emerald Isle’.[18]

Both the king’s speech at the opening of the Northern Irish parliament and the British debates on the Anglo-Irish Treaty demonstrate, as Heather Jones has observed, that a shift in British imperial ideas was occurring not just in – but through – Ireland.[19] As George V noted during his visit to Belfast: ‘everything which touches Ireland finds an echo in the remotest parts of the Empire.’[20] The Irish were negotiating self-government at a time of rapid transition for the British Empire. For many Irish revolutionaries, political developments since Easter 1916 had made the notion of an oath of allegiance to a British monarch unthinkable because a particular form of state, the republic, had become synonymous with full independence. But for many British politicians, the role of the monarch as the crucial element that would bind together the community of nations that was transitioning from an Empire ruled by London to a less hierarchical ‘Commonwealth of Nations’ (a term whose first legal use occurs in the Anglo-Irish Treaty) was too important to allow for compromise on the oath. These transnational

17 Quoted in Seán Donnelly, ‘Ireland in the Imperial Imagination: British Nationalism and the Anglo-Irish Treaty’, *Irish Studies Review*, 27/4 (2019), p. 496.

18 David Stafford, *Oblivion or Glory: 1921 and the Making of Winston Churchill* (New Haven: CT, 2019), pp. 216–217.

19 Heather Jones, ‘Wars, Dominions, and Monarchy: The Transnational Imperial Context of Ireland’s Revolution, 1916–1922’, in Mannion and McGarry, *Irish Revolution*, p. 271.

20 *Belfast Newsletter*, 23 June 1921, p. 9.

developments in political thought help to explain the difficulty of fashioning a Treaty settlement acceptable to both Irish republicans and British imperialists, and the drift to Civil War that ensued as a result.

Ultimately, Britain's insistence on the role of the monarch and Empire in the Treaty proved a pyrrhic victory, delegitimising in the eyes of many Irish republicans the Irish Free State established in 1922. By 1937, both Treaty and Free State had been scrapped: ironically, this was achieved because of the success with which the Irish Free State had worked with other 'restless dominions' to assert its legislative independence within the Commonwealth. There remains a tragic dimension to these developments given that the Treaty debates centred on whether that settlement would forever lock Ireland into imperial subjugation or permit a peaceful evolution to full independence.

What relevance does Ireland's global revolution have for commemoration? Exploring the Irish conflict beyond the island emphasises the importance of political ideas in shaping the Revolution, something that is less evident from historiographical and commemorative focus on domestic and military dimensions of the War of Independence. It reminds us how the Irish question, for a brief period, galvanised international attention, symbolising as it did broader political shifts as imperial and colonial world orders slowly gave ground to more democratic and egalitarian forms of statehood.

Finally, consideration of the importance of ideas such as self-determination and empire should complicate commemoration given that the legacy of these conflicts, in the form of a partitioned island with a contested border, continues to shape our present rather than constituting a past that can be safely consigned to history. Underlying much of the commemorative strategy of the Irish State is the idea of the Decade of Centenaries as marking a tragic period of 'shared history', shaped by people from 'multiple identities and traditions', requiring an egalitarian remembrance.[21] Although well-meaning, commemorations that prioritise present-day reconciliation over interrogation of the political ideas and agency that shaped the struggles and enmities of the revolutionary era may end up contributing little to either reconciliation or historical understanding.

Muriel MacSwiney widow of Terence, arrives in New York, December 1920

Muriel McSwiney Uasal ag sroicheadh Nua Eabhrac, mí na Nollag 1920.

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21 See, for example, Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, 'Decade of Centenaries Programme' (n.d.), www.decadeofcentenaries.com. For a critique of 'shared history', see Fearghal McGarry, 'The Politics of Pluralism: Historians and Easter 2016 *Éire-Ireland*', 57/1&2 (2022).

Respondent

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Coming to Grips with Reality: The Treaty, Civil War, and the Irish Free State

Professor Mary E. Daly

An tOllamh Mary E. Daly

Before exploring the difficult and divisive issues relating to the 1921 Treaty and Civil War, it may be helpful to reflect for a moment on the remarkable achievement of Dáil Éireann in securing a ceasefire and a Treaty with Britain, which was at that time one of the most powerful nations in the world. The very limited devolution that was offered in the 1914 Home Rule Act would have left an Irish Home Rule parliament with significantly less power than the current Scottish Assembly. By contrast the 1921 Treaty gave the new Irish State Dominion Status, similar to that enjoyed by Canada, and at a time when the Dominions were in the process of demanding and securing much greater autonomy, culminating in the 1931 Statute of Westminster.[1] The Treaty also granted the Irish State full fiscal freedom: the freedom to set taxes, including protective tariff and import quotas. This concession was of immense importance for Arthur Griffith, the head of the Irish delegation because for decades he had argued that Ireland should have the power to develop its native industries by means of tariff protection.

The 1914 Home Rule Act and the 1921 Treaty both evaded the thorniest issue in British-Irish relations: Ulster, leaving the long-term settlement in terms of borders or all-island governance arrangements to be determined later. But it can be argued that the remarkable success of the Irish campaign, both domestically and internationally – a topic covered in Fearghal McGarry's contribution – may have led to hubris: a belief that anything was possible, including an

1 David Harkness, *The Restless Dominion: The Irish Free State and the British Commonwealth of Nations, 1921-1931*, (London: Macmillan, 1969) The 1931 Statute of Westminster abolished the right of the British Parliament to legislate for the Dominions.

Anti-Treaty Women

Peace meeting at Mansion House, Dublin: left to right, Mrs. Tom Clarke, Countess Markievicz, Mrs. O' Callaghan and Mrs. Pearse

Mná in éadan an Chonartha

Cruinniú síochána i dTeach an Ard-Mhéara, Baile Átha Cliath: ó chlé: Caitlín Bean Uí Chléirigh, Constance Markievicz, Kathleen O'Callaghan agus Margaret Pearse

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Irish Republic, however that was defined. Alvin Jackson suggests that in the Treaty negotiations 'The Irish to some extent became victims of their own aspirations.'[2]

All negotiations involve compromise. De Valera appears to have recognised that some compromise would be needed if a settlement was to be agreed with Britain. In an interview that he gave in February 1920, while in the United States, to the British Liberal newspaper, *Westminster Gazette*, he countered the fears expressed by some US Congressmen, that an independent Ireland would represent a threat to Britain's security, by suggesting that Britain could apply a variant of the American Monroe Doctrine to Ireland, stating that any foreign intervention in Ireland would be regarded by Britain as a hostile act.[3] This would have required an independent Ireland to accept the status of permanent neutrality.[4] De Valera's proposal of External Association: that an independent Irish Republic would freely associate with the British Commonwealth and recognise the Crown as head of the Commonwealth, was a further attempt to reconcile Irish aspirations for independence, with British demands that Ireland must continue to recognise the Crown as its Head of State, but de Valera sat on the side-lines during the Treaty negotiations, and it is not clear that the Irish delegation fully comprehended or accepted the External Association option.

There is no indication that the members of Dáil Éireann or the rank and file of the IRA were aware that the negotiations would involve some compromises by the Irish delegation, and neither was there any detailed discussion among the Dáil ministry as to what form these compromises might take. Although Dáil Éireann had existed as a legislative assembly from January 1919, meetings were irregular, and poorly attended.[5] For much of its existence members were in prison, on the run, or the Dáil was proscribed, but it would have been possible to debate these topics after the Truce in the summer of 1921, and the Dáil did hold private sessions where this could have happened.[6] Such sessions might have injected a much-needed measure of realism into expectations for the forthcoming negotiations. There were many signals that Britain would not countenance a republic, and that it would insist on residual ties to the Crown and to the Empire. As Fearghal McGarry has explained, Britain regarded these ties as essential, not just for British-Irish relations but to protect the Empire. There was also a need to recognise that the Irish delegates were facing a team of experienced statesmen, whose negotiating skills had been honed at the Paris Peace Talks.

2 Alvin Jackson, *Ireland, 1798-1998*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 259.

3 Michael Doorley, *Irish-American Diaspora Nationalism. The Friends of Irish Freedom, 1916-1935*, (Dublin: Four Courts, 2005), pp. 116-8.

4 Joseph M. Curran, *The Birth of the Irish Free State, 1921-23*, (University of Alabama Press, 1980), pp. 44-45.

5 Mary E. Daly, 'The First Dail', in John Crowley, Donal O Drisceoil and Mike Murphy (eds), *Atlas of the Irish revolution*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2017, pp. 334-9.

6 Thomas P. O'Neill, (ed*), Private Sessions of Second Dáil: Minutes of proceedings 18 August 1921 to 14 September 1921 and report of debates*, (Dublin, 1972).

Britain, unlike Ireland, had determined in advance, through extensive Cabinet discussions, what they were prepared to concede, and what issues were not negotiable.[7] Furthermore, while Dáil Éireann and the struggle for independence had secured widespread international attention and sympathy, Russia, at the time a pariah state, was the only country that had recognised the Irish Republic. The failure to have Irish independence placed on the agenda of the Paris Peace Conference indicated that there was little prospect of securing wider international recognition, let alone support, for an Irish Republic, established in defiance of Britain.

Symbols mattered to both sides. For Britain the Crown was paramount, though by this time, the precise nature of the monarch's authority in political matters, was ill-defined, but the symbolism mattered. Likewise, the Republic – equally ill-defined – but a term that conjured up the sacrifices of the 1916 leaders – was non-negotiable for many Dáil deputies, and members of the IRA and Cumann na mBan. The committee charged with drafting a constitution for the Irish Free State tried to reconcile these conflicting principles by excluding references to the oath of allegiance and the Treaty from the constitution and by limiting the role of the monarchy to Ireland's relationship with the British Commonwealth.[8] Article 3 stated that 'All powers of government are derived from the people of Ireland. All persons who exercise the authority of Saorstát Éireann, whether legislative, executive or judicial do so by virtue of the power conferred on them by the people.'[9] When the Provisional Government submitted a draft of the proposed Constitution to the British authorities on 27 May 1922 the British Prime Minister Lloyd George described it as 'purely republican in character and but thinly veiled'.[10] The negotiations between British and Irish delegations over the draft Constitution, which lasted for almost three weeks, reprised many of the arguments of the Treaty negotiations. The revised Constitution, which was published on 16 June 1922, included a reference to the oath of allegiance and other symbols of British authority, that Britain had insisted should be inserted. Cahillane claims that these insertions 'essentially tainted the document in the eyes of the anti-Treaty side'.[11]

The irony is that within a decade almost all the residual powers of the British government and the monarchy over the Irish Free State had vanished, with the enactment of the 1931 Statute of Westminster, and in the 1940s, an independent Indian Republic was established which remained a member of the Commonwealth – a case of External Association for Slow Learners (to mirror the terminology of the late Seamus Mallon).

Leaving Ulster aside, the clause in the Treaty which had the greatest potential to constrain an independent Ireland, was Britain's retention of three naval bases. These were returned to Ireland in 1938. If that had not happened, Irish neutrality in WWII would not have been feasible.[12] But the implications of these bases for an independent Irish foreign policy were not widely discussed during the Treaty debates – except by Erskine Childers. Only nine out of 338 pages of the Treaty debates related to Ulster, with the contributions coming from deputies with Ulster connections, like Seán MacEntee or Ernest Blythe. Townshend comments that both sides in the Treaty debates detested partition, 'but both sides expected the existence of Northern Ireland to be short one'.[13]

The extensive Treaty debates and how individual deputies voted have been subjected to detailed analysis by many historians and social scientists, seeking to explain the reasons why deputies voted as they did. It is clear that these decisions were complex, and they cannot be explained by reference to geography, social class, age, or other variables. There was only one coherent voting bloc: – all six women deputies voted against the Treaty. Some of the male deputies who supported the Treaty, dismissed the women as merely ciphers for dead male heroes – a criticism that fails to acknowledge that, with the possible exception of Margaret Pearse, mother of Patrick and Willie, these were women with proven records of involvement in the campaign for independence. The views expressed by the six women deputies were shared by a much wider cohort of women who were active in Cumann na mBan. Seventy-seven women were interned in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising; and approximately 600 were imprisoned during 1922-23, which was roughly ten times the number imprisoned by the British authorities during the

7 Ronan Fanning, *The Fatal Path. The British Government and the Irish Revolution, 1913-1922*, (London: Faber, 2013), pp. 256-76.

8 Laura Cahillane, *Drafting the Irish Free State Constitution*, (Manchester: University Press, 2016), pp. 33-34.

9 Curran, *The Birth of the Irish Free State*, p. 202.

10 Cahalane, *Drafting the Irish Constitution*, p. 51.

11 Cahalane, *Drafting the Irish Constitution*, p. 63.

12 Michael Kennedy, 'The Anglo-Irish Treaty, in Crowley et al.(eds), Atlas of the Irish Revolution, pp. 642-8.

13 Maureen Wall, 'Partition: the Ulster Question, 1916-26, in Desmond Williams, (ed.) The Irish Struggle, 1916-26, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul); Charles Townshend, *The Partition. Ireland Divided, 1885-1925*, (Allan Lane, 2021), p. 209.

War of Independence.[14] These statistics suggest that the years after 1916 saw a dramatic increase in female activism, with a disproportionate concentration of women on the anti-Treaty side. Some of these women are well-known: Hanna Sheehy Skeffington, Mary MacSwiney, Constance Markievicz, Dorothy McArdle to name a few, but many have been forgotten, and their lives are only now being explored, with the release of the records of the Bureau of Military History and the Military Pensions Files. The strength and passion of women's opposition to the Treaty suggests that for politically active women, the republic symbolised a break with the past and the promise of significant change.

The Treaty split and the ensuing Civil War threatened the existence of the Irish Free State. The bitter divisions within Sinn Féin and the violence and destruction that followed, gave comfort to those who believed that the Irish people were incapable of self-government. In 1919 the editor of *Notes from Ireland* stated that 'The cold truth is this: Ireland was not fit for self-government and was never less fit that it is to-day.'[15] Many commentaries, written from a unionist perspective, described the conflict as evidence of Irish barbarity and propensity to anarchy.[16] In the spring of 1922 the British authorities drew up contingency plans for a limited blockade of major Irish ports, cutting off essential fuel and other supplies, to be implemented if the anti-Treaty forces had prevailed.[17] It seems probable that Ireland's business elite would have welcomed the collapse of the new State and a reversion to some form of subordinate status to Britain. In the years 1922-23, as Ronan Fanning showed, the Irish Free State received more practical support from the British Treasury when it was running out of money, than it did from Irish banks.[18]

At issue also was the survival of a parliamentary democracy. The history of Ireland during the years 1912-23 is a dialectic between parliamentary democracy and physical force. The tension between these two strands was evident in the years 1919-21 when an elected assembly, Dáil Éireann, co-existed with the IRA, but the Dáil did not exercise effective control over the military. There was also a secret organisation – the Irish Republican Brotherhood lurking in the background. The results of the 1922 election indicated that many voters wanted to return to some form of normality; it is estimated that over 78% of votes went to parties and candidates that supported the Treaty,[19] though as Diarmaid Ferriter noted, up to 75% of IRA volunteers were reported to have opposed the Treaty settlement.[20]

For many young men who were active in the war of independence, and were perhaps feted as heroes, normality meant returning to life working on the family farm or family business – subject to the dictates of their parents, or working as urban labourers, perhaps facing unemployment, so it is perhaps not surprising that some were prepared to continue the fight. They were not unique. In the immediate aftermath of World War I, there were many demobilised soldiers scattered throughout Europe, seeking a new role and some new excitement. [21] The Black and Tans were recruited from ex-servicemen,[22] and the large numbers recruited into the Irish national army in 1922 following the outbreak of the Civil War included many Irishmen who had fought in WWI.[23] Government victory in the Civil War did not end the threat of violence from the IRA and its offshoots or from demobilised and disenchanted members of the national army; this remained a recurring prospect throughout the first decades of the new State.

There were no real winners in this conflict, with the possible exception of Sir James Craig and the government of Northern Ireland, who were granted the time and space to consolidate unionist rule, including the abolition of proportional representation in local elections, and postponement of the Boundary Commission, while nationalist Ireland fought a bitter war. The emotional and physical consequences of this conflict were momentous, as evident in

14 Leanne Lane, *Dorothy McArdle*, (Dublin: UCD Press, 2019), p. 30. John Borgonovo, 'Cumann na mBan in the Irish Civil War', in Crowley et al. (eds) *Atlas of the Irish revolution*, pp. 698-702.

15 David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish Life, 1913-1921. Provincial Experience of War and Revolution*, (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1977), p. 80.

16 Frances Flanagan, *Remembering the Revolution. Dissent Culture and Nationalism in the Irish Free State*, (Oxford: University Press, (2015), pp. 13-14.

17 Curran, *The Birth of the Irish Free State*, Appendix IV, p. 294.

18 Ronan Fanning, *The Irish Department of Finance, 1922-1958*, (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 1958), pp. 80-96.

19 Jackson, *Ireland 1798-1998*, p. 264.

20 Diarmaid Ferriter, *Between Two Hells. The Irish Civil War*, (London: Profile, 2021), p. 21

21 Robert Gerwarth, *The Vanquished. Why the first World War failed to end, 1917-1923*, (Oxford: University Press, 2016)

22 D.M. Leeson, *The Black & Tans. British police and auxiliaries in the Irish war of independence*, (Oxford: University Press, 2011), pp. 68-71.

23 Gerry White, 'Free State versus Republic: the opposing armed forces in the Civil War', in Crowley, et.al.- (eds), *Atlas of the Irish Revolution*, pp. 691-2.

the stories that Diarmaid Ferriter has relayed. The cost of repairing the physical damage – on top of the destruction caused during the war of independence, was a crippling burden on the new State, and one that forced the government to adopt a policy of austerity with respect to spending on social and economic development. Mary Cullen noted that 'one of the most striking features of post-treaty politics in the Irish Free State was the sudden disappearance from the public political arena of many of the women who had become prominent there.'[24] I believe that the intellectually-purist stance taken by so many talented and committed women – who stood by the republic, not just in 1922 but again in 1927 and later – reiterating their determination not to take their seats in Dáil Éireann, had serious long-term consequences for women's place in Irish politics. Their abstention made it possible for male politicians to indulge in outbursts of misogyny, stereotyping women as incapable of participating in democratic politics. In 1924 P.S. O'Hegarty described republican women as 'unlovely, destructive-minded, and begetters of violence, both physical violence and mental violence'. Historian Margaret Ward claims that his assessment 'was shared by each member of Cosgrave's Cabinet: "We know that with women in political power there will be no more peace."'[25]

If I had to summarise the story of Ireland in the early 1920s in one word – it would be 'disillusion'. The heady expectations that were associated with the Irish Revolution – the 1916 Proclamation; the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil; the promises of an end to the degradation of a British-style poor law, and the hopes of landless labourers and non-inheriting farmers' sons that they would acquire land, faded away as the new State and its people struggled with the realities of unemployment, poverty, and emigration. One of the phrases that has been widely referenced in the commemorative events held over the past decade, is the emphasis on 'shared histories'. The history of the Treaty and its bitter and violent aftermath was shared by those who supported the settlement and those who opposed it – evidence that shared histories are not always happy or harmonious. However, from the perspective of a century later, we should all express empathy for the passions that drove those who were involved in the Irish Revolution and their families, and the challenges that they faced when those heady days were over, in adjusting to the mundane and often grim realities of 1920s Ireland.

The transfer of Spike Island from Britain to the Irish forces in 1938.

Inis Píc á haistriú ón mBreatain go fórsaí na hÉireann sa bhliain 1938.

From the Irish Independent Collection. Mediahuis Ireland Ref: H3299 and H3290

24 Mary Cullen, 'Women, emancipation and politics, 1860-1964', in J.R. Hill (ed.), *A new history of Ireland. Vol VIII. Ireland 1921-1984*, (Oxford: University Press, 2003), pp. 864-5.

25 Margaret Ward, *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington. A life*, (Cork: Attic Press, 1997), p. 264.

Photo EXHIBIT 23 *Central News Service*

A DUBLIN RAID. CHARGE BY ARMORED CARS AND SOLDIERS.

Photo from the Imaging Conflict Exhibition

Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Respondent

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Map images and hard-headed pragmatism: the Roman Catholic Church and the two Irish states

Dr Daithí Ó Corráin
An Dr Daithí Ó Corráin

Between 1918 and 1923, the stance of the Irish Catholic hierarchy was characterised by repudiation of political violence but not the goal of Irish independence; obeisance to the legally constituted government; advocacy of majority rule; deep hostility towards partition; and, perhaps most of all, a desire for peace, order and social stability. While the political influence of Catholic bishops and clergy during this traumatic period should not be overstated, the Church was sensitive to the shifting political landscape and was determined not to alienate the laity. Three issues mentioned by Professor Ferriter were of particular significance to Church authorities: upholding democratic principles, the Ulster question, and misplaced hopes in the Boundary Commission.

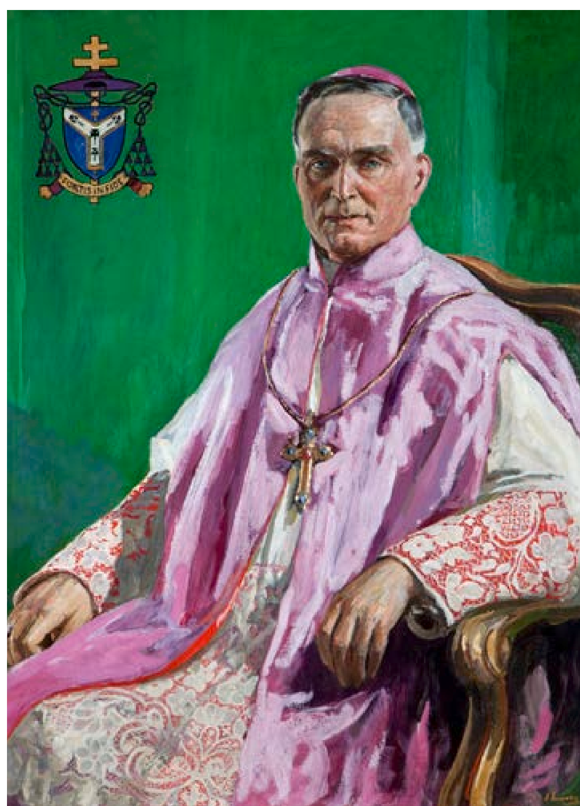
The bishops and clergy were nationalist and supported Irish self-government but as revealed by the scholarship of Dermot Keogh, Mary Harris and Patrick Murray, among others, there was a variety of political stances among them.[1] Some retained their loyalty to the Irish Parliamentary Party, whereas others travelled at different speeds towards Sinn Féin. In their statements in 1920 and 1921, the hierarchy continuously instanced the right of Irish people to self-determination and how the national will was trampled by failed British policy. But the hierarchy stopped short of formally recognising the Dáil. Once the truce was declared, the bishops bestowed moral sanction on Sinn Féin as the Irish government in waiting. This was a pragmatic move ahead of peace negotiations.

1 Dermot Keogh, *The Vatican, The Bishops and Irish Politics, 1919-39* (Cambridge, 1986), *Ireland and the Vatican: The Politics and Diplomacy of Church-State relations, 1922-1960* (Cork, 1995); Mary Harris, *The Catholic Church and the Foundation of the Northern Ireland State* (Cork, 1993); Patrick Murray, *Oracles of God: The Roman Catholic Church and Irish Politics, 1922-37* (Dublin, 2000).

When those negotiations in London began in October 1921 the hierarchy issued a resolution seeking 'permanent friendship between the two countries' and calling for 'a great act of national freedom untrammelled by limitations, and free from the hateful spirit of partition, which could never be anything but a perennial source of discord and fratricidal strife'.[2] The references to partition and fratricidal strife are significant. The bishops, in general, and the influential Joseph MacRory of Down and Connor, in particular, were distressed by the plight of northern nationalists, who had borne the brunt of sectarian strife in Northern Ireland since July 1920. The hierarchy had frequently condemned what they considered a 'campaign of extermination', but during the Treaty negotiations they maintained a discrete silence.[3]

Whereas the hierarchy had been regularly consulted about home rule by the Irish Parliamentary Party that was not the case with Sinn Féin ahead of the Treaty negotiations. An exception was the involvement of five northern bishops and eight senior clergy in the Committee of Information on the Case of Ulster, established in September 1921 to assemble information for the Irish delegation.[4] They were Bishops MacRory, Edward Mulhern of Dromore, Charles McHugh of Derry, Patrick McKenna of Clogher and Patrick O'Donnell of Raphoe and from January 1922 coadjutor in Armagh. If anything, this reflected Sinn Féin's lack of knowledge of northern conditions as much as the centrality of the Church in northern political life.

Unsurprisingly, the bishops welcomed the Treaty and favoured its ratification because it offered a means of preventing a resumption of violence. On 13 December they issued a careful statement that praised the 'patriotism' and 'honesty of purpose' of the Irish negotiating team, and hoped that when Dáil Éireann began its deliberations, the following day, its members would 'have before their minds the best interests of the country'.[5] As the parliamentary debates became increasingly polarised, the bishops exerted political and moral pressure on TDs to uphold majority opinion by supporting the Treaty. Edward Byrne, who succeeded William Walsh as archbishop of Dublin and shared his predecessor's diplomatic touch,



Bishop Joseph MacRory of Down and Connor
Portrait by John Laverty 1928

Easpag an Dúin agus Choinnire Seosamh Mac Ruairí
Portráid le John Laverty 1928

Courtesy of National Museums NI

wrote to Éamon de Valera on 3 January 1922 to suggest a means whereby de Valera and others could register their protest against the Treaty but avoid, in the archbishop's words, 'being placed in the undesirable position of acting against the declared will of the people' and creating 'a miserable split in the national forces when all should act in consolidating what has been gained', even if not perfect.[6] This entreaty was unsuccessful.

Among the northern bishops, enthusiasm for the settlement was tempered by anxiety about partition – 'the big blot on the Treaty'– as Bishop McKenna of Clogher put it.[7] They reluctantly concluded that the Treaty offered the best hope

2 *Irish Catholic Directory 1922*, pp. 600-601.

3 Ibid., p. 595.

4 'Committee of Information on the Case of Ulster', Sept. 1921 (Trinity College Dublin, Erskine Childers papers, 7784/66/4). See, for example, Bishop Mulhern of Dromore to Seán Milroy, 2 Oct. 1921 (National Archives of Ireland (hereafter NAI), DE/4/9/8).

5 *Irish Catholic Directory 1923*, p. 538.

6 Edward Byrne to Éamon de Valera, 3 Jan. 1922 (University College Dublin Archives, Éamon de Valera papers, P150/2903).

7 Patrick McKenna to John Hagan (rector Irish College Rome), 31 Jan. 1922 cited in Murray, *Oracles of God*, p. 356.

Archbishop Edward J. Byrne of Dublin

Ardeaspag Bhaile Átha Cliath Edward J. Byrne

Courtesy of Dublin Diocesan Archives
Ref: DDA/AB7/b/Photographs

of all Ireland unity.[8] This was not as absurd as it might appear in hindsight. It was rooted in the expectation, encouraged by Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins, that Northern Ireland would be forced to accept inclusion into the Irish Free State. Bishop MacRory raised three concerns at a meeting of the Provisional government in Dublin on 30 January 1922. First, that James Craig, the northern premier, 'be urged to come into the Irish Free State at once'. Second, that Catholic education in Northern Ireland be safeguarded. Third, that the policy of non-recognition of the Northern government advocated by Collins would leave northern nationalists fighting alone.[9] Collins mollified the prelate by undertaking to pay the salaries of teachers who refused to recognise the northern ministry of education, and by establishing a North-Eastern Advisory Committee which included, among others, Bishops MacRory, Mulhern and McKenna. In the event, the policy of non-recognition ended with the death of Collins and any vague hopes of an all-Ireland settlement were extinguished on 7 December 1922 when James Craig excluded Northern Ireland from the jurisdiction of the Free State under the Treaty.

Against a deteriorating political and military situation, most Catholic bishops used their Lenten pastorals in February 1922 to bolster support for the Treaty. For Archbishop John Harty of Cashel, the benefits of the Treaty far overweighed its limitations, none more so than 'England's renunciation of its claim to govern Ireland'. Likewise, Archbishop Byrne emphasised that 'the unsympathetic, wasteful and unintelligent rule of men alien to us in blood and traditions' would be replaced by a native one with 'knowledge of our people's needs'. Archbishop Thomas Gilmartin of Tuam prayed for deliverance from the curse of disunion, a theme put more forcefully by Bishop Michael Fogarty of Killaloe: 'Ireland is now the sovereign mistress of her own life. The rusty chains of bondage are scrapped for ever – unless, indeed, by our own folly we put them on again.'[10]

In word and deed the hierarchy attempted to avert the disaster of civil war. A statement on 26 April made clear the bishops' view that the Treaty was a national question that could only be settled by the national will, and that the anti-Treatyite occupation of the Four Courts amounted to 'military despotism' and 'an immoral usurpation and confiscation of the people's rights'.[11] A second statement on the north-east offered a bitter reflection on the Northern government which was ranked 'more nearly with the government of the Turk in his worst days than with anything to be found anywhere in a Christian state' and where Catholics were subjected to 'a savage persecution which is hardly paralleled by the bitterest suffering of the Armenians. Every kind of persecution, arson, destruction of property, systematic terrorism, deliberate assassination,

8 Eamon Phoenix, *Northern Nationalism: Nationalist Politics, Partition and the Catholic Minority in Northern Ireland, 1890-1940* (Belfast, 1994), p. 161.

9 Provisional government minute of meeting, 30 Jan. 1922 (NAI, G1/1).

10 *Irish Catholic Directory 1923*, pp. 551-3.

11 Ibid., pp. 598-600.

and indiscriminate murder reign supreme'.[12] This was a reference to a number of gruesome atrocities such as the killing of six children on Weaver Street in February and the murder of the McMahon family in March. Also at this time, the lord mayor of Dublin and Archbishop Byrne held a conference of pro- and anti-Treaty representatives in the Mansion House. This effort at mediation ended in failure.

Divisions over the Treaty and the outbreak of civil war in the south dismayed northern nationalists and their clerical leaders. It was perceived as a betrayal in their hour of gravest danger. As early as January 1922, Cardinal Michael Logue of Armagh had to be talked out of publicly condemning the stance of de Valera. Nationalist grievances were augmented by the abolition in September 1922 of proportional representation in local government elections, the subsequent redrawing of electoral boundaries, and the imposition of a declaration of allegiance and service to the monarch and his government in Northern Ireland.

Fearing anarchy, the hierarchy unequivocally upheld the authority of the Provisional government on the outbreak of civil war and was committed to the survival of the Treaty settlement. Throughout the summer, individual bishops repeatedly decried violations of moral law. This was easier in 1922 than during the War of Independence because, in Patrick Murray's evocative phrase, the Church was 'sustaining' the authority of an *Irish* state.[13] This extended to producing a politically partisan pastoral on 10 October 1922 to coincide with an amnesty offer to republicans by the government before the imposition of a draconian public safety act. The pastoral rejected the legitimacy of the republican campaign because 'no one is justified in rebelling against the legitimate Government... set up by the nation and acting within its rights', an argument reinforced by the overwhelming endorsement of the Treaty at the June 1922 election.[14] The hierarchy also threatened to deprive those engaged in unlawful rebellion of the sacraments of the Eucharist and confession, and to suspend priests who gave spiritual aid to the anti-Treaty IRA (in the event neither was stringently applied). Outraged by the attempt to use religious sanctions to enforce a political standpoint on a constitutional matter, republicans petitioned Pope Pius XI.

The effectiveness of the October pastoral was uncertain. It may have emboldened the government in its ruthless prosecution of the Civil War. Privately, the bishops were appalled at the policy of summary executions, which Edward Byrne considered 'not only unwise but entirely unjustifiable from the moral point of view'.[15] Episcopal appeals for clemency, such as for Erskine Childers, were ignored – a reminder to us of the limited political influence of the bishops at this time. However dismayed their lordships were in private at the excesses of the Irish government and the National army during the Civil War, no public condemnation was issued. In this, there was an element of pragmatic self-interest. The unpalatable reality of a Northern unionist government hostile to Catholic interests increased the hierarchy's resolve to secure the Free State and the opportunities that it promised, not least for the Church.

Until the failure of the Boundary Commission in November 1925 northern nationalists and Church figures continued to look to Dublin to protect their interests. They regarded the Treaty settlement and the Boundary Commission as a means of salvation from the Northern government. Lobbying by clergy in border areas led to the establishment of a North Eastern Boundary Bureau in October 1922 to compile data in anticipation of the commission which was delayed until November 1924 by the Civil War in Ireland and political instability in Britain. For unionists the Boundary Commission posed a threat to the territorial integrity of Northern Ireland. That Justice Feetham, the commission chairperson, favoured economic and geographic considerations over the wishes of inhabitants shattered the hopes of northern nationalists. After the findings were leaked in the Tory *Morning Post* in November 1925, the controversial report was suppressed and the British, Free State and Northern governments agreed in December to leave the boundary unaltered. The depth of disillusionment and bitterness of northern nationalists was captured by Cahir Healy, the Sinn Féin MP for Fermanagh and Tyrone. He described the agreement as 'a betrayal of the Nationalists of the North and a denial of every statement put forward by the Free State in their alleged support of our cause since 1921... John Redmond was driven from public life for even suggesting partition for a

12 Ibid., p. 603.

13 Murray, *Oracles*, p. 34.

14 *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Oct. 1922.

15 Draft Byrne to Cosgrave, 10 Dec. 1922 (Dublin Diocesan Archives, Byrne MSS 466) cited in Michael Laffan, *Judging W. T. Cosgrave* (Dublin, 2014), p. 122.

period of five years. The new leaders agree to partition forever.'[16] There was a sense, as Oliver Rafferty has argued, that northern nationalists and their clerical leaders felt alienated from both parts of the island at this time.[17] This was another manifestation of the pervasive sense of disillusionment remarked on by Professors Ferriter and Daly.

The settlements, schisms and strife of the early 1920s shaped church-state relations on the island in five significant ways. First, all the main Christian Churches continued to operate on an all-island basis, despite contending with two political jurisdictions. This did not mean that Catholics bishops accepted partition. In his consecration address as bishop of Derry, almost a year after the Boundary Commission, Bernard O'Kane referred to the 'anomaly and absurdity' of having one part of his diocese 'in one kingdom and the remainder in another state' and pledged to work for a united Ireland.[18] But for the Catholic Church there was never any question that partition would compromise or fracture its religious unity. The Church's map image remained an undivided all-Ireland one. Second, partition proved deeply traumatic for the Catholic Church given the number of its adherents in Northern Ireland, the appalling civil strife there between 1920 and 1922, and its fears for Catholic education. Unsurprisingly, resentment and political aloofness lingered. The northern Catholic experience before the 1960s was marked by a sense of being in but not of the State, where, as Marianne Elliott suggests, 'their religion was their politics.'[19] Among Church leaders this only changed significantly when the opportunities occasioned by the welfare state after the Second World War demanded greater pragmatism in their interactions with the Northern state. Third, partition reinforced the association of political allegiance and religious affiliation on both sides of the border. It produced a remarkably homogenous population in the Irish Free State, where in 1926 Catholics accounted for almost 93 per cent of the population. This had a significant bearing on the political and public culture, and on the status enjoyed by the Church. Fourth, the Catholic Church played a significant role in the state-building project by providing an unrivalled institutional presence in the Free State and dominating significant policy areas, education in particular. Lastly, Catholicism helped to bind some of the wounds inflicted by the Civil War in the south. There was remarkably little republican resentment towards the Church and no anti-clerical party developed. The devout Catholicism of de Valera and many of his soldiers of destiny helped to ensure continued harmony in church-state relations when Fianna Fáil took office in 1932.

16 *Irish Independent*, 5 Dec. 1925.

17 Oliver P. Rafferty, *Catholicism in Ulster, 1603-1983: An Interpretative History* (London, 1994), p. 222.

18 *Irish Catholic Directory 1927*, p. 615.

19 Marianne Elliott, 'Faith in Ireland, 1600-2000' in Alvin Jackson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Irish History* (Oxford, 2015), p. 177.

Respondent

Professor Margaret Kelleher

University College Dublin

Settlements, Schisms and Civil Strife: Literature and Conflict

Professor Margaret Kelleher
An tOllamh Margaret Kelleher

> *We had fed the heart on fantasies,*
> *The heart's grown brutal from the fare;*
> *More substance in our enmities*
> *Than in our love; O honey-bees,*
> *Come build in the empty house of the stare.*[1]

These famous lines by W.B. Yeats come from 'The Stare's Nest by My Window', section VI of his long poem 'Meditations in Time of Civil War'. They were composed in Thoor Ballylee Galway in July 1922, during the first weeks of the Civil War, a time when, to quote Yeats,

> there were no newspapers, no reliable news, we did not know who had won nor who had lost, and even after newspapers came, one never knew what was happening on the other side of the hill or of the line of trees. Ford cars passed the house from time to time with coffins standing upon end between the seats, and sometimes at night we heard an explosion, and once by day saw the smoke made by the burning of a great neighboring house. Men must have lived so through many tumultuous centuries. One felt an overmastering desire not to grow unhappy or embittered, not to lose all sense of the beauty of nature. A stare (our West of Ireland name for a starling) had built in a hole beside my window and I made these verses out of the feeling of the moment.[2]

1 Yeats, W.B. (1991). *Meditations in Time of Civil War*. In Richard J. Finneran, ed. *Collected poems of W.B. Yeats*. Springer: New York, p. 205.

2 Yeats, W.B. (1925), *The bounty of Sweden*. Dublin: Cuala Press, p. 50.

On 15 July a Free State soldier was shot at Gort railway bridge, 'a boy from Connemara', according to Yeats;[3] his death and other contemporary events shadow the following lines:

We are closed in, and the key is turned
On our uncertainty; somewhere
A man is killed, or a house burned,
Yet no clear fact to be discerned:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.

A barricade of stone or of wood;
Some fourteen days of civil war;
Last night they trundled down the road
That dead young soldier in his blood:
Come build in the empty house of the stare.[4]

In 1995, as part of his Nobel Prize acceptance speech, Seamus Heaney invoked Yeats's 'Meditations in Time of Civil War', as lines that speak not only to the civil strife of 1920s Ireland but also to much more recent schisms: 'I have heard this poem repeated often, in whole and in part, by people in Ireland over the past twenty-five years, and no wonder... It knows that the massacre will happen again on the roadside, that the workers in the minibus are going to be lined up and shot down just after quitting time; but it also credits as a reality the squeeze of the hand, the actuality of sympathy and protectiveness between living creatures.'[5] For Heaney, Yeats's poem achieves a precious doubleness of being 'tender-minded' and 'tough-minded', telling hard truths and enabling the softness of empathy with another. To quote again from Heaney, 'It satisfies the contradictory needs which consciousness experiences at times of extreme crisis, the need on the one hand for a truth-telling that will be hard and retributive, and on the other hand, the need not to harden the mind to a point where it denies its own yearnings for sweetness and trust.'[6]

Other creative writings composed during the early 1920s are now much less well known. In the early years of the Free State, Waterford-born Rosamond Jacob composed her second novel *A House Divided*, later entitled *The Troubled House.* Jacob, from a Quaker family, was a suffragist, republican, socialist and pacifist. In 1917 she was chosen as a delegate representing Waterford at the Sinn Féin convention, where she won a commitment to women's suffrage. From 1920 to 1927, she was secretary of the Irishwomen's International League, founded in 1916 as the Irish branch of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom; she was delegate to a congress in Vienna in 1921 and to Prague in 1929, and was among the organisers of the congress held in Dublin in 1926.[7] Her diaries of the period are housed in the National Library of Ireland and thanks to the valuable research of scholars including Leeann Lane, Gerardine Meaney and Maria Luddy, together with the digitization project led by Maria Mulvany and Derek Greene, the significance of her creative works has come to be more recognised in recent years.

Jacob's novel *The Troubled House* explores the schisms within a family – the father a Dublin Castle official, one son a republican, one son a pacificist – from the point of view of Maggie Cullen, their mother and wife. What could seem an abstract conflict between ideological and political affiliations, and between generations, is given concrete life through the relationships of individuals and the fate of one family; and in turn the force and impact of political events can be more fully understood. For example, one scene in the novel vividly describes the impact of the Bloody Sunday murders of November 1920; events whose traumatic and brutalising legacy has, as Anne Dolan has convincingly argued, only begun to be fully recognised. The last scenes of the novel are set just after the July 1921 truce, and record an optimism that we now know to be momentary but also worth recalling.

In spite of the novel's power and quality, Jacob was unable to secure a publisher for many years. Over a decade later, in May 1936, as Gerardine Meaney's research has uncovered, an editor at Duffy's publisher dismissed the original title of 'A House Divided' as 'too sad', and said that he might consider publishing the novel later when he could 'risk more'.[8] When the novel was finally published by Browne and Nolan in 1938, it carried a defensive epigraph saying that 'All the characters in this novel are figments of the author's mind; they represent no actual persons.'[9] By now, 1938, another aspect of the novel's optimistic ending – that post war independence

3 Quoted in Foster, R. (2002). *W.B. Yeats: a life, vol 2: the arch-poet 1915-1939*. Oxford: OUP, p. 221.

4 Yeats, (1991), p. 205.

5 Heaney, S. (1995). *Crediting poetry*. Dublin: Gallery Press, pp. 46-7.

6 Heaney, (1995), p. 47.

7 See *Dictionary of Irish Biography* entry: https://www.dib.ie/biography/jacob-rosamond-a4248 (Accessed 23 January 2022)

8 Meaney, G. (2011). Rosamond Jacob and the hidden histories of Irish writing. *New Hibernia Review* 15.4, pp. 70-74, p. 70.

9 Jacob, R. (1938). *The troubled house: a novel of Dublin in the 'twenties*. Dublin: Browne and Nolan, epigraph.

Máire Mhac an tSaoi

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Cóipceart: Foras na Gaeilge

Rosamond Jacob

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would bring new freedoms and roles for women as artists and as mothers – had a deeply ironic tinge, given the gender discrimination against women enacted by legislative and economic measures in the 1920s and 1930s. Those measures, and the theological doctrines which they put into social practice, carried repercussions that carried through to the deeply divisive social schisms of the 1980s: a period well described by Anne Enright as a 'moral Civil War that was fought out in people's homes' with 'unfathomable bitterness'.[10]

I refer to Jacob in this detail because important work is continuing by researchers and students to reclaim and revalue 'quieter' literary and cultural writings, artistic work that can offer us richer and more complex views of the historical and the contemporary. It is notable that the works thus returning to view can help us to expand the register of emotions which we employ in speaking of, or thinking of, or feeling about our historical past. Professor Ferriter ended his paper by invoking 'the depth of conviction' as well as the cruel compromise of idealism; and in his recent book he also valuably underscores the importance of giving sufficient weight to the 'emotional charge of 1922-1923'.[11] How we can best do justice to past events involves also doing 'emotion justice',[12] and here the literary and creative imagination plays a key role. Writing of the importance of fiction in the understanding of history, French philosopher Paul Ricoeur has observed: 'Individuation by means of the horrible, to which we are particularly attentive, regardless of how elevated or how profound it might be, would be blind feeling without the quasi-intuitiveness of fiction. Fiction gives eyes to the horrified narrator. Eyes to see and to weep.'[13]

The poetic voice in Irish literature, be it in English and in Irish and in those languages that newly enrich our national 'riverrun', is the means whereby some of (what we might term) the more 'awkward' emotions are made visible and audible, uncomfortably so. 'An Fuath', published in 1967, by Máire Mhac an tSaoi, begins:

> *Is é a dh'éilíonn an fuath fadfhulang*
> *agus fadaradhna,*
>
> *Is é a dh'éilíonn an fuath neamhaithne*
> *agus daille na foighne,*
>
> *Is é a dh'éilíonn an fuath méar shocair*
> *ar ghaiste an raidhfil*
>
> *Is ná scaoil go bhfeicfir gealadh na súl*
> *mar ghealacán uibh id radhairc uait!*[14]

In the translation by Peter Sirr,

> *Hatred demands patience and deadened senses,*
>
> *Hatred waits for its chance;*
>
> *Hatred keeps a steady finger on the trigger*
>
> *And won't pull it till it sees the whites of the eyes*
>
> *Like egg-whites in its sights!*[15]

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10 Enright, A. (2010). *Making babies: stumbling into motherhood*. London: Random House, p. 187.
11 Ferriter, D. (2021). *Between two hells: the Irish Civil War*. London: Profile Books, p. 8.
12 Ferriter, (2021), p. 8.
13 Ricoeur, P. (1988). *Time and narrative, vol 3*. 1985; Transl. by Kathleen Blamey and David Pellauer. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, p. 188.
14 Mhac an tSaoi, M. (2011). *An paróiste míorúilteach/the miraculous parish*. Ed. by Louis de Paor. Dublin: O'Brien Press, p. 108.
15 Mhac an tSaoi, (2011), p. 109.

In mourning her recent passing, we are reminded not only of the links between generations to which her life testifies – 'the same age as the State' – but also her fearless poetic interrogation of those links and fissures:

Inheritors of the event who never knew the smell

Of gunpowder, or of terror,

Who never fired a shot in anger,

Worse yet

Never stood up to one...

These lines, as translated by Louis de Paor, come from 'Fód an imris', or 'Trouble Spot' set in the General Post Office in 1986:

Oidhrí ar eachtra nár aithin bolaith an phúdair

Ná na heagla.

Nár chaith riamh ruchar feirge

Is is lú ná san

A sheas...[16]

The implicit question is much more explicit in her early poem 'Cam reilige' (a poem which continued to trouble her own writing life):

Fear lár an tsúsa

Conas a thuigfeadh san

Oibriú an fhuachta

Ar bhráithre na n-imeallach?

In the translation by Louis de Paor ('Birth Defect'):

How can the moderate man

In his comfortable bed

Understand how the cold

Afflicts his brothers on the edge?[17]

The literary representation of violence is never without challenge; it is perilously situated on the edge of that paradox so eloquently identified by Theodor Adorno: the paradox of art's wrongness and rightness, impossibility and necessity. The intricacies of Adorno's words deserve detailing; in his words,

The so-called artistic rendering of the naked physical pain of those who were beaten down with rifle butts contains, however distantly, the possibility that pleasure can be squeezed from it. The morality that forbids art to forget this for a second slides off into the abyss of its opposite. The aesthetic stylistic principle ... makes the unthinkable appear to have had some meaning; it becomes transfigured, something of its horror removed. By this alone, an injustice is done the victims, yet no art that avoided the victims could stand up to the demands of justice.[18]

Here is Heaney's formulation on what he terms 'the thing which always is and always will be to poetry's credit' (from the closing lines of his Nobel lecture 'Crediting Poetry'): 'the power to persuade that vulnerable part of our consciousness of its rightness in spite of the evidence of wrongness all around it, the power to remind us that we are hunters and gatherers of values'.[19]

And my gathering closes with quotations from two poems. The closing poem in Eavan Boland's sequence 'Writing in a Time of Violence', published in 1994, and entitled 'Beautiful Speech', finishes with a powerful invocation of what may still await:

... the distances
we are stepping into where we never

imagine words such as hate
and territory *and the like–unbanished still*
as they always would be–wait
and are waiting under
beautiful speech. To strike.[20]

And finally, quietly refusing the limits of commemorations and memorably reshaping our practice, from Paula Meehan:

When we've licked the wounds of history, wounds of war,

we'll salute the stretcher bearer, the nurse in white,
the ones who pick up the pieces, who endure,
who live at the edge, and die there and are known

by this archival footnote read by fading light;
fragile as a breathmark on the windowpane or the gesture
of commemorating heroes in bronze and stone.[21]

16 Mhac an tSaoi, (2011), pp. 110-13.

17 Mhac an tSaoi, (2011), pp. 106-7.

18 Adorno, T. (1974). Commitment. *Notes to literature* II. Transl. by Shierry Weber Nicholsen. New York: Columbia Press, pp. 87-91, p. 88.

19 Heaney, (1995), pp. 53-4.

20 Boland, E. (2005). *New collected poems*. Manchester: Carcanet Press, p. 212.

21 Meehan, P. (2020). *As if by magic: selected poems*. Dublin: Dedalus Press, p. 186.

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Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Respondent

President Michael D. Higgins

The 1920s' – Of the Experience 'from Below'

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

Introduction: History 'from below'

In my contribution to *Machnamh 100* IV, and having heard a fine introductory paper, and responses of an equally fine order, I seek to look at the period 'from below', as it were, from the perspective of the varying circumstances of the enlisting volunteer, the fellow family member, with whom the efforts for the achievement of independence were shared; the same family member who might become later the opponent in the Civil War, the circumstances that would lead to one serving the new State through the National Army, and for the other experiencing incarceration in Tintown in the Curragh.

Minorities

One cannot help wondering if the great flaw in the political discussion of the period is the absence of a discourse as to how minorities are to be catered for in the context of majority rule, be it North or South. There were good grounds for the defence of conscience that a diverse Protestant set of peoples might rightly have held, one that consisted of a resistance to what might be discerned as a strengthening clerical authoritarianism and absolutism of belief in what was to be the Free State.

There was much more than this, however, to what became in Northern Ireland a project of establishment and consolidation of a sectarian state, one with exclusions directed at the minority in terms of the very essentials of life – housing, employment, education and participation itself in the changes in the basic right to vote.

The World War was over, and empires were in flux. Member peoples from various forms of dominion had fought together, including Irish people, under the flag of empire. The majority of those who fought from Ulster now located the defence of all their interests, and indeed privileges, within a victorious empire.

South of this was a state that was, and had become, more clericalist and conservative by the day since 1829, and the achievement of Catholic Emancipation that by the 1930s would have a profile that could be evaluated as indeed contradicting the individual principles of conscience, not only as might be perceived in the North but by any citizen dreaming of the values of a republic.

The forming of the Volunteers in the North, the import of arms, and British Government acquiescence to it suggested that a legitimation for a specific form of separation was available. Volunteers were in response organised in the South on a wide basis.

Class

What was the class composition of the Volunteers, and how did it differ North and South? When I look at those historical photographs, such as those which appear on the cover of Pádraig Yeates's book, *A City in Civil War: Dublin 1921-4*, Lorcan Collins's *Ireland's War of Independence 1919-21*, or those other books which depict 'the fighting column', I am struck by their youth but also by their dress. The gap between their form of dress with their shirts and braces-supported trousers, the occasional cap, and the later photographs of those hatted representatives sent to London, or delegated later to Dublin, to debate the Treaty, is striking. Then, too, there was some self-selection in those who went to Dublin. Back down in the rural areas, among the ranks of the Volunteers or the Flying Columns, it is doubtful if the nuance of all the distinction in forms of separation from empire, or independence, was being discussed by those in such pictures.

As I look, I cannot help asking how many among them are likely to become proprietors of a farm. How will they, as siblings or neighbours in the future, react to their having being divided, not only by sides taken, but in terms of prospects for the future? In the moment of the photo of the Flying Column they are united, both in circumstance and purpose as well as dress. This bonding will not last, however, and when their stories are recovered, when the War of Independence and Civil War are over, they will tell of more than a great scattering. They will give evidence of the consequences of an inheritance pattern as to land that required not only a scattering, but of lives with different roles. Life as a "relative assisting" would be a lesser life than proprietorship.

After the War of Independence and the succeeding Civil War, new class divisions will be created, old ones reinforced. Some will go home to make something of their meagre acres. Others will have no choice but to emigrate. Others again will seek some form of employment in the town or with large farmers. Others will sink into poverty.

Some will go on to prosper in the following decades, secure in land, having status acquired more and reputation, become pillars of society, guardians of respectability, not only for themselves, but as a necessary imposition on others seen as feeble in moral fibre terms, or suspect as to class, and thus deficient in relation to the values the qualifying orthodoxy demanded, sought to impose.

Land

A powerful element that remains as part of the context of the period is land. There is a huge proportion of land from estates yet to be divided. There are those who have identified parts of estates for which they have aspirations of ownership, an ownership not needed quite the same as before for survival, as a previous ancestor might have sought, through a plot for potatoes.

This is hardly surprising. After the Land Acts, proprietors have moved beyond the securing of the plot for survival. It is now about having the means of making a living, of being secure within the confines of respectable status, of aspiration, to have even greater respect in the next generations, even perhaps to advance to a position in the diocesan clergy, take advantage of the openings in the civil service, make a breakthrough to the rank of the native gentry in the professional classes, get to bring one's horse to the hunt – at the basis of it all was land.

Ownership of the farm, having been given to one family member, one female released by an incoming dowry, meant the surplus family members had to become 'relatives assisting' or find employment away from home, or indeed emigrate. This was the experience of those such as my father, like so many others from large families. Siblings are united, however, in the War of Independence, sharing a reaction and abhorrence to acts such as those of the Black-and-Tans[1], and sharing, too, the long memory of the exclusions and humiliations recalled through the generations.

Many would have to go, at a distance, from where they were born. In the 120 years since the Act of Union in 1800, 8 million Irish people had emigrated. In 1901, of those born on the island of Ireland, a majority lived abroad.

In the decade under review, the 1920s, acts of violence, when they occur in relation to land agitation, will be consistently condemned, but the responsibility for them after the Civil War will be frequently attributed to, among others,

1 For a riveting oral history of some of the incidents of rampage undertaken by the Black-and-Tans, see: MacConmara, Tomás (2019). *The Time of the Tans: An Oral History of the War of Independence in County Clare*, Mercier Press: Cork.

the newly released detainees after the Civil War, to such an extent that they will be forced to leave their home parishes. This, too, was an experience my father shared.

Through 1924, the numbers seeking to find work abroad chose to opt for the United States, some with permits from the IRA, others without. Emigrating was seen by the IRA as 'unpatriotic' and, as Gavin Foster's work shows, among others, Éamon de Valera was urging Clan na Gael in the United States that non-permit-holders not be allowed membership of such emigrant organisations as itself, with all the ensuing hardship and loss of friendships, and networks of employment, that this involved for such non-IRA-permitted emigrants.[2] This was despite the entreaties of Sean Moylan in 1923, to whom my father would later be writing as to the endless bureaucracy of the pensions system.

A new Ireland is emerging in the 1920s, and the shape of what will be the 1930s and its extreme authoritarian excesses are what are already discernible. The reformative, inclusive agenda of the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil might indeed be invoked later by Éamon de Valera as one of the five campaigning principles for later elections, but that will be a different time, with emigration having become established as an undeniable fact.

Missed opportunities

There had been a clear mandate given for independence in the 1918 Election, one that was not respected. That Election reflected the public response to the executions, the attempt at introducing conscription, the perceived neglect in terms of health, the poverty of life.

Reflecting on the Truce declared between the British government and the insurgent Irish Republic on the 11th of July 1921, senior civil servant Warren Fisher remarked, "better late than never, but I can't get out of my mind the unnecessary number of graves."[3]

Indeed, there were many missed opportunities on the road to the Treaty. Perhaps chief amongst them, war having broken out, was the intervention to mediate by Bishop Joseph Clune, of Perth, Australia, in November and December 1920, which almost led to a ceasefire. The Bishop had extensive talks with senior civil servants and had met Michael Collins in secret. However, the talks stalled, not so much on the political questions, as on the manner in which violence would be ended before real negotiations could begin. An agreement was almost reached for a ceasefire in December 1920, but foundered on Lloyd George's insistence that IRA arms be surrendered before any negotiations could start, prisoners would not be released, and existing sentences were to stay in place.

The effective rejection of the Clune proposals was based, too, on the advice of General Macready in Dublin Castle insisting that intelligence suggested that a military victory was possible.

The result was six more bloody months, carnage, in which well over a thousand more people would die in the midst of the violence in Ireland. At least half of all casualties in the War of Independence between January 1919 and July 1921 were suffered in those first months of 1921. Weary from war, and the effect of the misnamed 'Spanish Flu' of 1918-1920, from the house burnings, shootings, beatings, in particular the rampage of the Black-and-Tans, undisciplined as they were, and the Auxiliaries who were 'professional' officers, there can be no doubt that most Irish people were worn out and wanted peace.[4] Yet in families, great risks were being taken to support those in dug-outs, in flying columns, or on the run.

Towards Truce

The decisive intervention on the road to truce is perhaps that from South African Prime Minister Jan Smuts, who was approached by the Irish to mediate in May. Urging negotiation on both the sides of the Irish Republicans and on the British, it was he and Lloyd George who jointly drafted the widely quoted 'conciliatory' speech made by King George V at the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament, which expressed the hope that "today may prove to be the first step towards an end of strife". This opened the door to the final negotiations for an end to hostilities.

Smuts, along with southern unionist leader, Lord Middleton, brokered the formal truce, agreed following negotiations between General Macready, Éamon de Valera, Cathal Brugha, Robert Barton and Eamon Duggan in Dublin's Mansion House on the 8th of July. Both sides agreed to an end to armed attacks, arrests, destruction of property and 'provocative

2 Foster, Gavin M (2015). The Irish Civil War and society: politics, class, and conflict. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

3 Michael Hopkinson, in, Joost Augustine, ed., *The Irish Revolution, 1913-1923*, (Palgrave, London, 2002) p. 124.

4 The rampage of the Black-and-Tans is described well in the oral histories contained in Thomás MacConmara's book, *The Time of the Tans* (Mercier Press: Cork, 2019) – such as the account on page 254-5 of Tom Connole's indiscriminate shooting by the Black-and-Tans, followed by his body being thrown into the family home's burning cottage in Ennistymon, together with the trauma that was forever seared on his wife and children's lives.

Republican internees, photo taken on a hidden camera by Sylvester Delahunt, Rath Internment Camp, the Curragh, 1921.

Imtheorannaithe poblachtánacha, grianghraf a ghlac Sylvester Delahunt ar cheamara faoi cheilt, Campa Imtheorannaithe na Rátha, an Currach, 1921.

Courtesy of Kildare Local Studies, Genealogy & Archives

displays', to come into effect on midday on the 11th of July. There was, however, to be no release of prisoners, nor evacuation of Crown forces.

As historian John Dorney has pointed out, the Truce did not end violence overnight:

"Indeed in the North, where loyalists feared a sell-out of their position, as Belfast IRA officer Roger McCorley acidly remarked, 'the Truce lasted six hours only.' In fact, the day before the Truce came into effect was nicknamed 'Belfast's Bloody Sunday' such was the violence there."[5]

Seventeen people were killed or fatally wounded in Belfast on the 10th of July, and a further three were killed or fatally wounded before the truce began at noon on the following day.

However, in most of Ireland, fighting did cease, and the way was cleared for negotiations. The Truce between the IRA and the British was, in many ways, a long-delayed arrival at a destination mapped out well beforehand.

Smuts proposed that the speech to be given by King George V in Belfast to open the Northern Ireland Parliament on the 22nd of June should be used to send a message to Sinn Féin, be an act of conciliation. The King readily agreed, and the delivered speech demonstrated a shift in language from the Crown that could be described as little less than a *volte face*. For almost exactly six months earlier, in a speech in the Westminster House of Commons, the same King had used strong words to attack, what he termed, "the campaign of violence and outrage by which a small section of my subjects seek to sever Ireland from the Empire."[6] This reflects the importance of the concept of 'The Empire' and indeed the symbolism of its Head, something which would later be perhaps under-estimated by de Valera.

Perhaps the most notable words from the King George V's 22nd of June speech are as follows:

"I speak from a full heart when I pray that my coming to Ireland today may prove to be the first step towards the end of strife amongst her people, whatever their race or creed. In that hope I appeal to all Irishmen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and forget, and to join in making for the land they love a new era of peace, contentment and goodwill."[7]

This, however well meant, ignored all of the structural realities that were very real – be it land, religious divisions well exploited, issues of equality in participation, unemployment, housing, education and health.

The ceasefire that was brokered on the 9th of July, and came into effect on the 11th, was of course widely welcomed. Yet, the Truce was not three weeks' old before the IRA was warning units to keep amassing ammunition supplies; IRA Commander-in-Chief Richard Mulcahy addressed men in the training camps, warning them that the shooting war would recommence should the talks fail.

5 'An unnecessary number of graves?' – The road to the Truce of July 1921' by John Dorney, 19th May 2021, *Irish History Online* – available here: https://www.theirishstory.com/2021/05/19/an-unnecessary-number-of-graves-the-road-to-the-truce-of-july-1921/#.YU2r4bhKhPY

6 Full speech available here: https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/lords/1920/dec/23/his-majestys-speech

7 *Ibid*.

Treaty

Yet, the Truce did hold, and August-September saw the Truce summer give way to the Treaty autumn.

The Treaty debates when they came were difficult, but also impressive in that they comprised a wider and robust stock-taking of the position by the contending parties, through which their differing views of the efforts of the past, parliamentary and otherwise, were laid bare and their hopes for the future were made public.

The focus was placed on the possibilities and limitations of the constitutional options available, but little mention was made of the economy, nor of society in terms of how life would now be impacted, for either the majorities or the political minorities of the population North and South. It would be much later, too, while he was preparing for entry to the Dáil, that Éamon de Valera would make reference to the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil, indeed perhaps to outflank the Labour Party rather than any indication of a conversion to social radicalism. The fate of southern unionists, too, was essentially ignored in the Treaty negotiations.

Though Sinn Féin had also campaigned to preserve the Irish language, relatively little use was made of this issue in the Treaty debates. The majority of the female TDs – aware of, or anticipating the fact that what they would now be conceded would be a less than equal role – included strongly in favour of continuing the war until a 32-county Republic was established.

Personal bitterness also developed at times during the debates, with Arthur Griffith remarking of Erskine Childers: “I will not reply to any damned Englishman in this Assembly”[8], and Cathal Brugha reminding everyone that the position of Michael Collins in the IRA was technically inferior to his.

The main dispute was centred on the implications of the status that would be attached to ‘dominion’ (as represented by the Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity), rather than existence as an independent republic, but partition, too, was a significant matter for dissent. Ulstermen like Seán MacEntee spoke strongly against the partition clause. The Dáil voted to approve the treaty, but the objectors, including MacEntee, refused to accept it, resulting eventually in a civil war, behind which stood the shadow of a threatening, non-departed and very proximate Empire.

The Treaty itself, for some few observers who had been interested in the general international independence movements, was described as having been procured by coercion and duress. It was, they agreed, being proposed with a view to bringing peace to Ireland, but as we know now, it did not bring peace. Shapurji Saklatvala, MP for the Labour Party and Communist Party, had been the only British MP to speak in The House of Commons against the Treaty. Speaking as an anti-imperialist, he defined the Treaty as an act of British imperialist coercion.

On the King’s Address to Parliament, on the 23rd of November 1922, Saklatvala remarked:

“Either we are actuated by the motive of restoring thorough peace in Ireland or we are doing it as partial conquerors in Ireland. Everyone knows that the Treaty has unfortunately gone forth as the only alternative to a new invasion of Ireland by British troops. As long as that element exists, the people of Ireland have a right to say that the very narrow majority which in Ireland accepted the Treaty at the time, accepted it also on this understanding: that if they did not accept it, the alternative was an invasion by the Black-and-Tans of this country. The Irish Treaty all along continues to suffer in Ireland from the fact that it is not a Treaty acceptable to the people as a whole.”[9]

Republican socialist Peadar O’Donnell was another of those who opposed the Treaty on such structural grounds as the unfinished and unequal nature of land distribution. He remarked how a great many of those opposed to the Treaty had their differing reasons for their stance. Perhaps this diversity of motives is an important factor that has not been sufficiently stressed in the historical accounts dealing with the resistance to the Treaty.

It is striking how there has been, in the early historiography, such little space given for structural analysis, change or its debate. North and South, there seemed to be more traction from a politics of fear. In the 1930s, the politics of fear would come to full assertion with the threat of Communism becoming a shared tactic of Church and constitutional politics

O’Donnell believed that the IRA should have adopted the people’s cause and supported land re-distribution and workers’ rights. He blamed the anti-Treaty republicans’ lack of support among the Irish public in the Civil War on their lack of a social programme. This was indeed a view supported by some republicans, notably Liam Mellows.

8 Dáil Éireann – Volume 3 – 22 December 1921 Debate on Treaty.

9 Shapurji Saklatvala MP: The Anglo-Irish ‘Treaty’ A Conqueror’s ‘Treaty’ by Manus O’Riordan, ‘Irish Foreign Affairs’, March 2021 - a Quarterly Review, published by the ‘Irish Political Review’ Group.

It is striking, however, how the structural forces of land, commercial and professional prosperity, respectability of status, belief and behaviour, bears none of the inclusiveness of Wolfe Tone's or the Young Irelanders' vision of what a Republic in the French sense, in terms of values, might constitute. The authoritarian tendencies of the projects North and South had similarities, but were moving in the composition of their fundamentalisms ever further from each other – to give space to the excesses of each, as it were.

If there was a utopian tendency at all, it was defined by land, property, status – certainly it did not have an egalitarian purpose. Church and State co-operated to ensure that any rights would have to exist within the absolutism of property.

Legacies

As to the legacies of the fighting, with all of the peace options having been lost, the War of Independence had resulted in the deaths of approximately 2,300, and the succeeding and devastating Civil War resulted in perhaps as many as another 2,000 casualties, with a legacy on all sides of some appalling violence on civilians as well as combatants.[10]

Those who left the army on both sides were left in a perilous pecuniary state, often deeply disenfranchised, with some returning into farming small and often poor plots of land, others returning to the trades, where it was allowed for them to return.

When consideration of pensions for service in the War of Independence commenced, the State set about devising ways in which to define what we might call 'deservingness', a concept John Whelan has developed in his book, *Welfare, Deservingness and the Logic of Poverty: Who Deserves?*[11] Pensions were denied to many of those who had fought, often on the grounds of gender, class or political allegiances. This 'deservingness' may have been a Poor Law legacy, but it could also now be a mask for clientelist and discriminatory practices.

As to gender, for example, women, who had played an important, perhaps even decisive, part in the War of Independence, were pushed aside after the independence struggle in which they participated. The large majority of Cumann na mBan members who were against the Treaty is perhaps to some extent a reflection of this, or perhaps their radicalism is like that of the women of the Land League who knew what form of inclusive independence was meaningful for families.

Inequality widened in all the decades that followed. Some did well, finding employment within the State, where advancement could be clientelist, including also those in the professions, governed by networks of access and class. For others, the employment might be in the trades, or working for larger farmers who were now organising and who were given the support of the IRA on occasion to oppose the demands made by trade unions on behalf of agricultural workers for better conditions. Trade unions were leading opposition to the wage cuts being demanded by some organised large farmers in places such as Waterford.

Others less fortunate had stark choices: emigration or enforced poverty. Patterns of land inheritance and distribution, now enforceable by title, resulted in, as Professor Joe Lee put it, "families giving way to fields". Pat McNabb in the Limerick Rural Society[12] has given details of how the non-inheriting males resented this system and discussed among themselves the consequences of their inferior status, even in marital prospects, to the sons of labourers. Emigration was, thus, now widely seen as an alternative to a lower status existence on land with which they may have had a familiarity, but could never be their own. It would be several decades more before Church and State would define their views on the acceptability of emigration.

Personal reflection

The Civil War divided my father's family, all of whom served in the War of Independence in Counties Clare and Cork. My uncle Peter went on to serve in the National Army from 1922 to 1925, taking part in the handover of Renmore Barracks, Galway. My father would spend most of the year 1923 as an internee in what was known to the prisoners as Tintown, in the Curragh camp. The Pension files record his long and exhausting battle for a small pension, which was eventually granted in 1956, eight years before his death and almost 22 years after his first application, in 1935.

Yes, families were united in wanting Ireland to be free, but they sought to live as best they could. I recognise all this complexity, which must be

10 Eunan O'Halpin and Daithi Ó Corráin, in *The Dead of the Irish Revolution* (Yale University Press: London, 2020), estimate the death toll from 1916 to 1921 inclusive at 2,850.

11 Whelan, John (2021). *Welfare, Deservingness and the Logic of Poverty: Who Deserves?*, Cambridge University Press.

12 McNabb, Patrick (1962). 'Social Structure' in *The Limerick Rural Society* (ed. Newman, Jeremiah), Muintir na Tire Rural Publications: Limerick; and McNabb, Patrick (1960). 'Migration' in *The Limerick Rural Society* (ed. Newman, Jeremiah), Muintir na Tire Rural Publications: Limerick.

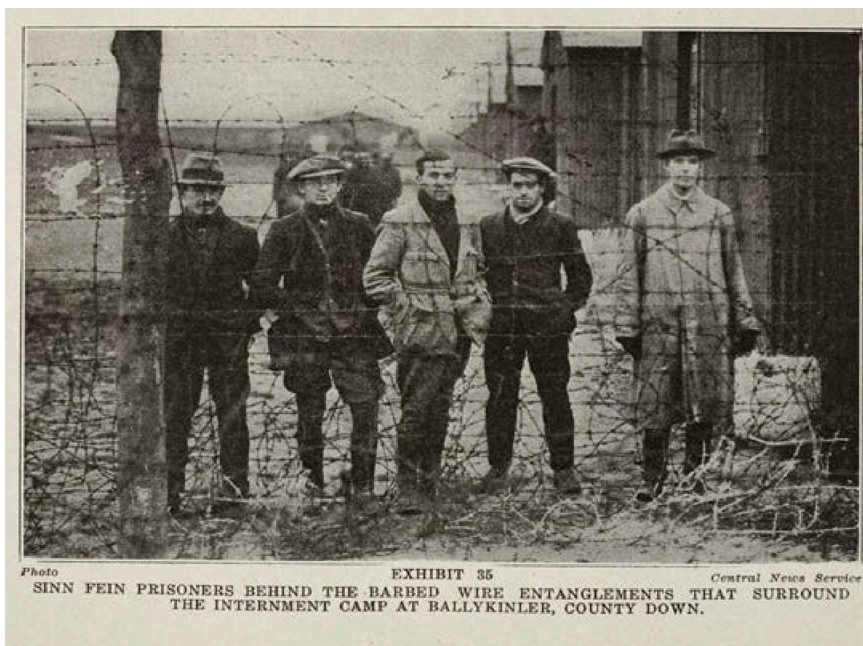
Photo EXHIBIT 35 Central News Service
SINN FEIN PRISONERS BEHIND THE BARBED WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS THAT SURROUND THE INTERNMENT CAMP AT BALLYKINLER, COUNTY DOWN.

Sinn Féin prisoners behind the barbed wire entanglements that surround the internment camp at Ballykinler, County Down.

Príosúnaigh de chuid Shinn Féin ar an taobh thall den tsreang dheilgneach thart ar an gcampa imtheorannaithe i mBaile Coinnleora, Contae an Dúin.

Photo from the Imaging Conflict Exhibition
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Ref: HE.EW.2186_1290_v2

respected, within my own family. My father, the youngest of 10 children, had a sister who had emigrated to Australia, a brother gone to Australia working on the railways, a sister who was a nurse serving in the British Forces in Egypt and Palestine. They, no more than we can now, did not live lives of a single identity. They lived lives of several identities.

All of the family in two generations had sought to make a living, with some of them entering the trades, as did my own father which is worth bearing in mind.

They all shared an aspiration for an Ireland which would be free, where people might live with basic security as to necessities of life. That is what they wrote and spoke about to each other.

Lived experience

For those for whom it was achieved or accepted as a necessity the return to the land was welcome. For some there was the goal of the prospect of even further acquisition of neighbouring fields, but for those in the trades away from the fields, they knew as much as those who would come to farm, stay and till those fields, but what was there to do? In the evening of their lives they might talk of comrades, drink perhaps too much, be an audience or serve as evidence, exhibits, for raconteurs of heroism, property-less many of them. They were important too as citizens with a past who, when called upon, could be called on to cheer the new holders of power, or those who contested with them at election times.

What were the choices of those who were not allowed to return to the practice of their trade? There was always the option of the boat, or if you could get a previously indentured rental space, you could use those skills acquired on an indentured apprenticeship to bar, grocery or retail trade to attempt to become a publican, open a shop, and maybe find a way out of poverty.

In the new circumstance it would seem to be important to recognise the distance that now prevailed between those perceived as being the reasonable beneficiaries of the new arrangements, and those regarded as ‘the wild ones’, in whom conservatives would suggest defects of character should have been recognised so much earlier when they were being identified as ‘irregulars’.

It was easy to marginalise those now divided, who were previously brothers, and in families there were those who would have to survive, now in the new circumstances, that meant they could never again be brothers in the way that they had been as youngsters, sharing those memories of recounted humiliations, borne through the generations, transmitted to them, and those times too when together they shared the hopes of a time to come, of shared joy, music, dancing and marriage perhaps, and the requirements of achieving independence. It would be future generations that would be given such opportunities, together with new challenges, disappointments and hopes. Yet their lives, and their efforts, were the ones that led to an independence that was neither gifted nor conceded easily.

Conclusion

Yes, we must continually revise our history, continually, endlessly, taking on board new facts and perspectives. However, we must not abuse the process in any way such as would allow either evasion or misuse of history. We must accept the challenges of our time, exercise our freedom to make an inclusive present and sustainable future, unburdened we must be of any distortions or abuses of versions of the past.

Respecting the past in its full complexity and diversity of interpretation, the allowing of respect where it has been earned at a cost, is a necessary preparation for a shared, ethical, inclusive future for us all. We have to take responsibility for our own present and its enabled future in our present complexity.

They were of their time and circumstances. We are of ours. Recognising such a complex context is not to judge, but rather to emphasise, in contrast to such times now when, for all of us on this island, far fewer obstacles to creating together a totally different future actually exist, how many challenges we must share, how hope must be turned into opportunities.

As we continue to remember this period in our nation's history, and seek to do so ethically, and with moral purpose, let us do our recall in a manner that allows for an inclusive reflection, open to all sides, including those who left our shores, those left below, and those who were left in a minority status, North or South, to suffer discrimination in any aspects of life.

Beir beannacht

Panel Discussion
Machnamh 100 – Seminar Four
25 November 2021

Dr John Bowman
An Dr John Bowman

John Bowman: Go raibh míle maith agat, a Uachtaráin. Our audience at this *Machnamh 100* seminar are postgraduate students researching this period. I invite them now to give us some response to what they've heard in these interesting and provocative papers that we've been listening to; and if I could ask them to stand up and give us their name just before they speak.

Sophie Cooper: Hello, I'm Sophie Cooper. Thank you so much for all of these papers. If we go back to the first paper and the whole idea of who's taking part, I think we're still taking too narrow an approach on this whole question of who's taking part in the Civil War; but particularly on who's taking part in shaping ideas about what it is to be a Republic and on what self-determination is. We still have this emphasis particularly on male politicians, bishops, and armed revolution. I would argue that we need to take into account a longer-term perspective on where these questions and discussions are coming from. Particularly bringing in the influence of people like teachers – men and women – and also lay and religious. If you look to the diaspora, for example, if you look in the 1890s, 1900s and 1910s, schools are having massive discussions on what self-determination means for Ireland. These are big debates. This is happening in schools but it's also happening in sodalities, in community centres and I think we need to really consider the impact of these people on multigenerational communities. The children that are having these debates in the 1910s are also the people who are being influential in international discussions both in the diaspora and in Ireland when it comes to 1920, so I just think we need to take in children, but also community leaders who are having big impacts at local as well as national level.

John Bowman: So, wider sources should be considered?

Sophie Cooper: Well, wider sources but also just wider types of influence. It's not just people that pick up a gun or spy, it's people who facilitate networks as well.

John Bowman: Okay, I'll put that to the panel. Diarmaid Ferriter, what's your view on that point and also then what about sources? Would the sources be there?

Diarmaid Ferriter: It's a very important point and it's a very fair point and we are accustomed, I suppose, to being drawn towards particular sources that are quite accessible now, particularly accessible now in this day and age. So, I think it is perfectly legitimate to point out how people are formed by various influences, particularly during their tender years. There were a few references to this during the Treaty debates where people

talked about what was drummed into them, not just in school but also at home and the role of parents. And the type of environment and ethos that is relevant for them. That's difficult to document, because we don't necessarily have a copious amount of memoirs in relation to that. We get scraps, we get references, but we've got to dig as deeply as we can. I've no doubt that there has been very interesting work done on the teaching of history, in National Schools in particular, which could be very loaded and could have consequences depending on the school and where it was and who was in charge of the employment of individual teachers; but there is no doubt that in what we do have, of memoirs of people growing up in the late 19th and early 20th century, that many of them do refer to what they absorbed in school. Yet, that does not mean that their experience was representative of all of the members of that class. And I often think – because I've been going through a lot of Seán Lemass material recently – Lemass talked about his own schooling and the different directions in which the classmates went off. So, if you were in a classroom like that, there wasn't one communal experience. And again that depended on what was expected of them but also the kind of houses that they were growing up in. So, I think it's a very fair and important point, but there's always going to be a difficulty in trying to get a range of sources that would leave you confident that they are representative.

John Bowman: Margaret Kelleher, what would your view be on that?

Margaret Kelleher: I'd echo that and I am struck again by the President's very powerful words about the importance of perspectives from below; as the speaker from the floor has said, childhood experiences are a key part of that and, in turn children's literature and what people are reading. I also think, Chair, that a crucial issue is not just sources but how they're being made available. It behoves us in this context to think not alone of what we're reflecting now but also what we are in turn making available for future generations and that's why digitisation projects are so important. As I mentioned in my own talk, the ongoing digitisation of the diaries of Rosamond Jacob, for example, will mean that, with the wider source material, we can ask both broader and deeper questions at the same time.

John Bowman: And her summation also would come into that, wouldn't it, yes? Because she was a suffragist, Republican, a feminist, pacifist and a very original thinker.[1]

Margaret Kelleher: That's right and I'm reminded of that adage that when one is involved in the retrieval of history, one may not always like what one finds, and that has been an important point for our reflections here as well: to recover perspectives that sometimes can be awkward and less attractive. Certainly the pacifism of Rosamond Jacob is an exception to that but there are other perspectives coming from a lot of these women in the period that might not fit some of our points of view. And I welcome the point made throughout this series that we must recover women's history in various forms. There is not one form of 'woman' in this conflict and I really welcome the complexity that's emerging here today.

John Bowman: Daithí Ó Corráin?

Daithí Ó Corráin: I think great work has been done in recent years on the diaspora, for example, and I think, as historians, it is incumbent upon us to cast our net as widely as possible in terms of sources. And I was struck while you asked your question that many historians now are beginning to use collections like the Folklore Collection in UCD which gives us a brilliant snapshot of what people are absorbing at school or what they're absorbing at home and maybe telling their school teacher. It also gets us partially around one of the difficulties of this period and that has been, perhaps, an excessive reliance on the Bureau of Military History, and indeed the Military Service Pensions Collection where our perspective is very much geared through those sources on combatants. Using other sources like the Folklore Commission, and what people are reading, as Margaret mentioned, is really, really important to give us greater balance.

John Bowman: But that would be a snapshot of the 1930s, wouldn't it, late 30s, wasn't that when most of that was done and captured?

Daithí Ó Corráin: Late 30s, yes.

John Bowman: Yes. Mary.

Mary E. Daly: I'm fascinated by your question. It's really intriguing and interesting and I'm someone who is descended from grandparents and great grandparents who were teachers in Cork and Clare. We need to consider the deference that people in that period showed to the clergy and to people who had some education. They were often expected to assume leadership roles. And that's where the role of the teacher in the community is extremely important. And how do you capture it? There are various ways. First of all I know that many teachers went to the Gaeltacht

1 Rosamond Jacob (1888-1960) suffragist, republican, and writer; her maverick voice is reflected in her copious diaries among her papers in the National Library of Ireland, Mss 32,582/1-170.

voluntarily during the summer to learn the Irish language. There is a whole generation of teachers in the schools who are teaching the Irish language in the 1920s and 30s, who would not have grown up learning Irish and they had to work and learn Irish in their free time. They played a crucial role in the revival of the Irish language in the decades immediately after independence. In order to research this topic I think what you need to do is investigate local sources of one kind or another. I am thinking of obscure meetings that took place in towns and communities. Who are the people who speak out at those meetings? Who are the people that provide leadership and we do need to begin to investigate this. This links with some of the topics that the President was talking about – respectability, status and deference and I completely agree with what you're saying. Great question.

John Bowman: Yes, but what's the answer? President, what's your opinion about sources and getting access to these other voices?

President Higgins: First of all, I think it's important that there be, if you like, access sought to as wide a range of sources as possible; but sometimes we have to rely on the work of fiction and of poetry to recover that because for many people it isn't a case that their record is being ignored, it is that they were suppressed and people were made silent. There are a couple of things that are very, very important, I think, in relation to some of the tendencies in the revisionism, and if you take a foundational historian like W.E.H. Lecky, he had a view of the Irish that was very, very close to an earlier philosopher, Hume, who would have the same view in many cases – a view that as the Irish were 'not conquered by Rome', they would, therefore have none of the 'civilities of education' that others would have had from such an experience, and at any time they are about to break out in an expression of barbarity. That's in black and white. Now, what that tells you is something else as well. When I used the word 'humiliations' myself, within the society you have others who are, if you like... I would call it habituated to the deference in order to get on and be acceptable to the local people in the big house and whatever like that. You learned how to be suitably deferential to the class society. It's full of that in the Irish RM and all of that.

John Bowman: So, you're saying fiction as a source then?

President Higgins: Yes, I am. But not only that, I'm saying that there was in fact a real problem that isn't resolved in relation to the imperial mind-set of seeing the Irish as inferior and I also think that that isn't just a simple division. I think that people took it into themselves. I find it very emotional for me, for example, that people in Connemara were learning English and that you had to have enough English to be able to be respectable when you went to the United States. It was referred to as 'teanga an bhochtanais', 'teanga an bháid', and all of these phrases.

Left to right: Professor Margaret Kelleher, Professor Diarmaid Ferriter, and President Michael D. Higgins

Clé go deas: An tOllamh Margaret Kelleher, an tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter, agus an tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

John Bowman: That was in National Schools as well, and the Church was behind that, wasn't it, looking for bishops for Australia and wherever.

President Higgins: It was indeed. One of the most amusing things I heard was that, before our accession to the European Union, of a nun teaching young girls saying to them there would be lots of jobs addressing envelopes when we're in the European Union. I think the question is a very valuable question. The other part of it is the division that is there about the diaspora. The diaspora has different views. The Irish Times said in the 1890s: 'They have gone abroad and they have located themselves in the most powerful country that is emerging and they will never let us forget it,' and their influence is the Famine in their mind. And then you get a later group as well, the people who emigrate in the 1920s are at a lesser level, even when they meet their fellow Irish in the United States or Australia; they have to come in at a lower level in relation to competing for jobs, and if you look at how they're dispersed in the United States, they're not actually sharing all the property now that the Irish-Americans of the previous generation have in the cities; they're scattered everywhere. You find that in the Irish Pilot when they're looking, 'Have you seen so and so with the freckled face? He was last seen in...'[2]

John Bowman: Fearghal McGarry, you've been looking at some of this.

Fearghal McGarry: Yes, I would like to go back to Sophie's question which I think is a great one. I would argue that maybe the single biggest influence on the revolutionary generation is not actually Republicanism but it is cultural nationalism and I think sometimes the language of cultural nationalism can be misleading. We think of terms such as the search for an Irish Ireland but actually this generation of people were very outward-looking. They were very aware of what was happening in terms of the development of other nationalisms and comparative situations elsewhere, if you look at people, say, involved in the Abbey Theatre. Or someone like Patrick Pearse, who really sort of personifies the idea of Irish Ireland; he's constantly writing to nationalists and intellectuals all around the world, so there is an incredible kind of intellectual and cultural exchange. And that brings us to the other point Sophie makes which is about diaspora. I think there's an issue about how we write about this period because we tend to write about Irish Nationalism within Ireland, and then we write about the diaspora within the context of Australia or Canada, whatever. But if you actually look at lives, and this comes through really strongly in biographies, people live transnational lives. And it's not just the elite but, as Sophie's own work has shown, ordinary people through the religious orders, the Catholic Church as an international organisation, the British Army, and posts in the Empire. So I think sometimes we think that we live in a much more international world than people 100 years ago. And considering also the consumption of media, we need to think about this incredible circulation of ideas and influence in order to understand what's happening, even if it's just in a village in Clare.

John Bowman: Another contribution? Yes?

Steven Egan: My name is Steven Egan, I'm a PhD researcher at Queen's University, Belfast. Building on what's just happened with the discussion, my area of research looks at how partition was perceived by the Irish diaspora, particularly with those within the British Empire and I think something that's really interesting that I'm really pleased to see in our reflections today is that we are taking into account not just the Irish on the island of Ireland but in a much broader international and global sense. Something I wonder if the panel could speak more to is the traumatic nature of partition for those communities, and in particular I specialise in looking at Canada and Australia. Irish identity within these diasporas is often in flux and in Canada in particular if we look at the work of Mark McGowan and Patrick Mannion, we see that Irish Canada is in a decline until we hit the revolutionary period where there's almost a resurgence of interest in the Irish nation, and in conceptions of Irishness. Partition ultimately ends that in many, many ways. You have a disjointedness between the Irish Protestants of Canada who in 1920 would regularly attend Irish nights at Orange Lodges. By 1921 and 1922, they are no longer being labelled as such, they're being called Imperial Nights, or British Nights. And similarly in Australia, you also have a kind of an inward retrospection of identity amongst these diasporic communities.

John Bowman: Because there were two Irish identities in both those continents.

Steven Egan: Absolutely yes, and the processes of which they develop and change is very different. Australia almost seems to be more advanced in terms of the, I suppose, the partitioning of identity rather than the partitioning line politically speaking. So, I was wondering if the panel could speak a little bit more to how we can

2 The Boston Pilot was founded in 1829. Throughout the nineteenth century its 'Information Wanted' column helped to reunite Irish family members who had lost contact with each other through emigration.

better capture how partition is not just a line on a map but also in the hearts and minds from those below.

John Bowman: Yes, well it always was, of course, in the hearts and minds, wasn't it? That's also the point. Fearghal?

Fearghal McGarry: Yes. I haven't looked at the impact of partition in close detail in different countries which strikes me as a really fascinating subject to look at. But much of what you're saying also applies to the impact of the Civil War. One of the things that's really extraordinary, I think, about the Irish Question and the way in which it electrifies Irish people everywhere is that it creates a kind of global Irish consciousness. The President was talking earlier about different generations. In a sense these different generations of Irish people are brought together in 1920 and 1921 in this great common cause; but what happens with the Treaty split and the Civil War is that it shatters that sense of a united Irish movement. Of course, America remains very important in terms of influencing Irish developments but that phenomenon of a global Irish community working together, as it previously existed, was grievously disrupted. One of the interesting themes in terms of looking at Commonwealth countries like Australia and New Zealand is that the consciousness there of what Irish identity and Irish nationalism stood for meant something different than in America. In Ireland, in Australia and in New Zealand, particularly in the context of the First World War, to be an Irish nationalist is a much more subversive thing. There are alignments with anti-war, anti-conscription and other radical movements. After Easter 1916, Irish nationalism becomes very fraught in the Dominions. Whereas in America there's a much more separatist Irish outlook and so this interplay between different notions of what Irish identity and politics are, in different parts of the world, forms a really fascinating aspect of what's happening in 1920, 1921 and bears also on international responses to partition and obviously also the response to the Treaty.

John Bowman: Diarmaid Ferriter, partition of course was sold by the British as temporary, or possibly temporary, certainly it was indefinite and Lloyd George of course was the conjuror. I think you used that metaphor yourself, and he was a well-known conjuror and a trickster. Look at the Punch cartoons about him – 'This is a trick I haven't done before,' and he was a master at deception and at, you could say, self-deception.

Diarmaid Ferriter: Yes, and you could say he was speaking out of different sides of his mouth in order to try and balance what he had to balance in the autumn of 1921. When you look at – and I quoted James Craig's account of their meeting after the Treaty had been signed, and he felt betrayal and of course there's betrayal felt by others too. You can look back now and wonder were they too naïve and too delusional to be accepting these reassurances, but you've also got to acknowledge what was being said privately. The reassurances that are being given privately. There were those at the heart of the British establishment who didn't want this to be a long-term commitment. They wanted it away from them. For understandable reasons. It had divided their politics for so long. In the previous Home Rule crisis, you know, many of them were veterans of that. There was a compelling case to get rid of it and interestingly given where we are now, there was a compelling economic case. There's that line that's used by David Lloyd George to James Craig: don't cut off the natural circuits of commercial activity. Ridiculous for a small island. And some of his colleagues were corresponding privately. But he's leader of a coalition government. He has to look out for Andrew Bonar Law, he has to be conscious of how the Die-hards as he calls them himself can be mobilised in relation still to the Ulster question, notwithstanding what I've said. And what's interesting about it, I suppose internationally – which is being raised in the question – there was a widespread belief even on the part of those who'd accepted the Treaty that they could pursue an international propaganda campaign against partition that would have a tremendous moral force behind it, on the grounds that this was clearly an injustice that would be recognised internationally. A problem.

John Bowman: The North Eastern Boundary Bureau, for instance: a very sophisticated analysis.

Diarmaid Ferriter: Yes. Like Kevin O'Shiel who was an Ulsterman and who believed passionately in that and we shouldn't be dismissive of it now, at the same time we have to acknowledge how difficult it was to keep the coherence in relation to the Irish question once the compromise has been made and that's very difficult in Australia. You can see the anger that's generated by Archbishop Mannix in Melbourne when he's denouncing the compromise and making common cause with the Anti-Treatyites. So, you know, and that causes difficulties in Australia too. So, it's difficult to sustain that and yet they're still trying to do it in the late 1940s and into the early 1950s, the idea of an international campaign against partition, but the audience isn't there.

John Bowman: The audience was certainly gone by then. But there is a field of forces at work here, so complex that there are a lot of unintended consequences as well. Would you agree with that, Daithí?

Daithí Ó Corráin: Absolutely. What we have to remember maybe is that partition is something that very significant agencies in Irish society are thinking about and are worried about for a very long time before it becomes a reality in 1920. And I suppose when you asked your question, Stephen, I was really struck by the absence maybe of a more sustained comparison between the impact of partition and partitionist mentalities in Ireland and what's going on in central and eastern Europe at this very time. And I think maybe we have a lot to learn by looking at that European example more deeply as historians.

John Bowman: Margaret, were you nodding to that?

Margaret Kelleher: Absolutely. And again I'm thinking about sources in relation to the question about how we might track the views of the diaspora. I think it's really important that we look at different forms of cultural expression there. We know that music plays a key part; but also film, if you think of the success of Liam O'Flaherty in terms of Hollywood. It's also really interesting to see how Irish themes appear in some of the early generations of film-making in the States. So, maybe that's one of the places where we can find a crucial insight into how viewpoints and interpretations of Ireland are being shaped by the diaspora because otherwise we're in danger of having a gap between the early 20th century and now. And I think popular culture is a way to trace how opinions and memories that weren't physical memories for the diaspora are shaped...

John Bowman: Are the sources more difficult to get at in those areas, do you think?

Margaret Kelleher: They can be but there can also be a certain hierarchy of sources and I think popular culture, and often relatedly, women's writings can lose out in that hierarchy. So, I applaud Stephen himself for the work he's doing and look forward to reading more.

John Bowman: Right, can we have another question?

Stephen O'Neill: Hi, I'm Stephen O'Neill and I'm working at Trinity and the Irish Museum of Modern Art. Thanks very much to everyone for the papers. Really enjoyed all of them. Part of what I'm studying at the minute is the idea of sources in the context of bottom-up history; what the ordinary person would have been able to actually know about the process of partition specifically in the 1920s. There were the secret sessions of the Treaty Debates and I think they were not released to the Irish public for some fifty years. And the report of the Boundary Commission was famously suppressed by both Craig and Cosgrave in the tripartite agreement of November 1925.[3] So we need to look at how such sources – and others – were not available then to people as they are now. But also how this deterministic reading of Irish partition in particular becomes dominant because of that very lack of memory or lack of actual knowledge in the 1920s as well and I thought we might just reflect a little bit on that and see what people would say.

John Bowman: Diarmaid?

Diarmaid Ferriter: What has me thinking about that subject is the idea, as I articulate it, through the work of Charles Townshend, this idea of a mental partition predating a physical partition. Mention was made of the Bureau of Military History statements earlier on; I was always interested in them for their introductions. Do people delve straight into 1913 and join the volunteers or do they give some sense of how they thought about Ireland, about Ireland as an entity, about Ireland North and South. Very few of them do. And it's often been referred to as an Achilles' heel of many nationalists, many southern nationalists that they don't understand the complexity, and it's why I quoted Cahir Healy in relation to the northern situation and the northern mind. And what is the northern mind? For many people the northern mind is different, it's wired in a different way and they often see it as more difficult as you could argue they do to this day. Because there is that sense of it as a place apart. And I don't think it's... it's not just about what became Northern Ireland, it's about Ulster, you know, as a nine-county province. Many in Donegal felt that they were somewhat cut adrift in relation to not just the settlement of late 1921, but culturally and mentally, that there is that feeling. That's why I quoted the idea of the highlanders, you know, that's a very strong image, you know, that we are being cast adrift.

John Bowman: Well, here's a stronger one. J. R. Fisher who was appointed finally by the British as the Ulster Unionists' representative on the Boundary Commission, because Craig wouldn't put one on. J. R. Fisher had earlier called Donegal – which he regretted had been left in the Free State – as 'our Afghanistan' thinking of it as a buffer State.

Diarmaid Ferriter: Yes, the remote north which is being used as a phrase even in the 1880s. But we've also got to be conscious, to directly address the question, how many people have moved well

3 *Dáil Éireann, Private Sessions of Second Dáil*, with an introduction by T.P.O'Neill, (Dublin, n.d. [1970]); and G.J.Hand, (ed.) *Report of the Irish Boundary Commission 1925* (Shannon, 1969)

President Michael D. Higgins and participants
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUiginn agus na rannpháirtithe

beyond their localities? How many people have travelled around Ireland? We know activists have, we know there are people involved in jobs that required travel, but how many people are actually familiar with the different traditions and the different character of different parts of Ireland? I think that is a big part of it and how much information are they actually getting and absorbing about different parts of Ireland, and different perspectives.

John Bowman: Mary Daly, were you saying on the Treaty debates themselves, there's evidence that any preoccupation about partition came only from northerners?

Mary E. Daly: When I was growing up I would have thought that the Civil War took place over partition and it was only when the late Maureen Wall started delving into the debates and she came up with a figure that approximately 10% of the public Treaty debates related to partition, and the figure for the secret debates is much, much the same. In other words it just doesn't feature. Responding to Stephen, there was an interesting conference organised by Monaghan County Museum and there was a panel which I chaired of people from border communities, local historians and local people talking about partition. They came up with the term of the 'third country' or, in other words, they were neither North nor South, and they see themselves as somehow a place apart from both Belfast and Dublin. And I think using that concept to get an understanding of partition would be helpful. I really think to grasp some of what you're dealing with is a matter of getting into the local and the parochial and the particular, not the national story. Looking at local council meetings, local newspapers, local community groups, how they interact and engage or don't engage, Church of Ireland meetings, Presbyterian assemblies, how they engage or disengage with the realities of partition, it worked out in various ways, they learned to negotiate it. It undoubtedly split families and communities. I completely agree with Diarmaid, the understanding of that experience outside those communities was – and remains – I think, pretty limited in this country.

John Bowman: And families were, of course, split, President Higgins, as you know from your own experience and as you indeed told us in your paper.

President Higgins: Yes, I think just by way of context, my grandfather was one of a family of seven and of that family of seven, five emigrated to Australia between 1852 and 1860. I think it's very important for us to deal with the questions and indeed it would need another day as to the difference, for example, in the letters from Australia and the letters from Ireland to Australia, and the letters from the United States to and from. I have a sociologist view that on the Irish side, people discontinued the Australian correspondence because they were in fact outside of cities, they were in land areas and so forth, apart from the difficulties of postage being expensive...

John Bowman: Very expensive.

President Higgins: Yes, and they lost connection to some extent. I think you have to look at Archbishop Mannix as well in his relationship to the trade union movement and also the central

Church's attitude, the incredible efforts to try and dislodge Mannix which is there as well. There was incredible support for him in County Cork, where he's from, and where my mother's family was involved. Ultimately my mother was secretary of Cumann na mBan in Liscarroll. But on the question we've just been answering about how very few people in the South have any real sensitivity to the industrial reality of living in Belfast. And I don't speak about Northern Ireland as one entity either, there's a huge difference between Derry and Belfast, that's very, very important. And what is fascinating about it as I very deliberately mentioned – I listened to Henry Patterson's paper in relation to the experience of his family, and there should be far more attention given to the incredible efforts of people at the different skill levels to keep sectarianism out of the division. Remember, it isn't only the Catholics first who are expelled in the pogroms, but also as you might call it, the 'unreliable Protestants' who are kind of driven out. And you look at who they are and this is why it is so important to see where the anti-communist thing is coming in and the labelling of agitators as Bolshevists and so forth. There was no sign of very many communists in the South, for example, but the rhetoric was immense. And there's a thing too, remember – I totally agree with the distinctiveness of the Ulster experience – remember you have the Ulster custom in relation to land. That's different to the tenants' relationship in the South. You also have very specific experiences in relation to the dignity and the ethics of work in the work place which the working class people have in Northern Ireland. So, in a way, a great division had happened as a result of the Act of Union in the location of possibilities for lives and everything and that in turn then, when you came, I think people are underestimating all the time, I think, in relation to the migration. People are absolutely trying to make a fist of life. And when they're trying to do that, the emigration figures are huge and the emigration to the United States is not singular, it has layers and layers of entirely different experiences and the other thing about it is the Irish language that I mentioned. The Presbyterian contribution to the Irish language is immense, and also to culture and music and everything. I asked somebody one time about it, it's one thing to say this and let us say about belief system, but it's very significant when you say that your particular version is the one that must exclude all others which very quickly emerged. You have Austin Clarke's poem about the cabinet outside the railings, not being able to go inside for the funeral.4 But equally on the other side you have the bitterness. And there is a kind of a little bit of evasion going on as to the manner in which a not very theological version of religion was used to divide people who were trying to make a life in different circumstances of agriculture and industry. And that's the future really. But what's significant is the way in which people are writing out the question about the blackening, for example. This goes right to the 1930s as another day but when those who came back in 1936 wouldn't be hired in a school that I refer to as the awful 1930s. I find it hard to see morality in much aspects of it.

John Bowman: Right, and what about *Machnamh 100* now? The future. I'll ask the audience first about that.

President Higgins: Oh, do, yes.

John Bowman: First a more general question: how much have you learnt from the whole *Machnamh 100* initiative? Would anybody like to comment on that – as a comment now, not as a question to the panel – but has anybody got comments to make on that?

Noel Carolan: Noel Carolan is my name. Just from today's material, it is really crucially important and it's been extraordinarily interesting to see the importance of what the President refers to as the people and the perspective from below. What happened for the ordinary man and the ordinary woman in particular; the ordinary woman is something that we really have to give more time to. And it's something that came across from today's talks particularly from my point of view in just listening to it here as an audience member today.

Joel Herman: My name is Joel Herman, I'm a PhD researcher at Trinity. I think, yes, just even it might overlap a little bit but all the papers were fantastic; we heard about the Irish context through the pension files, global context, the achievement of the Treaty and, you know, the disillusionment it caused. Religious context and the Catholic Church, social context and in a literary sense and the history of the Treaty from below and from the President. And I think my question would just be, what in these different areas, what directions forward do we have?

John Bowman: Okay, well I'm going to stay with the President on this. The future shape of *Machnamh 100* – this is the fourth session and there are two to come – so what's coming next?

4 A reference to Austin Clarke's poem 'Burial of a President' in which he mocks the decision by the then Taoiseach John A. Costello to follow Catholic custom and not to enter the Protestant Church for the former President Douglas Hyde's funeral, 'dreading the our father in English'; better 'not hear that which for who and risk eternal doom.'

President Higgins: Okay. On that last question, I think that the future should be about achieving universal basic services which can be shared and that should be the debate about the connection between inclusive economies, social justice and ecological responsibility. That framework gives us a whole new space in which to discuss all these issues in. But what's coming next? There are two more Machnamhs planned. The next one, the fifth seminar, will take place in the spring of 2022 and will be entitled 'Constitutional, Institutional and Ideological Foundations: Complexity and Contestation'. So, the constitution will be there, but also how are the new institutions shaping up and what will they tell us for the future? And we're hoping to do that in terms of both the Irish Free State and the Northern Ireland administrations; and to try and deal with this issue that I referred to as well, about minorities and the discussion about the majority-minority relationship, and so on. And then it will try and look as well at how both entities in a way looked abroad, for example, to the League of Nations, and how are they to deal with the International Labour Organisation. And then the sixth seminar, the final one, in autumn 2022, is when I will look back on all that has been discussed across the previous five but also look at how can the music, for example, survive on an all-island basis and what is the significance of films that have been made, the novels and stories that have been written; in the fullness of the experience of life, how are people seeing it now. So, I think I'll introduce scholars and thinkers not just from history, but also from the cultural theory area and from the performing culture and also something that has never grounded itself sufficiently, the sociological perspective. And also, I want to try and look at international scholarship – Ireland isn't just a kind of a commodity to be polished up for scholarship – it is about people who call themselves Irish wherever they are. And that *Machnamh 100* will take place in the autumn of 2022.

John Bowman: Right, well on behalf of the audience out there watching this on the webcast and the audience indeed who are assembled here, I'd like to thank you, President Higgins, for hosting all of this and thank Diarmaid Ferriter for his paper today and to the other four scholars who responded to it. And thank you viewers, indeed. And the key website for connection to all of this and indeed to the new volume which is available online free of charge is www.president.ie. If you go to that, you'll get all the details of how to access the e-book and how to watch further developments in *Machnamh 100*. From the Hyde Room in Áras an Uachtaráin, thank you for watching.

Left to right: Professor Diarmaid Ferriter, Professor Margaret Kelleher, President Michael D. Higgins, Dr Daithí Ó Corráin, Dr John Bowman, Professor Mary E. Daly, Professor Fearghal McGarry

Ó chlé go deas: An tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter, an tOllamh Margaret Kelleher, an tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn, an Dr Daithí Ó Corráin, an Dr John Bowman, an tOllamh Mary E. Daly, agus an tOllamh Fearghal McGarry

President Michael D. Higgins and guests

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus aíonna

President Michael D. Higgins and Professor Diarmaid Ferriter

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus an tOllamh Diarmaid Ferriter

Machnamh 100 - Seminar IV guests

Aíonna Seimineár IV - *Machnamh 100*

Machnamh 100
President of Ireland
Centenary Reflections

Fifth Seminar

Constitutional, Institutional and Ideological Foundations: Complexity And Contestation

26 May 2022

Photo from the Imaging Conflict Exhibition

Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Opening Words

President Michael D. Higgins

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

In today's seminar, *Machnamh V*, we consider the constitutional, institutional and ideological foundations of the emerging Irish State a century ago. We do so respecting its complexity, and its inevitable aspects of contestation. This challenging period of our history demands such an approach, one that allows for multiple narratives, and alternative versions of events that are best considered within a framework of narrative hospitality.

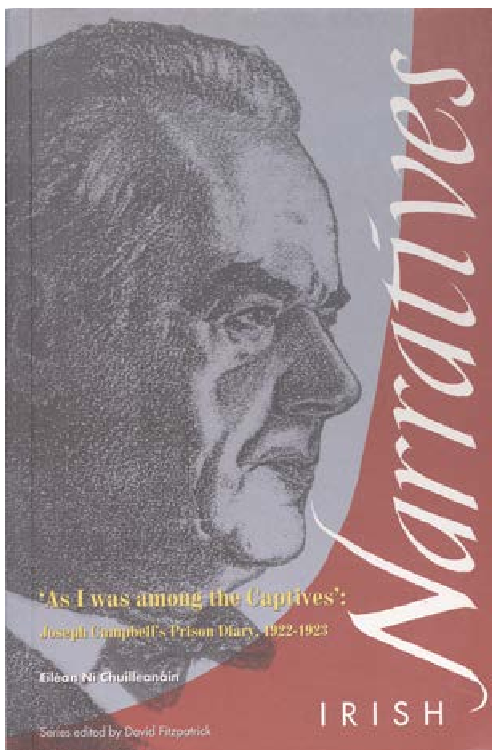
The events of the period 1922 to 1926 are, may I suggest, among the most important in modern Irish history.

Such events are important events as to the form in which they transpired,

and their consequences that soon became all too apparent, but also in terms of what they reveal to us of the assumptions they carried, as to independence, the balance between parliamentary possibilities and military action, the hold of empires and the force of an inherited dream of independence.

In reflecting on this period, we must remember difference in experiences on the island of Ireland. There was a huge difference, beyond geography, between those who had, within empire, experienced the benefits of the industrial revolution and its class conflicts, and those struggling for survival, for land.

As to understanding the period, we are fortunate to have available to us now a rich vein of new scholarship, from new and often neglected perspectives work that can be added to the



'As I was among the Captives': Joseph Campbell's Prison Diary, 1922-23

(Cork University Press, 2001) Reproduced courtesy of University College Cork

seminal work of Irish and American scholars in leaner times of publication.

In preparing my own contribution for today, I have drawn on the work of some of these scholars, including Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's work on the diaries of Joseph Campbell, as well as new scholarship from Terence Dooley and Síobhra Aiken.

Machnamh 100 is an initiative I have undertaken, as Uachtarán na hÉireann, building on previous work seeking to enable reflections on the wider context of events, including the War of Independence, Civil War and Partition.

I have invited leading scholars with diverse perspectives to share their insights on the context and events of that formative period of a century ago and to make a reflection on the nature of the act of commemoration itself.

My motivation in convening *Machnamh 100* is to address the complexity of the period, to engage in the exploration of motivations rather than the assertion of conclusions.

Our efforts are aimed at understanding, and may I suggest that such efforts in relation to the past may assist us in addressing our present complexities and our future challenges on this island.

May I thank Dr. John Bowman for agreeing to chair these seminars and for the excellent job he has done throughout, and Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh for his ongoing, invaluable advice and assistance.

May I thank, too, those who agreed to participate in today's *Machnamh V* seminar by providing original papers on various aspects of this period under examination. We are fortunate to have with us distinguished scholars.

Today's principal address will be provided by Professor Brendan O'Leary of the University of Pennsylvania. Responses will be made by Professor Henry Patterson of the Ulster University, Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne of University College Cork, and Dr Theresa Reidy, also of University College Cork.

My own address will be entitled 'Interpreting the Period 1922 to 1926 in Irish History: Influences and Consequences'.

A word on our previous seminars –

Our inaugural seminar, held in December 2020, examined the nature and concept of commemoration itself in the contexts of today and of the national and global events of a century ago. Speakers included Professors Ciarán Benson, Michael Laffan, Joep Leerssen, Dr Anne Dolan and myself, and together we set out our intentions for what we are hoping to achieve from this series.

In February 2021, I hosted the second seminar which focused on Empire, imperial attitudes and responses as they related to circumstances in Ireland. The main reflection was given by Professor John Horne, with responses from Dr Niamh Gallagher, Professor Eunan O'Halpin, Professor Alvin Jackson, Dr Marie Coleman and myself.

The third *Machnamh 100* seminar took place in May 2021 and was entitled 'Recovering Reimagined Futures'. This seminar focused on issues of land, social class, gender and the sources of violence, and speakers included Dr Margaret O'Callaghan, Ms. Catriona Crowe, Dr John Cunningham, Dr Caitriona Clear, Professor Linda Connolly and myself.

The fourth seminar took place in November 2021, focusing on the Truce, the Treaty and Partition. It saw Professor Diarmaid Ferriter of University College Dublin provide the principal address, and respondents in addition to myself included Professor Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast, Professor Mary E. Daly of University College Dublin, Dr Daithí Ó Corráin of Dublin City University, and Professor Margaret Kelleher of University College Dublin, all of whom delivered excellent responses.

I hope that you find today's penultimate seminar thought-provoking, perhaps even challenging, and, above all, a reminder of the importance of examining the history of this period through an ethical prism, and one that takes into account the 'view from below'.

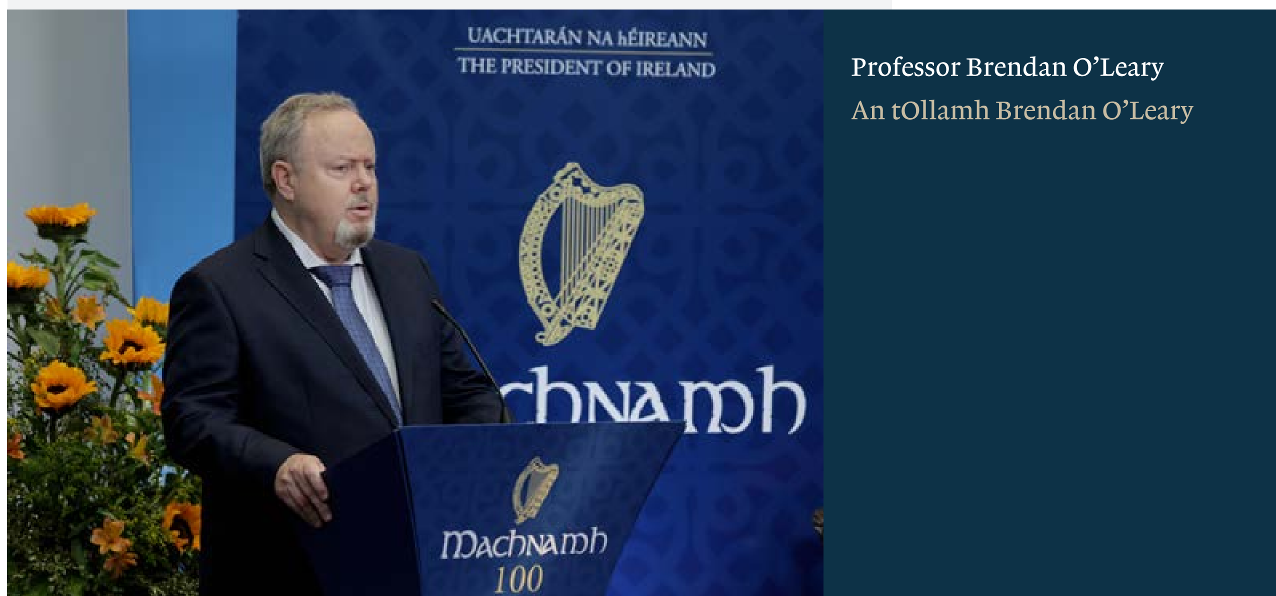
Fáilte romhaibh uilig. Bain taithneamh as an seminar.

Principal Address

Professor Brendan O’Leary

University of Pennsylvania

Machnamh on Constitutional Trajectories Since 1922



Professor Brendan O’Leary
An tOllamh Brendan O’Leary

Three new political entities emerged on this island in 1922: the Irish Free State; Northern Ireland; and, sometimes overlooked, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Two new states materialized. Northern Ireland was not one of them–though many have suggested otherwise, including James Craig who boasted of “a Protestant State” in riposte to those who had allegedly boasted of a Catholic one.[1]

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland has never met any formal definition of a state–not Hegel’s, not Marx’s, not Max Weber’s, nor that of any other German eminence. Nor has it ever met standard legal definitions. Legislated through the Government of Ireland Act of 1920 Northern Ireland was neither domestically nor externally sovereign and has never had constituent power. Differently put, it cannot make its constitution on its own. Intermittently, it has been a devolved entity (1921-72), with delegated powers, powers that have been revoked in favor of direct rule (1972-98, 2000, 2002-7), and that may be revoked again. “In terms”, as lawyers say, it has never been a state in a federation: its powers could always be revoked. Throughout its existence Northern Ireland has

1 James Craig, Unionist Party, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, 24 April 1934. Parliamentary Debates, Northern Ireland House of Commons, Vol. XVI, cols. 1091-95. For examples of historians deeming Northern Ireland a state see Dudley Edwards, et al. 1968: p. 8, and O’Brien 1974.

been subject to the overriding sovereignty of the Westminster parliament–and still is, even though that parliament repealed Section 75 of the Government of Ireland Act in 1998. The Suspension Act of 2000, passed and implemented without the approval of the Government of Ireland, is a recent illustration of this sovereign override.[2]

On April 30, 2021, a BBC reporter told us that "A panel of historians set up to advise the government on Northern Ireland's centenary has settled on 3 May 1921 as the birthdate of the State".[3] Admittedly, that must be the sole occasion on which a panel addressing a controversial topic in and over Northern Ireland has made an agreement to time–albeit with three days to go. The panel erred, however, if it thought it was naming the birthdate of a state called Northern Ireland.

The reporter mentioned that seven other birthdates had been considered. My own writing, with some disposition toward mercy, has considered four plausible birthdays[4]: December 23, 1920, when the Government of Ireland Act was ratified; May 3, 1921, when it entered into force; June 22, 1921, when the Belfast parliament was opened; and, lastly, the occasion unionists are inclined to forget, 8 December 1922. That was when the Belfast parliament voted to secede from the Irish Free State, into which it had been legally put by the Treaty signed in 1921. That Treaty was not ratified by the King-in-Parliament until late 1922, *after* the final draft of the Constitution of the Irish Free State had been ratified. The previous version had been rejected by the British cabinet as incompatible with the Treaty of 1921, a rejection that made the war of Green against Green,[5] the Irish Civil War, more likely.

Any place with four or more birthdays is unlikely to be the subject of an agreed celebration, or commemoration, and so it has proved. But one factual observation flows from the fourth birthday: if the people of both jurisdictions vote in future with concurrent majorities to create a "sovereign united Ireland"[6] then they would accomplish *re*unification.

If Northern Ireland had a constitution before the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, it was the Government of Ireland Act, originally drafted to create two devolved parliaments within the Union, with continuing Westminster sovereignty, and with continuing but reduced Irish representation in the House of Commons.[7] The Liberal Imperialist and Conservative solution to Irish self-determination was to invent two Irelands, Northern and Southern, with a geographic insouciance that still rankles, especially in Donegal. Unionist elites decisively shaped the final territorial definition of Northern Ireland–insisting on six counties, thereby betraying their co-ethnics in Donegal, Cavan, and Monaghan. They did not, however, significantly debate or reflect–they did not engage in an act of ***Machnamh***–on what constitutional forms Northern Ireland should have. In practice they resented inconvenient deviations from the Westminster mothership and would soon rectify them.

No evidence exists of serious reflection within the UUP of the 1920s regarding what constitutional forms would best win the consent of the newly created political minority in Northern Ireland–the nationalists who saw themselves as part of an all-island majority, and the other overlapping minority, cultural Catholics. Rather, the UUP focused on control: preventing or putting down republican rebellion, organizing unionists, and disorganizing Northern nationalists and republicans–who were, admittedly, doing a thorough job of disorganizing themselves. Unionist elites did care about local fiscal burdens and benefits. Throughout the 1920s Craig worked successfully to increase subsidies from the London Treasury, and to bypass Lloyd George's fiscal provisos. Had he not done so, Northern Ireland might have gone bankrupt in the 1930s, like Newfoundland.

The British compromise was to give home rule to those who claimed they did not want it *after* they had refused or postponed it for those who had wanted it. As it happened, however, unionists preferred local home rule to its alternatives, but not home rule within the Irish Free State. They cared about who ruled at home.

The UUP would work to make Northern Ireland as culturally British as possible. The party abolished proportional representation in local government almost immediately–to strengthen the case against revisions of the new border.

2 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/1/contents/enacted It was later repealed as part of the St Andrews Agreement.

3 Simpson 2021.

4 O'Leary 2021a.

5 Hopkinson 1988.

6 [The Belfast or Good Friday Agreement] 1998 Constitutional Issues 1 (i).

7 It has been customary for constitutional lawyers to treat the Government of Ireland Act in this way (Calvert 1968, Palley 1972, Hadfield 1989, McCrudden 1997) though the idea of a 'constitutional statute' was not expressed or defined by British judges before 2002. The idea is that such statutes are not subject to 'implied repeal.'

Within the decade, PR-STV was abolished for elections to the Stormont parliament being built in Belfast's eastern suburbs. Twice London governments chose not to prevent the abolition of proportional representation. The UUP sought to polarize local politics on the national question, curiously called "the constitutional question" by all sides, thereby making it easier for the party to act as a pan-Protestant alliance of classes and sects.

The 'adversarial politics' of the Westminster parliamentary model *may* be suited to homogeneous societies–*if* two major parties compete for the moderate median voter.[8] But it has always been deeply unsuited to places rented by divisions over national, ethnic, and religious questions[9] as was already apparent as the Union of Great Britain and Ireland *began* to democratize significantly after 1884.

Reverting to winner-takes-all in single member-districts in Belfast helped the UUP to marginalize Protestant socialists–deemed 'rotten Prods' during the expulsions of Catholics from Belfast's shipyards. It also helped keep loyalist ultras generally within the folds of the dominant party. Republicans and Northern nationalists were given no reasons to abandon 'abstentionism'.

Among other 'securities' for Southern Protestants, STV-PR had been introduced for Irish local government elections in 1920 and was then put into the Government of Ireland Act. STV-PR would stay in the South, championed by Arthur Griffith, incorporated in both the Constitution of the Irish Free State and its replacement. Subsequent efforts, by Fianna Fáil governments, to replace STV-PR with winner-takes-all were defeated in referendums in 1959 and 1968. These institutional decisions had consequences. Fianna Fáil, while the largest party, always faced prospects of not being able to form a government.[10] The UUP did not, though it was constantly anxious that it might lose.[11] It dealt with the anxiety by making losing highly improbable.

STV-PR was not restored in the North until 1973. In the interim, the Ulster Unionist Party won all general elections held to the Belfast and London parliaments. No alternation in government took place. Two prime ministers, Craig and Brooke, served for twenty years each. Death in office may have been the most common means of changing cabinet ministers. There was no incentive to attract Catholic let alone nationalist votes. The party did not debate Catholic membership until the late 1950s. Abuse of power was plentiful, especially where its exercise would further entrench the party. All the pathologies of the UUP's dominance were aggravated by the abolition of PR. Namely, partisan control of the police and its B Special reserves; gerrymandering; making elections into censuses of the loyal; direct and indirect discrimination against Catholics, nationalists, and republicans–in employment, housing allocation, and the building and siting of infrastructure; the maintenance of an unreformed local government franchise; and the weakness of parliamentary opposition. Failure to protect the securities they had included in the home rule acts typified Westminster's negligent oversight.[12]

Northern Ireland has been the subject of five major treaties since its creation:

- The founding Treaty amended the Government of Ireland Act, putting Northern Ireland into the Irish Free State, while allowing it to secede back into the UK, subject to two provisos: a boundary commission, which would, it seemed, create a fairer border, and an obligation on Northern Ireland to pay its full fiscal contributions, then known as Imperial contributions. Neither proviso was fulfilled.
- The Treaty of 1925 amended the foundational Treaty. It buried the boundary commission, and the Council of Ireland–though the latter idea would be resurrected and rejected in the making and defeat of the Sunningdale Agreement in 1973 and 1974.[13]
- The Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1985 created the inter-governmental conference; pledged the further reform of Northern Ireland in return for security co-operation; and incentivized power-sharing devolution.

8 Downs 1957. The formal results of Downs' model rest on a 'knife-edge,' some fifteen assumptions unlikely to be jointly met as vividly shown by Bernard Grofman 2004, Grofman 2013.

9 Lijphart 2008, Lijphart 2012.

10 O'Duffy and O'Leary 1995

11 Mulholland 2004, 2013; see also Bew, et al. 1979 on populists versus their opponents within UUP cabinets.

12 See the memoir of Peter Rose 2001.

13 The Sunningdale Agreement was not a Treaty. Ireland's Supreme Court in Boland v An Taoiseach (Judgment 1 January 1975) held that the crucial clause 5 was not an agreement, but rather two different policy statements by the two governments (https://ie.vlex.com/vid/boland-v-an-taoiseach-805258061). On Sunningdale's politics see the memoir and study of Dorr 2017, and the study of Kerr 2011, both sympathetic to the predicaments of Brian Faulkner; for a comparison of Sunningdale and the GFA see Wolff 2001.

- The latter was not agreed until the British-Irish Agreement of 10 April 1998, which promised to safeguard and implement the three-stranded power-sharing settlement reached in multi-party talks in Belfast.
- Last, and most recent, is the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol, an integral part of the UK's Withdrawal Agreement of 2020 with the European Union, intended to preserve the gains of the 1998 Agreement.

The Government of Northern Ireland was a party to just one of these treaties, that of 1925–but not as a state.[14] The Good Friday or Belfast Agreement–the latter name preferred by those who emphasize where it was signed rather than the day it was made–addressed how a Northern Ireland government would be composed, at least this side of a reunified Ireland, and it was agreed by double referendums, not just in the North, and negotiated and ratified under the supervision and with the exhortation of the two sovereign governments. Being the subject of five significant international treaties suggests that sustained insecurity describes Northern Ireland's constitutional trajectory–for which many are jointly culpable, not least unionist leaders.

Even the place's name has never been fully agreed. Unionists would have preferred to call it Ulster, taking the name of the whole for the larger portion. They lobbied for that name-change in 1937 when the name of the Irish State was changed, and in 1949 when the republic was redeclared. London governments refused the name-change but did not object to the Royal Ulster Constabulary–or later to the Ulster Defence Regiment. To this day, most loyalist militia have Ulster in their titles, not Northern Ireland. For traditional Irish nationalists the place remains "the North of Ireland," for traditional republicans, "the six counties."

A last measure of Northern Ireland's constitutional insecurity may be taken from Richard Humphreys' very useful edition of key documents, *Reconciling Ireland: Fifty Years of British-Irish Agreements*.[15] His text includes 40 agreements made between 1973 and 2020, but not the recent Protocol to which the UK and Ireland are parties–Ireland through the EU. We may expect further such agreements before future referendums decide the status of Northern Ireland.

In the long story of British direct rule between 1972 and 1998, that I cannot examine here, the Government of Ireland Act was progressively amended or extinguished by British governments until it was replaced by the 1998 Agreement.

Unlike previous power-sharing initiatives, the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement eventually appeared to stabilize between 2007 and 2017, after the St Andrews Agreement led to minor adjustments of its content. For the first time constitutional arrangements enjoyed legitimacy throughout the island as well as within and across Northern Ireland. The parties to the 1998 Agreement included republicans as well as loyalists. They accepted consociational arrangements, power-sharing between communities and parties based on the principles of parity, proportionality, autonomy, and veto-rights on devolved matters. I have reviewed these in detail elsewhere–generally favorably.[16]

However, these arrangements are not 'constitutionalized' as that term is understood elsewhere. They are partly in a UK "constitutional statute,"[17] the Northern Ireland Act 1998, as modified by subsequent legislation, notably the St Andrews Agreement. All that does, however, is to protect the GFA against implied repeal. They are also in the provisions of the text agreed by the parties in 1998 that are not incorporated into UK domestic law. These include the recognition of the right of the people of Ireland, North and South, respectively to exercise their right of self-determination to create a sovereign united Ireland, or to maintain the Union; to do so "without external impediment;" and, not least, the obligation of "rigorous impartiality" in administration by the incumbent sovereign government. Lastly, they are protected by two treaties, one between the UK and Ireland, and now one between the EU and the UK.

The permanent constitutional trouble, admittedly not the only one, is that Westminster's sovereignty hangs like a sword of Damocles over all these arrangements. No Westminster parliament can bind its successor. Each fresh UK government may modify these and any other constitutional arrangements–if it so chooses–provided it can pass the relevant laws. Simply put, a binding Treaty with a parliament that allows itself easily to modify or repudiate

14 In the Irish text, it is a Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland, though the two sovereign governments are 'united in amity' with the Government of Northern Ireland: Treaty (Confirmation of Amending Agreement) Act, 1925 https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1925/act/40/schedule/enacted/en/html

15 Humphreys 2021, a book best accompanied by Coakley and Todd 2020.

16 O'Leary 1999, McGarry and O'Leary 2004, 2015, McCrudden, et al. 2016, O'Leary 2020a.

17 Samuels 2018.

3p blue stamp, issued 29th December 1937, celebrating Bunreacht na hÉireann.

The woman with a harp to her right is opening a vellum copy to her left with the emblems of the four historic provinces below it.

The new constitution had many merits: the protection of women's rights was not among their number.

Stampa gorm 3p arna eisiúint ar an 29 Nollaig 1937 le ceiliúradh a dhéanamh ar Bhunreacht na hÉireann.

Le feiceáil ar an stampa tá bean, cláirseach ar thaobh a láimhe deise agus í ag oscailt cóip veillim den Bhunreacht, atá ar thaobh a láimhe clé, agus suaitheantas na gceithre chúige stairiúla faoina bhun sin.

Is iomaí bua a bhain leis an mbunreacht nua; ní raibh cosaint chearta na mban ar cheann acu.

Photo reproduced courtesy of An Post

treaties, deeply impairs the UK's capacity to make credible commitments to foreign governments, including Ireland's. Equally that same parliament cannot make solemn internal constitutional pledges to nationalists, unionists, or others. What Westminster gives, Westminster may take away, by the same means.[18]

The constant lobbying of the Westminster government of the day to implement the 1998 Agreement—or not—or to implement the Protocol—or not—reflects this condition of permanent constitutional insecurity.[19] Perfidious Albion, I like to say, is a constitutional condition, not a national character trait. No Anglophobia is required for this diagnosis—or intended. No governing arrangements or platform of rights in any part of the Union is institutionally entrenched against a simple majority in the House of Commons and the Lords—including the Acts of Union, as recently advertised by Justice Adrian Colton's eloquent essay in constitutional law, upheld by the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal in March 2022.[20]

So long as parliamentary sovereignty remains the UK's *Grundnorm*[21] the credible entrenchment of rights and procedures—even when sincerely supported by London ministers—cannot be offered to the Scots or the Welsh, let alone the three designations of Northern Irish. And as observed throughout this island, the current Conservative government feels free in principle to repudiate—allegedly "in a very specific and limited way"[22]—treaties which it has very recently signed.

Northern Ireland was a constitutional failure before 1998, an example of how the Westminster model may be abused by a dominant party based on a dominant nationality, ethnicity, or religious community. Its replacement by a consociational devolved settlement with institutionalized North-South and East-West relations, is a very distinct improvement, but that settlement has proven brittle, especially without sustained British and Irish governmental oversight and cooperation. The settlement was not made by and has never been fully owned by leading English

Conservatives, with the notably honorable exceptions of Christopher Patten and John Major. The fragility of the settlement has been exposed by the Johnson administration's decision to

18 Admittedly treaties are made with states, not parliaments, and the problem identified can exist in other states, but the Westminster model aggravates the problem because its parliament by ordinary law may repudiate or modify an incorporated Treaty.

19 The Protocol is compatible with the Good Friday Agreement, see O'Leary 2022b, a.

20 Colton 2021, Judicial Communications Office 2022.

21 On the Grundnorm see the Austrian jurist Hans Kelsen 1945, which is very similar to HLA Hart's 'rule of recognition,' Hart 1961.

22 The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Brandon Lewis), 8 September 2020 https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2020-09-08/debates/2F32EBC3-6692-402C-93E6-76B4CF1BC6E3/NorthernIrelandProtocolUKLegalObligations

choose a hard exit from the EU–for Great Britain, while in bad faith signing a Protocol to address the Brexiteers' afterthought–Northern Ireland. Whether the 1998 settlement endures remains to be seen; if it does, it will ease a more benign path toward reunification.

Independent Ireland

The Irish Free State (IFS), by contrast to Northern Ireland, was a state, and became a free state. Statehood was in its founding title, but Whitehall's lawyers sought, unsuccessfully, to keep it constrained by the narrowest construal of 'the Treaty'. The domestic sovereignty of the IFS was mostly clear at the outset, albeit constrained by the *Articles of Agreement for a Treaty* ratified by Dáil Éireann and the Westminster parliament in 1922. The Free State immediately had the Treaty-making powers of Canada, and by 1923, against the wishes of His Majesty's Government, it was recognized by the League of Nations, of which it would become a member in good standing. By 1931, Westminster had renounced the right to legislate for any dominion–the designation through which British drafters of 'the Treaty' had hoped to confine the sovereignty of the Irish Free State. Within fifteen years most of the constitutional articles, including most of those in the Treaty, imposed against the first preferences of the Irish negotiators, were gone. Successive constitutional amendments by Cumann na nGaedheal or Fianna Fáil-led governments were not contested or were acquiesced in by London governments.[23]

The Irish of the Free State adopted *Bunreacht na hÉireann*, by referendum, in 1937. Literally that is the *Fundamental or Basic Law of Ireland*, but officially it is translated as the Constitution of Ireland. Unlike the Free State Constitution, the Bunreacht was entirely made in sovereign Ireland, and ratified by its sovereign people alone, through their own parliament and by a referendum.[24] It thereby achieved a widespread standing that its predecessor never attained, because both the Treaty and London's rejection of the official first draft of the Constitution of the Irish Free State were accompanied by a British threat to renew war.[25]

The following year Neville Chamberlain's government, on the advice of his senior military officers, relinquished the so-called Treaty ports, leaving the Government of Ireland fully sovereign over its territory. The so-called "economic war" was settled at the same time–in de Valera's and Ireland's favour.[26] So by 1939 the State named Ireland in the English language had become fully externally sovereign, demonstrated through its subsequent neutrality throughout World War 2. In all but name it had become a republic again, with an elected President, described as taking "precedence over all other persons in the State."[27] (That would be you Uachtarán...)

The outstanding feature of the Treaty contested by nationalists of all hues–Northern Ireland's existence–was tactically but not tactfully addressed in Articles 2 and 3 of the Bunreacht. These claimed the whole island as Ireland's national territory but confined the jurisdiction of the Oireachtas to the territory of Saorstát Éireann. Seen as aggressively irredentist by unionists, these articles were qualified by Article 29 of the Constitution, which obliged Ireland to obey international law, and to settle territorial disputes peaceably. They deliberately left open the possibility that Northern Ireland could be transferred to Ireland by an agreement between Great Britain and Ireland, without the consent of its parliament or a majority of its people.

After 1937 Irish governments effectively did not recognize Northern Ireland, silently repudiating the agreement of 1925. Irish sovereignty was prioritized ahead of détente with the Northern government. Non-recognition was fully reciprocated by the Government of Northern Ireland's cultural and ideological distance from de Valera's Ireland, which it berated for betraying the Treaty–one that the UUP government had not recognized at the time. We also now know that in June 1940 Craig wrote to Churchill recommending that Scottish and Welsh regiments should be sent to topple the regime in Dublin and to install a British military governor.[28] On this occasion Churchill did not agree with Craig.

Mutual non-recognition persisted: the Prime Ministers of Ireland and Northern Ireland did not meet between 1925 and 1965. The UK did not recognize Ireland by its official name until 1998; Ireland did not fully recognize Northern Ireland by its name until it ratified the British-Irish Agreement and modified Articles 2 and 3 in 1999 to specify mutual consent for reunification.

23 The details are in Harkness 1969, McMahon 1984, Canning 1985; for a survey see O'Leary 2020d: Ch. 3.

24 See the superb collection and study by Hogan 2012. Both the IFS Constitution and the Bunreacht drew upon extensive examinations of foreign constitutions, for the IFS see Cahillane 2016: Ch. 6.

25 Regan 1999, 2013, Kissane 2011, Cahillane 2016.

26 O'Rourke 1991

27 Bunreacht na hÉireann 1937: Article 12.1. A very neat drafting bypass around the status of the King.

28 Fisk 1985: p. 210.

Disputes over names and refusing to recognize one another's preferred names feature in the base currency of deep national and ethnic conflict.

The Constitution of the Irish Free State was replaced for two reasons. One was to complete the implementation of de Valera's Document Number 2, his alternative to the 1921 Treaty, that had been rejected both by the British and by a majority of his fellow Sinn Féin cabinet members, and a majority of the revolutionary Dáil Éireann.

The other reason was that the Constitution of the Irish Free State had become too British, but not in a monarchical sense. Unexpectedly, each article could be amended by a simple majority of the Oireachtas, i.e., the Oireachtas became sovereign. Legally that development was allowed to happen through the exploitation of a badly drafted albeit misinterpreted Article 50–*what is it about Articles numbered 50?*

In that article the entrenchment of the constitution had been postponed for eight years–initially to enable minor corrective amendments by ordinary legislation; but it was then extended for sixteen years, through arguably invalid amendment of the amending provision. Had the planned entrenchment occurred, then a referendum passed by a qualified majority would have been required to ratify constitutional amendments.

Legally, the de facto shift to Oireachtas sovereignty was also enabled by a curious court judgment by Judge MR O'Connor in May 1924, *R (Cooney) v Clinton*. The judge held that retrospective legislation validating the military courts that had been used to try militant republicans should be treated as a constitutional amendment–even though the act in question had not been brought forward as such. Effectively this decision returned the Irish Free State to the British judicial doctrine of 'implied repeal.' As a result of this decision, and subsequent cases, the Constitution could be amended by ordinary legislation "without specifying the provisions to be amended and without even specifying any intention to amend the Constitution."[29]

The Cumann na nGaedheal government also abolished the article enabling a popular initiative to launch a referendum because Fianna Fáil began to mobilize to hold one targeted against the Treaty.

Despite its eventual failure the Free State Constitution nevertheless deserves some backward glances of approval, but not because of its unstable compromise between a democratic and republican ethos and British monarchic symbolism, but rather because of its innovative ambitions and its good faith intent to accommodate Irish Protestants and Unionists–including Ulster Protestants. The innovative ambitions included the desire to entrench citizen not parliamentary sovereignty–by making the people sovereign, and by requiring referendums to change the constitution–and the desire to establish judicial review to ensure that governments did not breach the people's rights.[30] The accommodationist ethos was present not just in the determination to keep STV-PR as a safeguard for Protestants throughout the island, but in the decision to establish a Senate in which Protestants would be significantly over-represented: a goal lost when the Senate became party-politicized.

Last, but not least, all three internal drafts of the Constitution of the Free State, obliged a request from Michael Collins regarding the North.[31] Article 44 of the final constitution had the following provision: "The Oireachtas may create subordinate legislatures with such powers as may be decided by law".[32] Collins had wanted a mechanism readily available to incorporate a devolved Northern Ireland within a reunited Irish Free State. Fifteen years later, Éamon de Valera kept open the option for "subordinate legislatures". Article 15.2 of the Bunreacht provides that,

> *1º The sole and exclusive power of making laws for the State is hereby vested in the Oireachtas: no other legislative authority has power to make laws for the State.*
>
> *2º Provision may however be made by law for the creation or recognition of subordinate legislatures and for the powers and functions of these legislatures."*[33] (Author's emphasis)

29 Cahillane 2016: p. 160.

30 These innovations broke strikingly with the Dominion and later Commonwealth constitutions. This is not the place to discuss other ideas which failed in the lifespan of the Irish Free State–extern or technocratic ministers and functional councils. See Cahillane 2016, Farrell 1970b, a, 1971a, b, Kissane 2011

31 The three drafts, A, B, and C may be found as appendices in Cahillane 2016.

32 Constitution of the Irish Free State https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1922/act/1/enacted/en/print

33 https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/cons/en/html#part4 Article 15. 2.2°

The National University Women's Graduate Association recommended voting against the 1937 Constitution: Professor Joseph Lee believes a majority of non-graduate women voted for the constitution.

Mhol Cumann Céimithe na mBan ó Ollscoil na hÉireann gur chóir vóta a chaitheamh i gcoinne Bhunreacht 1937: Creideann an tOllamh Joseph Lee gur chaith an chuid is mó de mhná nár chéimithe iad vóta ar son an Bhunreachta.

Source: https://irishelectionliterature.com/2012/03/12/from-1937-women-voters-vote-against-the-constitution/

There is a clear difference between the two constitutions. Under Ireland's current constitution, a law may be passed by the Oireachtas to recognize an existing legislature as subordinate. At the time this text allowed for the recognition of the Northern Ireland Parliament, which had been running for some sixteen years when Bunreacht na hÉireann was ratified. The same clause could, however, be used to recognize the current Northern Ireland Assembly as a subordinate legislature.

De Valera's constitution has proved robust and flexible, surprising many.[34] It has become a constitution as ordinarily understood. The Oireachtas is not sovereign. The constitution protects popular sovereignty. Referendums are required to amend the constitution. Judicial review and presidential reference for judicial review have helped protect constitutional and human rights, both those that are explicit, and those Americans call "unenumerated." The constitution has been sufficiently flexible to allow Articles 2 and 3 to be amended to reflect the principle of concurrent consent for Irish reunification, and to enable amendments, starting with the modification of Article 44 on religion, that reflect the country's thoroughgoing secularization, as well as its integration into the European confederation.[35] It is sufficiently flexible to allow for two different models of future reunification–one with a continuing Northern Ireland Assembly, and one in which Northern Ireland is dissolved. It must, however, be radically amended or replaced if federation becomes the chosen model of reunification, an unlikely possibility I believe.[36] The Constitution's Preamble, however, is not fit for purpose: it reads as sectarian, whatever the drafting intent. Likewise, the provisions on declarations for officeholders, including the President's, need to be fully secularized. Its drafting spirit was patriarchal and regressive regarding women's rights. A full scan and deliberation over the constitution, particularly its language provisions, is minimally necessary before the momentous and galvanizing prospects of reunification referendums circa 2030. Comprehensive replacement, however, may not be required, unless the model of reunification chosen is based on holding a constitutional convention elected by the entire people of the island.[37]

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

The other state created in 1922, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, is sovereign over Northern Ireland. It is sometimes, inaccurately, referred to as "the British state in Ireland," because there is no good adjectival form for UK. "Ukania and

34 The theme of my former doctoral student Bill Kissane is that Irish democracy is not amazing in the sense of being comparatively unsurprising, Kissane 1995, 2002.

35 Later, de Valera as President, signed into law the amendment removing the special position of the Roman Catholic Church (January 1973). For the speculative claim that the framers of the constitution "subconsciously" leaned heavily on Napoleon's 1801 concordat with the Papacy see Dudley Edwards, et al. 1968: pp. 86-87. On the European Union as a confederation see O'Leary 2020c.

36 O'Leary 2022 in press.

37 For further elaboration see Garry, et al. 2020, Garry, et al. 2022, O'Leary 2021b, O'Leary 2022 in press.

Ukanian", advanced by Tom Nairn, have no extensive followers.[38] In 1922, the territorially reconstructed United Kingdom lost more of its sovereign territory (22%) than Germany had at Versailles (13%), a vivid testament to its failure to incorporate Ireland into British nation-building. This down-sizing, under the pressure of ballots and armed insurrection, caused no significant political aftershock within Great Britain. No institutional transformation occurred akin to France's reconstruction during withdrawal from Algeria. Any prospects of 'home rule all around' or of federalizing the UK died, surviving only in the Round Table group–pan-dominion or commonwealth imperialists led by Lionel Curtis, who had been an advisor to Lloyd George during the making of the Treaty and after.[39]

From the perspective of British political elites, especially the Conservatives, down-sizing from Ireland, South *and* North, was almost a complete success. Ireland no longer sent over 100 MPs to the House of Commons. Tiresome 'Irish questions' were removed from the Commons, aided by a Speaker's convention blocking parliamentary questions and discussion on matters devolved to Northern Ireland. The Tories could also count on 10-12 UUP MPs at Westminster to take the Conservative whip until 1972, a phenomenon that concentrated Harold Wilson's mind when Labour won a House of Commons majority of four seats in 1964.

Managing Ireland became largely a question of international relations, whereas Northern Ireland was delegated to a small number of officials in the Treasury and the Home Office. The removal of 'the Irish question' from the Commons also unexpectedly facilitated the growth of Labour and the Conservatives at the expense of the Liberals.

"Class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail." So wrote a professor of politics in 1967. [40] That illusion was easier to believe after 1945 and before the duopoly of Labour and Conservatives began to breakdown in the mid-1970s. At least Scotland and Wales were part of the embellishment and detail; Northern Ireland was not; it was not treated as part of British party politics–its details did not fit class politics, even though its dominant party represented conservative British Protestant culture in nearly fossilized forms. Intellectual neglect within the British academy mirrored the political neglect in Westminster and Whitehall, and in the press and civil society. British imperial elites also quickly judged that partitioning Ireland had been a success–whence the confidence with which some of their officials advanced partition as a "solution" for mandate Palestine and "British" India.[41]

After 1918 and 1945 the victors of two world wars saw no reason to replace their constitution, essentially the English constitution, with its core doctrine of parliamentary sovereignty. Later, the not-so-post-imperial political elite of Greater England found European integration, especially the European Union, a profound challenge. There they encountered a constitutionalized confederation-in-the-making, rather than an international organization to be treated à la carte. We all know how that tension ended, or at least appears to have ended. Grafting the English constitution into the European confederation eventually did not work, although ironically the divorce took place after a referendum intended to resolve intra-elite disagreement among the Conservatives. Twenty years ago, it had not been absurd to imagine the UK evolving in an informally quasi-federal manner within a confederalizing Europe. That vista has gone like the snows of yesteryear.

Until England, and I mean England, constitutionalizes in a conventional manner by removing sovereignty from its imperious parliament, it will remain an awkward partner to its domestic neighbors, and its sovereign neighbors. "Awkward" is a polite adjective. Indeed, the dissolution of the two unions, that of Great Britain and that of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, may occur before the English determine to join the club of genuinely constitutionalized democracies. The rules for the dissolution of the union with Northern Ireland are agreed in a treaty, the rules for the other union are not. The current Conservative Prime Minister reserves the right to determine when the people of Scotland may next decide on their self-determination.

38 Nairn 1988. Nairn used the term satirically and would not have expected it to be accepted by its targets.

39 On the failure to federalize these isles see O'Leary 2020b: pp. 344-51.

40 Pulzer 1967: p. 98.

41 Mansergh 1997, O'Leary 2007, 2012, for a convincing study of Reginald Coupland see Dubnov 2019, who absolves him of formal partitionist intent in Palestine and India.

Finally?

Finally—the late JK Galbraith advised that a speaker should always say "finally" to give hope to his audience. Finally, we must learn from our constitutional experiences. 1922 was a bloody year throughout much of the island; both emergent jurisdictions experienced civil war. Both initial constitutional orders were failures, by the evaluative standards of constitutionality used here. We still live with the consequences. The compromises of 1937 and 1998 did not definitively settle the constitutional orders of the South and the North. The terms and conditions for future referendums on the possibility of reunification are specified in the 1998 Agreement—though not with the detail many would like to see.[42] They are also protected by two treaties. However, adequate constitutional preparation for the possibility of the referendums has not begun. The nature of the UK state, and Northern Ireland's lack of statehood, puts a particular onus on the Irish State to prepare for reunification.

The minimal statecraft required of this cohort of deputies and senators in the Oireachtas is to start considering the optimal constitutional accommodations that would provide a soft landing to the possible losers in the referendums. The losers could be Ulster unionists; but they could also be Northern nationalists—though they will be entitled to another referendum seven years later if the conditions are met again.

I have been told that it is a bit rich for the Irish to demand that treaties be honoured given that the independence of Ireland was partly accomplished through unilateral amendment or repudiation of a Treaty's articles. There is, however, an incomparable difference between voluntary treaties, freely negotiated and ratified, and coerced treaties imposed by the threat of "terrible and immediate war." Similar comparative condemnation should attach to insincere Treaty-making.

Preserving constitutional order and avoiding any diminution in the protection of rights across the island is the immediate challenge faced by our politicians. Preparing all, South and North, for the possibility of reunification, so that it may occur as democratically, peaceably, and constitutionally as possible, is the larger and more demanding challenge, both for this political class, and those who will follow them.

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Left to Right:—
BACK ROW:—Michael Kilroy, T. Kitterick, E. Moane, J. Gibbons, J. Walsh, P. J. Cannon, P. Lambert, J. Kelly, J. Doherty, B. Malone, J. Rush, J. Ring.
MIDDLE ROW:—M. Naughton, J. Hogan, J. Hearney, D. Sammon, J. Keane, J. Connolly, R. Joyce, P. McNamara, W. Malone.
FRONT ROW:—Dan Gavin, T. Heavey, J. Duffy, J. McDonagh, P. Kelly, J. Moran, J. Flaherty, B. Cryan, M. Staunton.
IN FRONT:—Dr. J. A. Madden.

Photo from the Imaging Conflict Exhibition

Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Respondent

Professor Henry Patterson

Ulster University

Class experience, state and identity, a Northern perspective

Professor Henry Patterson

An tOllamh Henry Patterson

Professor O'Leary has provided us with an impressive, historically informed, political science overview of the Free State, Northern Ireland and the UK since partition. My focus is a narrower one that addresses an issue that has been largely absent from the Decade of Centenaries treatment of the North – that of class and unionist identity. My focus will be on two groups: the shipyard owners and shipyard workers of Belfast. This is also in part the history of my father's family who arrived in east Belfast from Scotland in the last decade of the nineteenth century. Their history, in particular that involving employment in Belfast's premier industry, can be used as a concrete example of the progressive and sectarian tendencies within a key sector of the Protestant working class. At times these tendencies cohabited in the same individual as Connal Parr has recently demonstrated in his work on the shipyard playwright and master of a lodge of the Independent Orange Order, Thomas Carnduff.[1]

From the 1880s, the industrial/political bloc between the shipyard owners and their largely Protestant labour force was, in the words of Arthur Balfour to the War Cabinet in 1918, 'the heart of the Ulster movement'.[2]

Belfast's engineering and shipbuilding industries were orientated outwards to the Irish Sea triangle – of which the other points were Glasgow and Liverpool – and beyond that to the Empire. In the case of the shipyards a broader imperialism of free trade also linked them to markets in the United States and Latin America. The city's most dynamic period of economic and demographic expansion would not have happened without these links. The founders of the Harland and Wolff and Workman, Clark shipyards were either migrants from the North of England and Scotland or their second generation

1 Parr, C., (2017) *Inventing the Myth: Political Passions and the Ulster Protestant Imagination*, pp. 53-54, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

2 Patterson, H., (1980), *Class Conflict and Sectarianism: The Protestant Working Class and the Belfast Labour Movement 1868-1921*, p. 94, Blackstaff Press: Belfast.

descendants.[3] A unionism without these productive forces would have found it much harder to resist Home Rule.

By 1914 Harland and Wolff employed nearly 25,000 when its works in Liverpool and Southampton are included. In Belfast, along with Workman, Clark, the shipyards employed over 20,000 workers.[4] The industrial might of Belfast in British and international terms is well summed up by the economic historian, David Edgerton:

> *Belfast could claim Harland and Wolff, the largest shipyard in the world; Belfast Harbour built the largest dry dock in the world, the Thompson Graving Dock. It had in the Sirocco Works, the world's largest tea drying machinery maker and in the Belfast Rope Works, which employed 3,600 the largest maker of rope in the world ...*[5]

Shipyard workers set their own records: the Guinness World Record in riveting was set by a Workman, Clark riveter in 1918.[6]

Much of this industry was located in the east of the city across the Lagan from the city centre and the older largely textile-based industrial districts of the Shankill and the Falls. The giant Queen's Island works of Harland and Wolff, the Ropeworks and the Sirocco works were all in the Ballymacarrett district whose main artery was the lower Newtownards Road. The expanding workforces were housed in row after row of new redbrick terraces in East and South-East Belfast, many of which were built in the last two decades of the nineteenth century.

It was in this part of Belfast that my father was born in 1917 to parents living in Dee Street, which runs from the lower Newtownards Road towards the Queen's Island. The family, like many other Scottish Presbyterian migrants, arrived in Belfast from the shipbuilding centres of the Clyde in the 1890s. That decade had seen the population of Belfast expand from almost 260,000 to just under 350,000 the largest increase in its history.[7] Migrants from other shipbuilding centres brought not only their trades but also their politics – in 1893 some of the workers expelled from Harland and Wolff were identified as Scottish Home Rulers.[8]

My great grandfather, William, had been a riveter on the Clyde. According to the 1901 census the family was living in 10 Melrose Avenue, a recently constructed terrace of six houses, off the Beersbridge Road, a few hundred yards from the Ropeworks. William was now a riveter in Harland and Wolff, while his son Henry and daughter, Eliza, were employed in the Ropeworks.

By 1912, both William and Henry were working in Harland and Wolff: Henry was now also a riveter following the common path of many skilled shipyard workers throughout the UK where apprenticeships, jealously guarded by the craft unions, were obtained through the intervention of a father or other relative. Given the religious and ethnic divisions in Belfast, this meant the Protestant domination of the shipyard crafts. Henry married and moved to Hollycroft Avenue the next street up the Beersbridge Road from Melrose Avenue. A few streets further up was Hyndford Street where in 1945 at number 125 George Ivan, 'Van' Morrison was born, the son of an electrician in Harland and Wolff.

In 1912, William and Henry walked down the Beersbridge Road to the Bloomfield Avenue Presbyterian Church to sign the Ulster Covenant. Henry was in the Orange Order which by 1914 had over 13,000 members in Belfast, an increase of almost a third since the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill.[9] The Orange Order never constituted a solid bloc within Unionism, representing as it did a wide range of views and social groups. It was as divided by class as was the broader Unionist movement. Dee Street had a hall of the Independent Orange Order, the radical, working class schism from the main Order led by the shipyard worker, Thomas Sloan.

3 Maume, P., (2016), 'Sir George Smith Clark 1861-1935' in Maguire, J. & Quinn, J. (2016), (eds.), *Ulster Political Lives 1886-1925*, Royal Irish Academy: Dublin.

4 Moss, M. & Hume, J. R., *Shipbuilders to the World: 125 Years of Harland and Wolff, Belfast 1861-1986,* The Blackstaff Press: Belfast.

5 Edgerton, D. (2020), *The Rise and Fall of the British Nation*, p. 132, Penguin: London. 2020.

6 In 1918 shipbuilding yards throughout the UK competed to set the world record for riveting. The British Film Institute has a short film showing the then holder of the record, W. Moses, of Vickers Yard in Barrow and Furness, who sank 5894 rivets in a 9 hour shift. However, that was soon broken and a Guinness World Record set by John Moir of Workman Clark who, in a Stakhanovite performance, sank 11,209 rivets in nine hours. Like my great grandfather, Moir, a Presbyterian, had come to Belfast from the Clyde. Watch Record Breaking Rivetters Online. BFI Player, https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-record-breaking-riveters-1918-online accessed 18 March 2022.

7 Connolly, S. J., (ed.) (2012), *Belfast 400 People, Place and History*, p. 17, Liverpool University Press: Liverpool.

8 'Men expelled from Queen's Island', *Irish Times*, 26 April 1893.

9 Govan, D. H., (2021), 'Towards a religious understanding of the Orange Order in Belfast, 1910-14', *Irish Studies Review*, vol. 29, issue 4.

Bow view on No. 1 slip, North Yard, prior to launch. Ship No. 422, Name: Nomadic.

Radharc an Chloiginn ar Fhánán Uimh. 1, an Clós Thuaidh, roimh an seoladh. Long Uimhir 422, Ainm: Nomadic.

Photo by Harland and Wolff
Courtesy of National Museums NI
Ref: HOYFM.HW.H2329

Sloan's successful bid to become MP for South Belfast in 1902, had been financed by William Pirrie,[10] the managing director of Harland and Wolff, and at that time a Home Rule supporter.

Pirrie's family, like most of the Presbyterian business class of Belfast, had been Liberal in politics and anti-Orange down to the 1880s when Gladstone's support for Home Rule had pushed the majority into a Unionist alliance with their former Conservative opponents.[11] Pirrie had maintained the faith in part because his support for Catholic and Labour representation on Belfast Corporation when he was Lord Mayor in 1898 had robbed him of the Unionist nomination for South Belfast. He soon afterwards declared his support for Home Rule.[12]

Orangeism was certainly a barrier to a broader class unity across the religious divide but not to class consciousness within the shipyards – in 1920 some of the trade union militants expelled were Orangemen.[13] Portrayals of the Order as embodying a colonially rooted ethos of Protestant superiority over Catholics get only part of the truth of working class Orangeism. F.S.L Lyons' description of the Order still rings true: 'It appealed to religious primitivism but it also provided colour, poetry and its own kind of magic for ordinary drab lives.'[14]

A photograph taken on a piece of open ground in Dee Street in 1912[15] shows three rows of men seated and standing wearing Orange and Black sashes and collarettes with, at each side, members of the East Belfast UVF in uniform and carrying rifles. The men are standing in front of 'Lundy's Pole' – a telegraph pole converted into a symbolic display of loyalist determination to resist Home Rule and cast out traitors.

In February 1912, Pirrie had organised a pro-Home Rule meeting in Celtic Park in Belfast addressed by Winston Churchill and John Redmond.[16] Four days later he was pelted with flour, rotten eggs and herrings when getting the steamer to Scotland in Larne.[17] By 1920 Pirrie had reverted to Unionism. De Valera and Collins were perceived as such a direct threat to the future of the shipyards that he was making contingency plans to transfer the business to the Clyde.[18]

10 Sloan was a semi-skilled worker in Harland and Wolff who held evangelical meetings in the platers' shed during the lunch breaks: Moss and Hume, *Shipbuilders*, p. 127.

11 Johnson, A., (2020), *Middle Class Life in Victorian Belfast*, p. 160, Liverpool University Press: Liverpool.

12 Simpson, G., (2012), 'William Pirrie, the Titanic and Home Rule', *History Ireland*, volume 20, Issue 2.

13 Patterson, *Class Conflict and Sectarianism*, p. 142.

14 Lyons, F.S.L., (1982), *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939*, p. 136, Oxford University Press: Oxford.

15 Campbell, A., (2016), p. 56, *Ballymacarrett, An Illustrated and Spoken History of Ballymacarrett*, Self-published: East Belfast.

16 'Lord Pirrie was generally considered to be one of Belfast's most unloved citizens..', Dangerfield, G., (2012). *The Strange Death of Liberal England*, p. 84, Serif: London.

17 Moss and Hume, *Shipbuilders*, p. 157.

18 Ibid, p. 225.

At the north end of Dee Street, before the bridge which took workers into the shipyard, was the Oval, the ground of Glentoran FC. The land on which the Oval was built along with a large part of Ballymacarrett between the Queen's Island and the lower Newtownards Road was owned by the property developer, factory owner and Unionist politician, Sir Daniel Dixon. Dixon was the key mover in floating Glentoran as a public company in 1900, along with Gustav Wolff and Pirrie.

In 1912 the Oval was the venue for an anti-Home Rule rally where the crowd created a human Union Jack.[19] Glentoran was the sporting embodiment of a unionist class alliance. The player register for 1911/12 lists the trades of the players: fitters, caulkers, shipwrights, platers, painters and shipyard labourers.

Craftsmen were the shipyard elite and constituted around two thirds of the workforce.[20] Tasked with riveting together the iron and steel plates of a ship's hull, the riveters were amongst the highest paid crafts. These were Lenin's 'labour aristocracy', the skilled workers who formed the bedrock of craft unionism and labour politics. However, although wages were higher, the work was insecure due to the very severe business cycle of the industry – unemployment was common even in periods of prosperity. Working on the hulls of ships in all weathers was dangerous and deaths and injuries from falls or objects falling on workers were common.[21] The constant noise of hammering resulted in many riveters being deaf by the end of their thirties.[22] Inhalation of fumes from the heating of rivets could lead to lung disease – it killed my grandfather at the age of 50.

Many of those who attended the 1912 Unionist rally were, by January 1919, involved in the shipbuilding and engineering workers strike for a reduction of working hours from 54 hours to 44 which shut down the city for three weeks. Emmet O'Connor has labelled the two years from the summer of 1918 to the summer of 1920 as Belfast's two Red Years pointing to the mass strike and the election of 13 Labour councillors to the Corporation in January 1920.[23]

The shipyard expulsions of July 1920 have captured the attention of historians. However, the broader social and economic history of Ballymacarrett, its industrial muscle and trade union history, have hardly featured in analyses of this period and the subsequent history of the Northern Ireland state.[24]

The shipyards contained a dark tradition, manifest since the 1860s, of vicarious retribution against Catholic employees for the political and violent acts of Irish nationalists in other parts of the island. They also contained those, who in the 1893 disturbances over the second Home Rule Bill, tried to protect their Catholic workmates from the mob.[25] The main craft unions condemned the violence and intimidation in 1893 and 1912[26]. It was to the shipyard workers of his parish that the Revd John Redmond of St Patrick's on the lower Newtownards Road turned in July 1920 when he organised bands of unarmed volunteers to protect the premises of local Catholics and prevent rioting and looting.[27]

However, there is little doubt that, at a time of intense uncertainty about the political future of the North, many shipyard workers were indifferent to the fate of those who had been expelled and others feared the consequences of opposing the mob. But the national question was not the sole issue at play. Employers and the Unionist leadership shared an acute class anxiety. The *Belfast Newsletter* blamed the 1919 strike on 'Bolshevik agitators'.[28] Carson was President of the British Empire Union, established by ultras in the Conservative Party to 'expose Bolshevism and the dangers connected with Nationalism'. In Belfast a key role in the BEU was played by the shipyard militants of the Ulster Unionist

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19 This paragraph is based on Robinson, S., (no date), *There's a Green Sward Called the Oval: The Life and Times of a Football Stadium*, Self-published: Belfast.

20 Foster, J., & Woolfson, C., (1986), *The Politics of the UCS Work-In*, p. 134, Lawrence & Wishart: London.

21 James Connolly wrote of the loss of 17 workers during the construction of the *Titanic*: 'Our shipyards offer up a daily sacrifice of life and limb on the altar of capitalism.' quoted in Lynch, J., 'The Belfast Shipyards and the Industrial Working Class' in Devine, F., *et.al*., (2008), *Essays in Irish Labour History*, p. 141, Irish Academic Press: Dublin.

22 De Kerbrech, R.P., & Williams, D.L., (2021) *Harland and Wolff and Workman Clark; A Golden Age of Shipbuilding in Old Images*, p. 22, The History Press: Cheltenham.

23 O'Connor, E., (2019) 'Labour in Ulster and the Formation of Northern Ireland', in *Labour and Northern Ireland Foundation and Development*, pp. 20-21, Proceedings of a Conference held by Northern Ireland Committee of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Belfast, 5 October 2019.

24 An important exception is Parr, C., *Inventing the Myth*.

25 'Disturbances in Belfast....Men beaten on Queen's Island', *The Weekly Irish Times*, 29 April 1893.

26 'The Queen's Island Workmen', *Irish Times*, 6 May 1893 and Morgan, A., (1991), *Labour and Partition The Belfast Working Class 1905-1923*, p. 136, Pluto Press: London.

27 Walker, B.M., 'Outreach in the Midst of Conflict: The Revd John Redmond in 1920s Belfast'. https://www.ireland.anglican.org>news>outreach accessed 22 March 2022.

28 Patterson, *Class Conflict and Sectarianism*, p. 105.

Labour Association who identified socialism and industrial militancy with Sinn Féin. [29]

The UULA did its work well – over 1850 of the expelled were Protestants, many of them trade union and labour activists.[30] Along with high rates of unemployment from the mid-1920s to the end of the thirties the spectre of shipyard radicalism which had so troubled Unionist leaders in 1919 was banished.

The Second World War resulted in an upsurge of militancy in the shipyards, engineering and aircraft factories, which between them employed around 40,000 workers in 1944.[31] It was the heavily unionised shipyard and engineering workers who made Northern Ireland the most strike prone region of the UK during the Second World War.[32] It was east Belfast workers, many of them from the shipyard, who gave Billy McCullough, general secretary of the Communist Party of Northern Ireland, almost six thousand votes in the 1945 Stormont election for the Bloomfield constituency.[33] Without the fear of losing this class's support the Unionist Party may well have indulged its most reactionary sectors and used devolution to keep out the welfare state when it was introduced in the rest of the UK after 1945.

My grandfather was part of the 'respectable' working class, with no time for rioters but equally no sympathy for 'red flaggers'. He had joined the Congregationalists, a small ultra-democratic sect, that expected regular church and Sunday school attendance and an ordered life distinct from chaos and disorder which was thought to characterise the 'rough' elements of the working class.

With six children, the eldest nine at the time of partition, his work and the income it brought was the centre of his existence. The summer violence in 1920 was uncomfortably close to his family. In two incidents at or near Dee Street, five young Protestants were shot dead by the military.[34] However, with some of the best wages for skilled workers in the UK and relatively full order books down to 1925, Harland and Wolff provided the means by which he was able to exit east Belfast and take his family to the safely unionist town of Bangor.

His unionism and British national identity, like that of many other working class Protestants, was rooted in taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life at the core of which was their work and the nexus of financial, economic and political relations with Britain and the Empire that made it possible. These included the trade unions and for a minority, labour and socialist politics. The material basis for this working class unionist identity was still remarkably strong in the 1960s – the iconic gantries, *Samson* and *Goliath*, were built in 1969 and 1973.

It was also manifest in the shop stewards' movement which had developed during the War. In August 1969 when violence broke out in Belfast, it was the shop stewards who called a mass meeting of the workforce to successfully oppose attempts by loyalist militants to repeat the expulsion of the 1920s. In the words of Sandy Scott, the chief shop steward in the yard, 'The shipyard men are determined to maintain the peace and set an example to the province.'[35]

For all the sectarianism that existed within the shipyards, without the class consciousness that was also rooted there, the Northern Ireland state would have been more like the 'carnival of reaction' that Connolly predicted.

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29 *Ibid*., pp. 127-128.

30 Morgan, *Labour and Partition*, p. 270.

31 Ollerenshaw, P., (2013), *Northern Ireland in the Second World War*, p. 128, Manchester University Press: Manchester.

32 *Ibid*., pp. 123-125.

33 Byers, S., (2015), *Sean Murray Marxist Leninist and Irish Socialist Republican*, p. 146, Irish Academic Press: Dublin, 2015.

34 On the 22 July 1920, the day after the shipyard expulsions, James Stewart, an eighteen year old apprentice engineer from Clydebank, was walking down the Newtownards Road with his cousin, Nellie McGregor and John Doyle, a friend, when they were shot and fatally wounded by soldiers dealing with rioters further down the road near St Matthews Catholic church. Stewart was on holiday from Scotland staying with his cousin who lived in Frome Street, the next street up from Dee Street towards the city centre. There is no suggestion that they or Doyle were involved in rioting. O'Halpin, E & O Corrain, D., (2021), *The Dead of the Irish Revolution*, p. 153, Yale University Press: New Haven & London.

On the 25 August during the severe rioting that followed the IRA's killing of District Inspector Swanzy in Lisburn, James McCartney a nineteen year old rope-worker from Frome Street and Ethel Mary Burrowes, a sixteen year old rope-worker from Bright Street were shot and fatally wounded at Dee Street. The shots came from a military lorry parked outside St Matthew's church, Ibid., p. 165.

35 Michael McInerney, 'The Vital Battle for Peace in Belfast Shipyards', *Irish Times*, 30 December 1969.

Respondent

Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne

University College Cork

Institutionalising Exclusion in Modern Ireland

Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne
An tOllamh Lindsey Earner-Byrne

On 25 August 1928 the readers of the *Connacht Tribune* were informed:

> *On Thursday morning a young woman inmate of the Magadalen Asylum, Galway, whose name was stated to be unknown, escaped from the institution.*
>
> *She is described as being aged about 25 years, wearing a black skirt, and had a slight stoppage in her speech.*[1]

This small snippet of a day in the life of Ireland in the late 1920s – barely a square inch of newsprint – tells us much about the status of women, the power of institutions and how the brutal treatment of the most vulnerable was normalised. The strange breed of 'young woman inmate' did not even warrant the very basic ingredients of biography, the only distinguishing feature of certainty was her 'slight stoppage' of speech. In this period of commemoration we might pause for a minute and think about the life obscured in this ad and the world revealed by it. How could anyone placing this ad not know the woman's name? How long had she been in the asylum? She was twenty-five, so legally an adult, on what grounds was she imprisoned? Was it that 'stoppage' in her speech that had singled her out and rendered her different? Was she caught and returned to her prison? Did anyone ever remember her name and record either her life or death? In her bid for escape she pierced, briefly, the sanctimonious world of moral certainty Ireland was building on backs such as hers. She also tells us a good deal about the institutionalisation of exclusion in the Irish Free State.

We are currently experiencing a period of self-reflection as a nation, which has been largely focused on our treatment of women and children

1 'Patient's escape magdalen asylum', *Connacht Tribune*, 25 August 1928.

in carceral institutions. This is no coincidence because the systematic demonisation of the so-called 'unmarried mother', since the mid-nineteenth century, was indicative of a wider system of structural violence in which all women were contingent actors – their belonging dependant on their behaviour. Any woman could have been sent to either a Magdalen asylum or a mother and baby home and be held there for an indeterminate period of time against her will. This, as we can see from the ad in the *Connacht Tribune*, was played out in full sight of the nation, in part, because it was supposed to act as a warning to others, but also, because it was part of the *process* of institutionalising exclusion. This process was considered vital to the new nation, underpinned as it was by ideas of belonging: we can only include if we have a sense of who is to be excluded. The process of normalising those categories – the insider and the outsider, the respectable and the deviant – was a vital component of nation-building in many places beyond Ireland. The process was often complex and always inflected by the priorities of the given context be that religion, gender, class, ethnicity and/or race. It is usually framed as intuitive and natural or God-given because a perquisite to institutionalisation is the normalisation of exclusion. In Ireland *institutionalising* became the verb of choice for the realisation of exclusion.

The active role of many women in the unrest and revolution since 1916, in particular, the visible role of women on the anti-Treaty side of the Irish Civil War, added a new intensity to an anxiety evolving since the early days of the suffrage campaigns regarding the expanding role of women in society and politics. Thus, characterising the women engaged in the Civil War as hysterical, crazed and emotional, did important work in denying them any political agency and effectively undermining the idea of women as capable of independent political consciousness that was not dangerous. As Cardinal Logue lamented in 1923: 'a number of young women and girls have become involved in this wild orgy of violence and destruction... Should this fell spirit spread, alas for the future motherhood of Ireland! We have ever been proud of the women and girls of Ireland; and justly so. Their reputation has been a precious asset of the nation.'[2] While there is little doubt that the fear of social unravelling underlay much of the moral panic of the 1920s, Irish nationalism and unionism's cleavage to the precepts of respectability was an equally important driver.

How deviance is classified and marginality defined tells us a good deal about where political power lies. The notion of respectability provided fertile soil for the making of the fledgling Irish nation embedded as it was in middle-class ideas of ownership, progress, governance and control.[3] In effect 'respectability' became an organising principle, it had places and spaces for people creating a logic for governance and behaviour, by ordering, protecting and confining. Its greatest trick was to mask the violence used to hold it in place by rendering it normal, for the greater good, thus converting implicit and even explicit violence into a reasonable correction, an action to protect the whole.[4] On Confirmation Day 1924, the Catholic Bishop of Galway explained to his flock that there were six local women 'on the parish' due to their 'lapses in virtue'.[5] To the fathers of Ireland he instructed: 'if your girls do not obey you, if they are not in at the hours appointed, lay the lash upon their backs... '[6] The permission this ordering gave for the embedding of violence at the heart of social relationships and social structures remains palpable and had real and physical consequences for thousands of people. In the name of respectability institutions such as magdalen asylums, county homes and mother and baby homes were normalised as sites of moral correction.[7] Nor was this a uniquely Catholic message, the readers of *The Church of Ireland Gazette* were informed that the increased moral threat was 'owing to the fact that young women have a greater degree of liberty accorded to them... with applications [to Rescue Homes]

2 'His Eminence Cardinal Logue's Lenten Pastoral. Demoralisation of Youth. Lamentable Events,' *Irish Independent*, 12 February 1923.

3 See, Maude Royden, 'Religion, and modern sexuality', *Journal of British Studies* 52 (2013), pp. 153–78

4 Explored particularly in African studies and history see, for example, Ann L. Stoler, 'Making empire respectable: the politics of race and sexual morality in twentieth century colonial cultures,' *American Ethnologist*, 16: 4 (1989), pp. 634-660; Corinne Sandwich, 'Contesting a 'Cult(ure) of respectability': anti-colonial resistance in the western cape, 1935–1950', *Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*, 16: 1 (2004), pp. 33-60; Robert Ross, *Respectability and the Culture of Colonial Society: Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony 1750–1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge University Press, 1999); Stephen Kingsley Scott, 'Through the diameter of respectability: the politics of historical representation in post emancipation colonial Trinidad', *New West Indian Guide/ Nieuwe West-Indishce Gids*, 76: 3-4, (2002), pp. 271-303.

5 'Evil Tendency: Immorality in Galway Deplored by Bishop: Warning to Girls – Influence of Dancing and Bad Literature, *The Freeman's Journal*, 11 April 1924.

6 Ibid.

7 See J. Smith's, *Ireland's Magdalen Laundries and the Nation's Architecture of Containment* (Manchester, 2007); L. Earner-Byrne, *Mother and Child: Maternity and Child Welfare in Dublin, 1922-60* (Manchester, 2007).

House decorated for Eucharistic Congress.

Commissioned by
Mr M. Quinn
37 Green Street, Waterford.

Teach maisithe don Chomhdháil Eocairisteach.

Arna choimisiúnú ag
an Uasal M. Quinn,
37 Sráid na Faiche, Port Láirge.

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pouring in from a superior class of unmarried girls, from clerks, typists, teachers and certified nurses.'[8]

Deviant women, and the definition could be broad and arbitrary, were to be excised from the bosom of the nation.[9] The single mother was framed as an anathema to the 'legitimate' family, she undermined it, endangered the standing of its other members, thus the 'respectable family' needed to banish her. Indeed, the fact that families around the country often found it impossible to reconcile the ideals of respectability with the reality of lived experience, reinforced a culture of silence in which the perceived shortfalls in behaviour were personalised, internalised and hidden. When the consequences were so high how many people were in a position to speak up? The ruse of protection meant that only when you failed to perform as you ought, did you notice the categories that held your social existence – 'good daughter', 'good mother' etc. – were not merely abstract.[10] Then the protective veneer became something else, something much less benign, something with the power of moral correction, a licence to control and force compliance. A dangerous mother was removed. An immoral daughter was expelled. A neglectful parent had their children taken away. This could be done for your own good, for the greater good, for the good of the nation.

The implications of the moral universe the new Irish Free State cultivated was not just hyperbole, its painful and often devastating impact is inscribed in our archives. Its political economy informed everything including, for example, the Military Service Pension Collection. In 1922 Mrs Rose Perry sought a dependence allowance for herself and her two small children upon the death of her twenty-four year old husband – shot dead after only 3 weeks of service in the new National Army.[11] However, there was a fly in the official ointment, Rose had not been legally married to

8 'A Door of Hope', *The Church of Ireland Gazette*, 21 November 1924.

9 Women were incarcerated for reasons as tenuous and broad as 'fears' for their moral safety, for reporting sexual assault, in cases of incest and pregnancy outside of marriage.

10 I am influenced by Sara Ahmed's work on categories of existence. See Ahmed, 'A willfulness archive', *Theory & Event*, 15: 3 (2012), pp. 1-22.

11 Rose Perry, The House of Recovery and Fever Hospital, Cork Street, Dublin to Department of Defence, 24 November 1922. Military Service Pensions Collection (M.S.P.C.) Patrick Perry, 2D133.

the father of her children. Although the Irish Ministry of Defence pointed out that the British Army would have recognised her as his common-law wife, the new Irish dispensation was to prove its discerning credentials by refusing her and her children support.[12] Her children ended up in an orphanage. The price of the new State's moral imperative was quite literally the institutionalisation of exclusion. Despite this negation of Rose Perry's legitimacy as a mother and her right to compensation for the loss of her breadwinner and life partner, who had died in the service of the new State, she had no sense of rightful anger and was merely fearful that the Department of Defence would blow her social cover and inform her employer that she was not a 'legitimate widow' of the nation.

The inevitable gap between the ideal and the real was often left to women to negotiate alone and in fear. While the 1922 Constitution of the Irish Free State honoured the commitment to equal suffrage, it did not prove effective at preventing the enactment of legislation in the 1920s and 30s which sought to pigeonhole and restrict women's citizenship. The 1937 Constitution represented the high point of this gendered vision defining women's roles through their capacity as homemakers. Indeed, in response to the draft of the Constitution, the Joint Committee of Women's Societies called out the false promise of protectionist rhetoric for what it was, explaining: 'The only protection women need, and the only protection women ask, is equality, under the Constitution, of rights and opportunities.'[13] Rose Perry might well have agreed.

Saidiya Hartman, who works so imaginatively to reclaim the history of black women, when considering the challenge of writing the history of women slaves asked: 'How does one revisit the scene of subjection without replicating the grammar of violence?'[14] One clear way to avoid re-inscribing the harm of the past in the narrative of our history, is by deconstructing the eco-system of power that has shaped the nation, its archives and, in many respects, the discipline of history itself. We might start by asking how many people could afford to see the world differently? Who was in a position to act differently? What would it have taken to produce a counter-narrative of inclusion and compassion? How many lived against the grain of this consensus absorbing their pregnant daughters, standing by their disgraced children, siblings or neighbours? What were their strategies and what can we learn from them? Institutionalising exclusion was pivotal to the structural violence that underpinned inequality in the past; a failure to acknowledge this in the history we write misses how central it is to the story of the nation *and* its relationship to continuing inequalities today.

12 Minister for Finance, Ernest Blythe refused the pension, the Minister for Defence, Richard Mulcahy would have granted it. Department of Finance Memo, 28 April 1924. Ibid.

13 Mary S. Kettle, Chairman of the Joint Committee of Women Societies letter to the Editor, 'Women and the Constitution', *Irish Times*, 11 May 1937.

14 Saidiya Hartman, 'Venus in two acts', *Small Axe*, 26 (June 2008), p. 4.

Respondent

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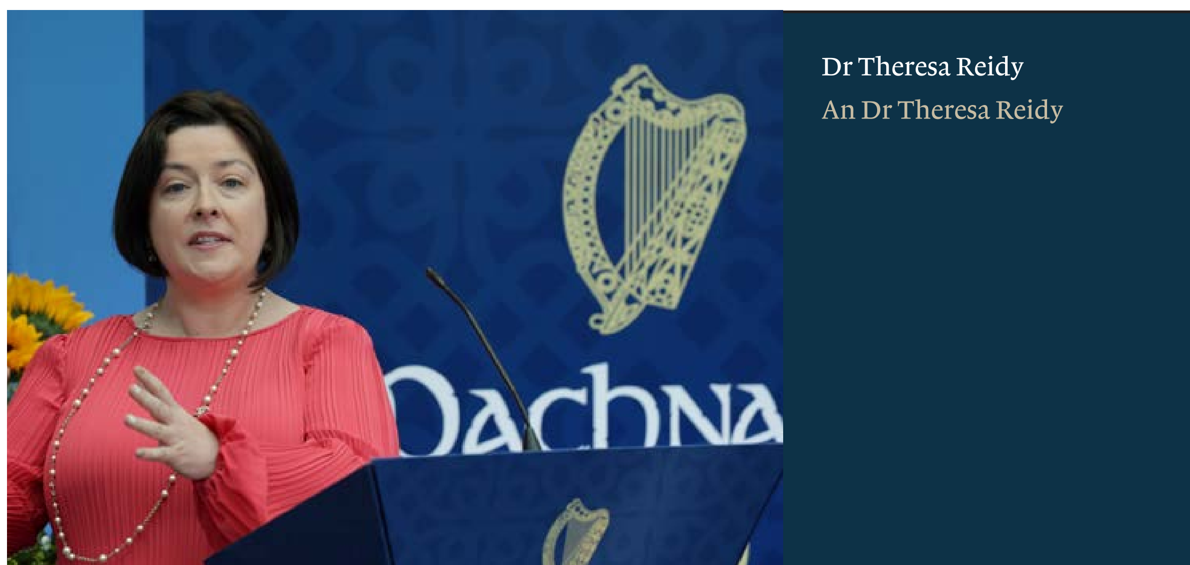
Representative government: the electoral systems



Dr Theresa Reidy

An Dr Theresa Reidy

Introduction

At their core, electoral systems convert votes cast at elections into seats in parliament. This is the opening sentence of nearly every book ever written on electoral systems. But electoral systems do much more. Michael Gallagher and Paul Mitchell describe the electoral system as the "crucial link in the chain of representative democracy"[2] and Pippa Norris has argued that electoral system choice is one of the most enduring decisions that can be made within a political system.[3] Both statements have particular significance in relation to decisions on electoral system choice on the island of Ireland.

Proportional Representation by the Single Transferable Vote (PRSTV) was the electoral system chosen for elections, North and South, at the foundation of the two separate political jurisdictions. Within a short number of years, PRSTV was rejected for use in Northern Ireland, and replaced with First Past the Post (FPTP), sometimes also known as "*winner takes all*" while PRSTV became one of the defining institutions of political life in the Free State, later Republic of Ireland. Importantly the two systems operate with very different logics and principles but yielded somewhat similar outcomes in their initial decades of operation. Variants of majoritarian style politics emerged both in Northern Ireland and the Free State despite theoretical expectations at least that PRSTV in the Free State would generate multipartyism and a more consensus style of politics. As society changed and political conditions evolved, PRSTV in the Republic proved itself an electoral formula that could channel and reflect changing political attitudes and affiliations while FPTP in Northern Ireland amplified underpinning divisions.

1 I would like to thank Prof Jane Suiter and Prof Gary Murphy for their generous and insightful comments on early drafts of this work.

2 Gallagher, M. and Mitchell, P. eds., (2005). *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. Oxford University Press: Oxford.

3 Norris, P., (1997). Choosing electoral systems: proportional, majoritarian and mixed systems. *International Political Science Review*, 18(3), pp. 297-312.

The vibrant field of electoral system scholarship has demonstrated concretely that the different families of electoral systems generate notable, and variable outcomes as happened in Ireland over the long term. The electoral system adopted can impact upon which citizens are represented and to what extent, the composition of the party system, common form of government and government durability. Matt Shugart has also described how electoral system choice impacts upon the broader concerns of political science, such as "regime stability, democratic quality and management of ethnic conflict".[4] But indeed, as Moser and Scheiner have shown, political context also systematically shapes the effects of electoral systems.[5] It is useful to unpack some of these points in a short review of electoral politics in Northern Ireland and the Free State.

As early as the nineteenth century, it was understood that proportional systems generated more equal representation giving a closer relationship between the votes cast for a party and the seats it received but the accepted downside was this often meant political fragmentation with many political parties and unstable forms of government (then understood as coalitions). Majoritarian systems provided a more imperfect relationship between votes and seats, favoured two party politics but yielded stable majority one-party governments.

These central propositions were formalised into theoretical models in the 1950s by the French political scientist Maurice Duverger.[6] Duverger classified party and government consequences as the "mechanical effects" of electoral system choice. He also elaborated on the "psychological effects" of electoral systems and the ways in which political parties, candidates and voters behave in response to, and expectation of, how the electoral system operates. For example, it is difficult for small parties to succeed in plurality systems, thus there are limited incentives to create new parties. These are not "laws" of political science but they are borne out in many cases. For example, Arend Lijphart demonstrated that the effective number of parties is 2.0 in plurality systems but 3.6 in PR systems.[7]

Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State provide a fascinating comparative case study of the outcomes of different electoral systems in operation in neighbouring but substantially different polities. In the early decades, these two systems delivered unusually similar majoritarian politics with a small numbers of parties and a tendency towards single party governments but they tracked in very different directions as the decades passed.

Proportional Representation in Ireland

John Coakley has provided a valuable overview of the reasoning and decisions that led to the introduction of PRSTV in Ireland.[8] It was adopted for selected constituencies under the Home Rule Act (1914), for local elections in Sligo in 1918, and then latterly in 1919 for local election across the island, and for parliamentary elections to the Northern and Southern parliaments under the Government of Ireland Act (1920).

Interestingly the selection of PRSTV as the electoral system for Ireland was largely uncontroversial. Discussion of electoral reform was widespread in Great Britain in the late nineteenth century with considerable concerns expressed about minority representation[9] and, momentum for change also took hold in Ireland. An Irish branch of the Proportional Representation Society was established and Basil Chubb highlighted the attendance of Arthur Griffith at an early public lecture in 1911 as decisive in shifting Sinn Féin support in favour of the system.[10] The representation of minority interests provided by PR persuaded Griffith that it could work effectively for the complex politics of pre-independence Ireland. The widespread use of PR across new European democracies to deal with class, religious and linguistic cleavages, and the fact that it was not used in Britain are also cited as being important indicators of why it was embraced by Sinn Féin.[11] The only voices

4 Shugart, M. (2008). "Comparative Electoral Systems Research: The Maturation of a Field and New Challenges Ahead" In M. Gallagher and P. Mitchell eds., *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, p. 28.

5 Moser, R.G. and Scheiner, E. (2012). Electoral systems and political context: How the effects of rules vary across new and established democracies. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

6 Duverger, M. (1954). *Political Parties. Their organization and Activity in the Modern State*. Methuen and Co: London.

7 Lijphart, A. (1994). Democracies: Forms, performance, and constitutional engineering. *European Journal of Political Research*, 25(1), p. 1-17. See also Singer, M.M. (2013). Was Duverger correct? Single-member district election outcomes in fifty-three countries. *British Journal of Political Science*, 43(1), pp. 201-220.

8 Coakley, J. (1991). The Single Transferable Vote in Ireland: An historical assessment. *Representation*, 30(111), p. 46-48. See also Coakley, J. (2021). Is a middle force emerging in Northern Ireland?. *Irish Political Studies*, 36(1), pp. 29-51.

9 Catterall, P. (2000). The British Electoral System, 1885-1970. *Historical Research*, 73(181), pp. 156-174.

10 Chubb, B. (2014). *The Government and Politics of Ireland*. Routledge: London, p. 133.

11 O'Leary, C. (1961). *The Irish Republic: And Its Experiment with Proportional Representation*. University of Notre Dame Press: USA.

in opposition to PRSTV came from the Ulster Unionist side and their opposition was rooted in the view that the system was "unBritish".[12] Indeed, in 1885, Gladstone had described STV as "artificial, not known to our usages and history".[13]

There were strategic considerations at play in the thinking of the British administration in its support for PRSTV at elections in Ireland. It was persuaded the system could deliver representation for the Protestant minority on the island: the Anglo Irish in Southern Ireland and Ulster Unionists in Northern Ireland. Conn O'Leary has argued that the outcome of the 1918 general election in which nationalists swept the board using FPTP, reinforced support for PRSTV among British decision makers.[14] He cites later newspaper coverage of the Sligo local elections that used PRSTV and the fact that Sinn Féin was pushed into second place, as important in persuading Southern Unionists that PR could deliver minority representation. The PR system also delivered representation for nationalists in local electoral districts in Northern counties in 1919, in further evidence of its effectiveness in delivering minority representation. British electoral reformers also favoured PRSTV because it retained a strong role for candidates and was considered to preserve the constituency connection between representative and voters more effectively than other alternatives.

With the British administration onside and tacit support from nationalists, PRSTV emerged as the electoral system of choice for the parliaments in Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland in the Government of Ireland Act (1920).[15] PR was included in the Anglo Irish Treaty of 1921 and later transposed into the Free State Constitution.

Free State

Several histories that address the choice of PRSTV remark that it was selected at the time because it was the only version of PR then known to the negotiators[16] although Joe Lee notes that concerns were expressed during the writing of the Free State Constitution that PR might lead to an excessive form of multipartyism and unstable government.[17] Lee goes on to provide a long quote from Ernest Blythe from a later date on the same point. So while it may have been the case that STV was the only version of PR known at the time, some of its potential implications and consequences were understood substantially.

The early PRSTV elections (especially in Southern Ireland, later the Free State) tell us little about the system. Electoral pacts and uncontested seats delivered pre-ordained outcomes. The first, what we might today term, "free and fair" general election in the Free State was held in 1923. It used PR as mandated by the Free State Constitution and STV as set out in the Electoral Act.[18] The Dáil consisted of 153 TDs elected from 30 constituencies with district magnitudes (the number of representatives to be elected per constituency) between three and nine seats. Historians recorded a keen contest with 375 candidates and the outcome was broadly proportional: four parties and two groups of independents (Unionists and non-party) were elected.[19]

A minority single party government was installed, albeit one that was able to act as though it had a majority because of Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin abstention. Several new and splinter parties formed in the ensuing years reflecting one of Duverger's psychological effects, that party entry is easier in a PR system. However, most failed to mount serious challenges at later elections and faded from politics or were absorbed into the existing parties. The first 1927 election substantially defined the party system with Fianna Fáil's early performance setting the ground for its later dominance while the second election resulted in many of the early smaller parties losing seats they would not regain.

The effective number of elective parties, a measure of political fragmentation, was above four until the close of the 1920s when it dropped back to three. New party entry was again a feature in the 1940s but it was not until the late 1990s that fragmentation reached levels seen at the foundation of the State.[20] The Republic of Ireland had a two and a half party system for most of the twentieth century, an outcome more commonly

12 O'Leary, C. (1979). *Irish Elections, 1918-77: Parties, Voters, and Proportional Representation*. Gill and Macmillan: Dublin, p. 6.

13 Catterall, P. (2000), p. 159.

14 O'Leary, C. (1979), p. 8.

15 Coakley, J. (1991).

16 See Gallagher, M. (2008) Ireland: The Discreet Charm of PR-STV. In M. Gallagher and P. Mitchell eds., *The Politics of Electoral Systems*. Oxford University Press: Oxford, p. 513. See also Chubb, B. (2014).

17 Lee, J.J. (1989). *Ireland, 1912-1985: Politics and Society*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.

18 *Ibid*.

19 O'Leary, C. (1979).

20 Reidy, T. (2022) Economic crisis, exacting voters and twenty-five years of electoral transformation in Ireland 1997-2022'. *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, p. 51.

SAMPLE BALLOT PAPER.

Attend Early on Friday, 16th June, and VOTE for the Candidates sent forward by the Workers, HUGH COLOHAN and JAMES EVERETT, by placing 1 and 2 opposite their names.

Mark Order of Preference in Spaces below.	Names of Candidates.
	BARTON (Robert Childers Barton, Glendalough House, Annamoe, Co. Wicklow, Farmer).
	BERGIN (John James Bergin, [illegible], Athy, Farmer).
	BUCKLEY (Daniel Buckley, Main Street, Maynooth, Merchant).
	BYRNE (Christopher Ml. Byrne, [illegible], [illegible], Co. Wicklow, Farmer).
	CHILDERS (Robert Erskine Childers, 12 Bushy Park Road, Terenure, Dublin, Gentleman).
	COLOHAN (Hugh Colohan, [illegible] Rowan Terrace, Newbridge, Brick and Stonelayer).
	EVERETT (James Everett, St. Patrick's Road, Wicklow, Trade Union Secretary).
	O'CONNOR (Arthur O'Connor, Elm Hall, Celbridge, Co. Kildare, Bachelor of Engineering).
	PHELAN (Patrick Phelan, [illegible], [illegible] E., Farmer).
	WILSON (Richard Wilson, [illegible], Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow, Farmer).

Your Number on Register is ____________

Your Polling Booth is at ____________

"The [illegible] Leader" Printing Works, [illegible].

Sample ballot paper for the general election 1922 / Labour Party

Sample ballot paper listing all candidates standing for Co. Wicklow in the general election 1922 [candidates listed include Robert Childers Barton, John James Bergin, Christopher Michael Byrne, Robert Erskine Childers, Hugh Colohan, James Everett, Arthur O'Connor, Patrick Phelan and Richard Wilson] but requesting support in particular for the Labour Party candidates - "Attend early on Friday, 16th June and vote for the candidates sent forward by the Workers, Hugh Colohan and James Everett, by placing 1 and 2 opposite their names".

Páipéar ballóide samplach don olltoghchán i 1922 / Páirtí an Lucht Oibre

Páipéar ballóide samplach inar tugadh ainmneacha na n-iarrthóirí ar fad i gCo. Chill Mhantáin in olltoghchán 1922 [ar na hiarrthóirí ar an liosta tá Robert Childers Barton, John James Bergin, Christopher Michael Byrne, Robert Erskine Childers, Hugh Colohan, James Everett, Arthur O'Connor, Patrick Phelan agus Richard Wilson] ach tacaíocht á lorg go speisialta d'iarrthóirí ó Pháirtí an Lucht Oibre "Bí ann go luath Dé hAoine an 16 Meitheamh agus cuir 1 agus 2 in aice ainmneacha Hugh Colohan agus James Everett le vóta a chaitheamh ar son na n-iarrthóirí atá curtha chun tosaigh ag an Lucht Oibre".

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associated with a majoritarian electoral system. There were periods of electoral change but the Fianna Fáil – Fine Gael – Labour triumvirate at the core always reasserted itself, that is until the early twenty first century where the evidence suggests that the system is mean-reverting no more![21]

In many ways, the Free State provided a rare inversion of Durverger's proposition. It began with a multi-party system that Peter Mair described as polarised pluralism.[22] It drifted towards a two and a half party system with more moderate pluralism from the 1930s to the early 1990s, when the seeds of a fully-fledged multiparty system flourished once more. No one form of government predominated but single party governments were a regular feature until 1989.

PRSTV was designed into the politics of the Free State to provide representation for the minority Anglo Irish community and it did achieve that, at least for a time through the university seats and electoral rules. Joe Lee notes with some irony that the first minority saved by PRSTV was Anti-Treaty Sinn Féin which would surely have been decimated in a system using FPTP.[23] Minority voices were accommodated but it would be wrong to assess the Free State as a place where

21 Gallagher, M., Marsh, M., Reidy, T. (eds). (2021) *How Ireland Voted 2020: The End of an Era*. Palgrave Macmillan: UK.
22 Mair, P. (1979). The autonomy of the political: The development of the Irish party system. *Comparative Politics*, 11(4), pp. 445-465.
23 Lee, J.J. (1989), p. 83.

Photograph taken in Liberty Hall the night Countess Markievicz was released from prison, 15 March 1919.

Grianghraf a tógadh i Halla na Saoirse an oíche ar scaoileadh an Chuntaois Markievicz as príosún ar an 15 Márta 1919.

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proportional representation delivered consensus politics and sensitivity[24] to minority rights and needs. On balance PRSTV operating in a largely homogenous polity provided a majoritarian form of politics. The dominant group was able to impose its values and preferences on the whole. The Anglo Irish community did not organise effectively in politics; many left the state, some were absorbed into other political movements and their distinctive identity faded from political life. Furthermore a reduction in the district magnitude in 1935 created a form of electoral threshold that kept fractionalisation low.[25] Diarmaid Ferriter has also written about an inclination among politicians and political parties at times to diminish differences between themselves.[26]

Levels of electoral integrity were moderate in the Free State, malapportionment was largely absent due to constitutional constraints but bouts of gerrymandering were not unknown. Political context matters and the electoral system for a long time delivered broadly proportional outcomes reflecting the conservative, quite authoritarian, if stable orientation of the vast majority of the electorate.

Northern Ireland

Electoral engineers employed a different system in Northern Ireland, one that also led to majoritarianism infusing elections, policy and politics but in a much more comprehensive and stifling way. Elections to the Northern Parliament (Stormont) were first held in 1921 using PRSTV. Unionists won 40 of the 52 seats in the parliament while the divided nationalists picked up just 12 seats (23%), although they received just under one third of the votes.[27] Disproportionality declined somewhat at the 1925 election and the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) dropped to 62% of the seats on 55% of the votes.

But in any case, PRSTV was replaced with FPTP for local elections in 1923 and for parliamentary

24 Adshead, M. and Tonge, J. (2009). Politics in Ireland: convergence and divergence in a two-polity island. Macmillan International Higher Education: UK, p. 108.
25 See Gallagher, M. (2008), p. 517. See also Chubb, B. (2014). p. 134.
26 Ferriter, D. (2010). The Transformation of Ireland 1900-2000. Profile Books: Dublin, p. 18.
27 O'Leary, C. (1979), p. 9.

elections to Stormont in 1929 in what has been described as a "flagrant abuse of power". FPTP is a majoritarian system, *winner takes all*, and it delivered extreme majoritarian outcomes in Northern Ireland. In the first election using FPTP, the UUP took 72% of the seats with 51% of the votes. It is widely argued that the decision to abolish PRSTV served partisan and class interests in the unionist community.[28]

FPTP ensured a dominant two party system and perpetual single party UUP government, features that were not interrupted until 1972.[29] John Coakley has been to the fore in demonstrating that the adoption of FPTP "reinforced the bipolar character of the party system"[30] and many have also emphasised that FPTP "diminished the risk of intra-bloc fragmentation" on the unionist side.[31]

In addition to the choice of electoral system, the wider abuse of electoral laws, gerrymandering and malapportionment meant that elections in Northern Ireland for many decades had low levels of electoral integrity. This point is made by Brendan O'Leary who has argued that although Northern Ireland had "formal democratic rules", the operation of those rules in practice leads to very "qualified assessments" of the nature of early Northern Irish democracy.[32]

Conclusion

In concluding, if I might return to the opening statement of Gallagher and Mitchell's definitive book where they assert that "Electoral systems matter". They do.[33] And it is also true to say that their impacts and logics are mediated through political culture and the underpinning cleavages that shape politics and electoral laws.

In Northern Ireland and the Free State, PRSTV and FPTP facilitated the dominant communities in imposing their will for many decades. Majoritarian spirit infused politics in both jurisdictions but one system developed political legitimacy, the other did not. In Northern Ireland, a majoritarian electoral system was chosen specifically to limit minority representation and it was combined with notable abuse of the principles and laws of electoral integrity.

In the Free State, the much smaller minority community achieved political representation and voice, initially disproportionately larger than their electoral weight. The 1937 constitution designed out some of the electoral advantages of the Anglo Irish community but lack of political organisation also contributed to the diminution of their representation over time. As the decades progressed, PR delivered election outcomes with much lower levels of disproportionality than that of FPTP in Northern Ireland. And importantly PRSTV is widely supported by the electorate. Voters rebuffed proposals to change the system to FPTP in referendums in 1959 and 1968. The Fianna Fáil proposals were robustly opposed by the main opposition parties that argued that the country would end up with permanent Fianna Fáil government.

Blais and Masicotte describe the system as giving "maximum freedom" to voters, freedom voters have refused to relinquish.[34] Despite two referendums, several serious reports and a Constitutional Convention, there are no serious signs that voters in the Republic could be persuaded to surrender the power bestowed on them by PRSTV. And of course Northern Ireland has reintroduced PRSTV.

Historians and political scientists have tended to focus on different aspects of the impact of PRSTV in the Free State-Republic of Ireland but there is widespread agreement that the electoral system choice was central to the enduring political stability that was achieved[35] and equally in Northern Ireland there is general agreement that the majoritarian outcomes delivered by FPTP exacerbated embedded community division.[36]

28 Coakley, J. (2009). The political consequences of the electoral system in Northern Ireland. *Irish Political Studies*, 24(3), pp. 253-284. And see also Pringle, D.G. (1980). Electoral systems and political manipulation: A case study of Northern Ireland in the 1920s. *Economic and Social Review*, 11(3), pp. 187-205.

29 Ó Dochartaigh, N. (2021). Beyond the dominant party system: the transformation of party politics in Northern Ireland. Irish Political Studies, 36(1), pp. 7-28.

30 Coakley, J. (2021).

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Respondent

President Michael D. Higgins

'Interpreting the Period 1922 to 1926 in Irish History: Influences and Consequences'

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

The events of the period 1922 to 1926 are among the most important in modern history – not only in terms of how they fell out, and the consequences that flowed from them, but in what they tell us about the assumptions they carried, about independence, of the balance between parliamentary possibilities and military action, of the hold of empires and the force of a mythic dream of independence.

Where a balance was won, had to be struck, it was one too that accommodated overt and covert strategies, and within each an ongoing tension as to the value of radical or accommodating projects in relation to the release from empire, or accommodation within it.

One cannot avoid, I feel, reflecting on what lives might have been saved, relationships allowed to survive and develop, had the express will and vote of the vast majority of the people of the island for independence in 1918 been accepted and acted upon.

We have our independence because it was fought for. Yet neither the war with an empire, that the majority had voted to leave, nor a later civil war on the implications of the conclusion of The Treaty, was inevitable.

The decisions on the forms of independence were not strictly for the making by Irish people, with their differing perspectives. They were being influenced by imperialist thinking, one that saw the cohesive value of loyalty to a crown, a perspective perhaps underestimated in Irish negotiations.

There was too a huge difference, beyond geography, between those who had, within empire, experienced the benefits of an industrial revolution and its class conflicts, and those struggling for survival, for land, within a landlordism, that while it held ownership of land, in part as a means of status advancement in the society at the heart of empire, a society that viewed them as landowners to be on occasion visited in their demesnes, but not, on any terms, to be regarded as equals.

As to understanding the period, we are fortunate to have available to us now a rich vein of new

scholarship, from new or neglected perspectives that can be added to the seminal work of Irish and American scholars in leaner times of publication.

In preparing my own contribution, I have drawn on some of these, having had of course the benefit of a brilliant, scholarly, informed, original paper from Professor Brendan O'Leary of the University of Pennsylvania, and excellent responses from Professor Henry Patterson of the Ulster University, Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne of University College Cork, and Dr Theresa Reidy, also of University College Cork.

I have been enormously indebted to Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin's work on the diaries of Joseph Campbell 1922/1923 entitled, *As I was among the Captives',* published as part of the Irish Narratives series edited by the late David Fitzpatrick.

I immediately state a personal interest, as my father, John Higgins, was interned in Tintown in the Curragh and released at the same time as Joseph Campbell in December 1923.

I should say that my father's brother Peter was, at this time, in Renmore Barracks, Galway, in the National Army. My aunts were on a small farm in County Clare.

They did not take sides in the Civil War but sent parcels with cakes, cigarettes and items of food or clothes to those interned, while also seeking news of possible releases from local senior Free State figures.

I believe Joseph Campbell's Diary is incredibly important. As Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin points out in her introduction, it is written by somebody who "was already a well-known literary figure at the time of his imprisonment and the writing of the diary".

Born in Belfast, he had spent time in what was the South-Ulster Gaeltacht, and had experience too of all of the current literary movements, including modernism, which he discussed in the huts with Seán a Chóta and Francis Stuart, fellow prisoners. Older than most internees, he was also exceptional in educational or social background terms.

The majority of those interned were, for the most part, experienced in the underclass of city life – insecure non-inheriting sons from small farms, the trades, with bar and grocery strongly represented.

It is from being among them, including the sharing of their lost hopes, that Joseph Campbell has left us a daily account that is sensory, deeply moving.

It demonstrates the influence of his knowledge of, and respect for, works such as that of Dostoevsky. His references to James Joyce's method of recording the minutiae of sensory experience is contemporary to Joyce.

I was particularly interested in the period of the diary from Frank Aiken's announcement of the end of the Civil War, on 24th May 1923. All is lost for the internees. On 3rd June 1923 there is an outburst of recrimination as to bad leadership and tactics, from Seán a Chóta, himself of course a diarist in the Irish language.

However, it is the experience of the month-long unsuccessful hunger strike in 1923 that reveals most the vulnerabilities on the part of internees, and the incredible cruelty on the part of those running the internment camp.

For those incarcerated, and who have lost, what concerns them most in 1923 is the uncertainty of their position. Rumours of release circulate. Newspapers are scrutinised for a hint. Sometimes the rumours have been circulated by the authorities, such as the rumour during the hunger strike that if those remaining on it go off it, all internees will be released.

In this short address, I must leave over the detail of what is little less than an anthropology of those from all parts of the island of Ireland who, for a variety of reasons, were incarcerated for the danger they were perceived as representing to the new State.

Their prospects on release were grim. If, a decade later, in preparation for power in 1932, representations from a newly-constructed Fianna Fáil would be sent to every parish to seek out IRA activists who had aspirations to get additional land, there would be no land on offer in 1924 for internees, nor for many, such as my father, would there be any prospect of a return to their jobs in the trades.

Responding to this, many of those trained in bar and grocery, for example, sought, after release, to rent a space to open a small business, thus making a job for themselves. Representations by fellow workers for them to be allowed to return to work had fallen on deaf ears.

It would be similar in relation to the agricultural workers who had lost their employment, with the division of demesne land, the flight from, and the burning of, big houses.

Emigration was the option envisaged by many, but not easily accessed, and a change had to be forced in the permit system run by the IRA. Without permission it was forbidden, seen as being "unpatriotic", to emigrate – and organisations like Clann na nGael in the United States were instructed that only those with IRA permits should be 'allowed in'.

This prohibition, despite letters from Seán Moylan and others, would prevail until July 1925 when the haemorrhage of those leaving was so great, thousands had left, that the Ard Cómhairle had to give way.

Kevin O'Higgins

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For those who stayed, unemployment was what beckoned. Worse than unemployment itself was the fact that their character was blackened. Their names would be handed in to the newly-formed police as suspects for the land agitation which was spreading and which the Churches as well as conservative politicians were titling 'Bolshevism'.

For this reason my father had to leave his home parish and experience his unemployment of 1924 elsewhere. The hunger for land, any land, more land, was widespread.

Professor Terence Dooley draws on the statistical sources on land ownership for the period. By 1923 there were around 114,000 farms, comprising roughly 3,125,000 untenanted acres still to be transferred.

Professor Dooley quotes Kevin O'Higgins's speech in the Dáil of 14th June 1923 when he spoke of 'land grabbers':

> *"They cannot have law and violence. They cannot have an Act and their own plunder and, insofar as it can secure it, I will see that they do not have it [...] and by the time this Bill reaches its final stages, I hope to be able to assure the Dáil that there is not in any county over which we have, for the time being, responsibility and jurisdiction, one acre of land in the possession of any person but the legal owner."*

Terence Dooley's *Burning the Big House: The Story of the Irish Country House in a time of War and Revolution* is a valuable, detailed, scholarly study of the experience of those in the country houses during the conditions of the War of Independence, when some were burned, and the Civil War when many more were burned.

The context in which the occupants of those houses found themselves is well traced.

However, the immediate threats of the 1920s have to be placed in a larger and longer context of decline that begins with the first of the Land Acts in 1881.

Professor Dooley gives us a picture of landlordism in the 1880s.

Using K.T. Hoppen's 500-acre threshold for admission to the landlord class, and drawing on a return of Irish landowners for the 1870s, Dooley enumerated and categorised landlords in Ireland as follows:

- Those owning between 500 and 1,000 acres: 2,683 persons;
- 1,000 to 2,000 acres: 1,788;
- 2,000 to 5,000 acres: 1,225;
- 5,000 to 10,000 acres: 438;
- above 10,000 acres: 303.

While this structure of ownership was carrying huge debt, it could never be sustainable. Its decline is in stages from the 1880s.

That decline will also be affected by those leaving, and by the loss of inheriting sons in the World War when it comes. Then, too, a decrease in the release of funds from the British Government for land purchase, during the war, made it difficult to agree terms of purchase, with bonds yielding less than the War Bonds.

By the end of the 1920s, the agricultural labourers are now being opposed by organised large farmers. Many labourers have of course emigrated.

Those agitating are being referred to, from such ranks as the graziers and others, as 'Bolshevists'.

The graziers, who have deflected the fury of those yet to get land on to the undistributed demesne lands, are themselves increasing their holdings.

Former militants in particular are angry, and they have their advocates in the Dáil.

Professor Dooley quotes a Dáil speech of the time:

> *"There is one class who seems to be nobody's children and they are the ex-army men of the Old Volunteers. I think if any class of people are entitled to consideration as regards land, they have first claim, because the Act of 1923 would not have been in existence at all, and we would not be here, were it not for them.*
>
> *They seem to have been forgotten in every department, and I hope when the Minister sends his inspectors out that he will give them directions to have these men given special consideration."*

How much land was involved?

We do know, Professor Dooley tells us, referring to a British Government's 400-page return of untenanted lands in the rural districts of Ireland in 1906, which distinguished 1,679 demesnes on which there was a 'mansion' and calculated that their owners – the vast majority of whom were aristocrats as defined here, with a respectable smattering of gentry, clergyman, merchants and professionals – continued to hold approximately 2.6 million acres of demesne and untenanted lands across the 32 counties.

To quote Dooley:

> *"Big Houses did not look out of place as long as they continued to be surrounded by hundreds of acres of demesne and parkland."*

By way of contrast, and the contrast explains much, in relation to land hunger and land agitation, it is worth noting that by 1917, of the 572,574 holdings in Ireland, 112,787 were less than 1 acre, while 123,129 holdings were comprised of more than 15 but less than 30 acres.

Land hunger was of course a constant. In the 19th century George Bermingham could write of a shopkeeper replying to his question as to how the vote on Home Rule had gone in the Commons the night before.

The reply was quick – "To hell with Home Rule. It is the land we are after".

While politicians in Dublin hurled abuse about forsaken principles and fealty to the British Crown, in rural Ireland people waited for the sanctioned transfer of their farms, and many more for the redistribution of untenanted and demesne lands.

Some became impatient, as Dooley notes:

"At the beginning of the Truce period, the County Inspector of Tipperary reported: 'The hunger for land is great, those who are landowners want more, while those who have none and who have been gunmen, believe that the estates of Loyalists, such as Kilroy, once cleared, will be divided amongst them'.

Standing as background then to the events of 1922-26 are a number of forces that would influence the choices made, policy and responses to a change that was imposed rather than chosen.

Of these the hunger for land is prominent. Yet, there is too the huge variation in what was sought as independence. There was an obvious difference among those seeking it, as to the means by which it would be achieved.

It was not a binary choice between parliamentary or military means. Within each was a spectrum of radical or accommodating positions and projects in relation to achieving an exit from empire.

Development of a policy of full separation, on the releasing of any of its dependent parts, was not an attribute of empire, even when formally conceded.

Institutional legacies too are left, not perceived as any detritus by those who now hold power, but rather as essential aspects of a gifted modernisation that is not to be questioned.

Following Memmi it is not difficult for the colonised and the coloniser to see their reflection in each other. The insults exchanged in the Civil War demonstrate this, with the former comrade now an enemy.

It can be seen as the reflection of the coloniser lodged in both former comrades, now fighting, antagonists, who previously avoided this lodgement in each by having a shared enemy.

A striking feature of those interned is their marginalisation, be it in terms of their occupation, their language. They are from the edges of the property-owning clericalist society that now defines what is "respectable".

The gap between the ethos, the discourse, of the formal talks, be it from Truce to Treaty to surrender of arms, and the daily experience and discourse of those incarcerated, seems unbridgeable.

The diary entries of Joseph Campbell or of Seán a Chóta show this. They reveal a resentment at the recollected absence of formal military leadership which was a source of failure. This recollection will, in time, be countered by later texts which offer a heroic version of events, events which are not recalled in any similar way by those incarcerated.

This experience of 1923 to 1924 will not be followed by any reaching out, effort at inclusion of the broken, the losers. The processing of the later pension applications is humiliating. We get a minimalism that is forced on applicants by the bureaucratic structure of the application process, one which excludes any full narrative of events. That bureaucratic ritualism is there in the questions. The applications will, until the intervention of a concerned senior civil servant, be conducted as a box-ticking exercise.

Understated in the history perhaps is the reference by the applicants to the poverty that they, the applicants are experiencing.

The role of women in the independence struggle, far from being recognised, is revelatory of a misogyny which is exposed, not only in the treatment of pension applications, but in the interpretation of the revolutionary women's speeches and their vote against the Treaty.

One might reasonably speculate indeed if that is not an explanatory factor in the long delay on according rights to women, including within the context of the Constitution.

Is there any evidence of a transcending vision such as that allowed in the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil?

The vision that predominates is for the stability sought for property ownership, acquiescence in clerical control, respectability in the person, the family, the community.

Constitutions frequently come out of revolutions, and accordingly they tend to deal not just with the relatively prosaic matters of government organisation, but they have often, too, attempted to encompass a people's spirit and values, a sense of the nation and of its citizens, as well as setting out the fundamental principles which were to govern the state's laws and institutions. An alternative view, such as that of Sartori, is that brevity in constitutions achieves certainty in an easier way.

The Democratic Programme of the First Dáil had a visionary character. However, as enacted in 1922, the Constitution of the Irish Free State was dictated in form and content by the requirements of the Anglo-Irish Treaty that had been negotiated between the British government and Irish leaders in 1921.

Saorstát Éireann consisted of 83 separate articles, totalling just 7,600 words.

The drafting committee had considered the inclusion of economic and social rights in the Irish constitution.

American labour lawyer Clemens James France, who assisted in the Constitution's drafting, proposed, for example, provisions to ensure state control of natural resources, and further proposed that the State would capture the "unearned increment" arising from land value increases, thereby impeding speculation in land and promoting investment in industrial development.

Then too during the parliamentary debates on the constitution, Labour TDs such as Tom Johnson and T.J. O'Connell proposed the inclusion of modest welfare measures as well as provisions to protect children's rights. These proposals met with opposition.

UCD professor of economics, George O'Brien, as well as others, including Archbishop John Harty of Cashel, both questioned the social provisions' economic and political viability, stating that such provisions carried the potential to alienate conservative, land-owning supporters of the Treaty.

Agitation by the landless across Europe and their seeking of the overthrow of authoritarian structures, their many expressions of emancipatory possibilities were known to each other by actionists across Europe and beyond.

The Church was already directing labels of Bolshevism at the Labour and Trade Union Movement. Tom Johnson's or Labour's condemnation of non-judicial executions brought, not any thanks, but death threats, from Liam Lynch on behalf of anti-Treatyites.

Issues of land remained omnipresent. The Land Commission continued to redistribute farmland in most of Ireland, with untenanted land subject to compulsorily purchase orders, lands which were nominally to be divided out to local landless families, but in the execution this was applied unevenly across the State, with an emerging

movement from IRA networks claiming that they who had driven out landlords were being ignored.

As to the 1922 Constitution itself, British law officers, operating under Lloyd George's government, had further objected to the "Soviet character" of the Constitution's declaration of "economic sovereignty".

Ultimately, in what can only be interpreted as a significant missed opportunity, with lasting and far-reaching consequences on Irish society for decades to come, but in so many senses unsurprising, the Provisional Government dropped the offending provisions.

As to social policy then, the 1922 Constitution was limited to two "programmatic declarations" only, one specifying a pre-existing right to elementary education (Article 10) and the other providing for the possibility of state ownership of national resources (Article 11).

It is important too, in our decade of commemorations, to realise that while there has been a reluctance, in the early days of the State, to put the events of this period through a formal commemorative lens in the fullest sense of recovering all of the pain, the violence, avoidable and unavoidable, the experience was real and damaging. It stayed on in the lives of those impacted.

Their pain was passed on in many cases, generating consequential pain suffered frequently in silence. That silence would be contradicted by those who addressed their experience in a secondary way, in fiction yes, but really not at much of a distance.

I believe that Síobhra Aiken's *Spiritual Wounds: Trauma, Testimony and the Irish Civil War* more than adequately disposes of the over-generalised suggestion that silence on the Civil War was general.

Her work, be it on the fiction, biography or stories of the decades that followed the Civil War, gives further strength to my own long-held belief that there are just so many instances where literature gives us the lived and sensory experience that a narrowed theoretical model in the social sciences, or indeed the historiography, has allowed.

Her critique, for example, of the work of Annie M.P. Smithson, including the career of how *Walk of a Queen* was received, is an example of this. So much of what was written was an indirect attempt to recover, imagine, compensate perhaps, or even transact what was experienced but, given the social milieu, had better be left unsaid.

It was not only among the landless or the unemployed ex-internees that division would be sown, opportunities for solidarity lost.

In cities like Belfast, where one of the positive consequences of the industrial legacy was a strong working class culture that had within it a trade union militancy that sought to prevent and reduce sectarian action against fellow workers.

However, that working class culture too would come to be divided, and significant parts of it captured by bigotry, with appalling consequences for the minority, and indeed a bigotry that would be a poison transmitted, resurrected, but now, thankfully, being rejected.

In the South, an authoritarian version of religion was claiming obedience in matters not only of the spirit, but of the body and life itself, and having it conceded to it, influence and hegemony in many of the institutions of the State. The appalling 1930s would be indeed a carnival of reaction, small-mindedness, repression and abuse.

The authoritarian abuses North and South were moving the people ever further away from each other. The shell of each of the authoritarian systems was hardening, seemed impermeable.

Change has come, if too slowly, too late, for many. We must welcome and sustain those cracks that have let in the light, that have led to communities beginning to see and understand the incubus for violence which these authoritarianisms constitute.

We are ceasing to see the necessity for abuses to be directed at each other. We are beginning to appreciate the need and satisfaction that comes from narrative hospitality and decency in discourse. All of that is precious. It is what offers hope.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh.

Panel Discussion
Machnamh 100 – Seminar Five
26 May 2022

Dr John Bowman and participants
An Dr John Bowman agus na rannpháirtithe

John Bowman: Can I now open this to the audience who are here with us in the Hyde Room in Áras an Uachtaráin? Brendan O'Leary, as the key speaker, what did Lloyd George give us when he gave us partition? I mean, we've paid a heavy price in one way but an inevitable price, and it could have been the least deadly alternative. Isn't that also true? That a North-South Civil War could have happened in 1920/22?

Brendan O Leary: I don't agree with the thesis of the inevitability of partition. Partition was a choice. But I do think that the complacency of a judgement in 1966 comes immediately to mind. A.J.P. Taylor was a famous English historian. He wrote in 1966, 'Lloyd George solved the Irish question in 1921'. Now, at that time there was a functioning independent Irish Republic. There was no violence in the north. It looked as if Lloyd George had achieved stability. What the Liberal Imperialists had always wanted. They wanted the Irish question out of British politics. But he only succeeded in achieving that until 1966/67. Thereafter, the story is bleaker. I think that partition was not inevitable. You had a clash of mandates in 1918. Clearly, the Conservatives and Liberal Imperialists won that election in Great Britain with a mandate for some special arrangement for Ulster. But quite clearly on the other side there was a mandate for independence, perhaps a debate about the scale of independence. So, had there been a greater degree of reasonableness among the Conservatives in particular, it would have been possible to have had a Home Rule inside Home Rule solution, with the Irish Free State having the maximum autonomy of a dominion like Canada, with something like Northern Ireland inside it having devolved structures. That was actually negotiated in the Treaty, but of course with the proviso that northern unionists could opt out of it. So, I don't-

John Bowman: Lloyd George wanted a quick fix, didn't he? And he was a fixer.

Brendan O Leary: He was a superb fixer who always gave each side the impression that he agreed with them and was acting on their behalf. I don't know what it would have been like to have encountered such a person. He probably would have struck you as far more honest than the current British Prime Minister, but with a similar ability to tell each audience what he thought they wanted to hear.

John Bowman: And he got the border too far south. If you look at the necklace of constituencies where nationalists win seats: from South Down and right along the border – contiguous to the border – over the century, these largely have been nationalist seats.

Brendan O Leary: Well, the border, there's an unresolved question in the historiography. Lloyd George offered a boundary commission. Clearly the Irish nationalist negotiators should have insisted on plebiscites on popular preferences being decisive. That was happening elsewhere in Europe as a result of the Versailles conference, so it was a perfectly feasible model, and I think the slight change in the wording of what become Article 12 of the Treaty, allowing other factors to shape the boundary, then became an excuse for not allowing popular preferences to prevail anywhere in boundary determination. So, that was again possibly a lost opportunity. And down to poor Irish negotiating on that particular question.

John Bowman: Theresa Reidy, given that the Ulster unionists felt besieged and they then did have a deliberately built in two-to-one majority, so it was almost the least democratic democracy. It had all the trappings and then it had Stormont as a vanity building arguably. There are no surprises in what happened really, are there?

Theresa Reidy: Yes I agree. I think the choice to move away from PRSTV and offer a majoritarian system was done deliberately to engineer the outcomes that actually happened, and I think when you combine that with the kind of abuse of electoral laws that followed, it really amplified the outcomes that were intended, if you want, because of the choice of the electoral system. So, the electoral system was always going to do that but it was copper fastened in many ways with some of the other changes that were built in around it. I think it's interesting that you do get a majoritarian style politics also in the Republic but PRSTV is a much more flexible and adaptable electoral system at funnelling votes, and over time you get a very different kind of politics. As society changes, PRSTV gives very different kinds of outcomes but the majoritarian FPTP system is more inflexible and it gave exactly the kind of outcomes in perpetuity that it was intended to do.

John Bowman: Yes, Brendan?

Brendan O Leary: One comment on this theme. Churchill had a moment of opportunity when the unionists chose to abolish STVPR in the course of 1922. At that juncture, they wanted to abolish it because they wanted to restructure local governments so it would look as if the border was legitimate. So, Churchill pauses for about six months before giving the go ahead. That was a strategic choice by a British politician at a key moment. They could have prevented the modification of the electoral rule in those circumstances. That probably wouldn't have stopped some degree of gerrymandering but it would have controlled the degree of exclusion of other voices from politics. So, once that precedent is established in '22, it was more difficult to resist the transformation of what became the Stormont Parliament.

John Bowman: Henry Patterson, what's your opinion on all of this? And wasn't there always a problem for those on the left? 'Show your flag' would be the heckle from the audience at any election meeting.

Henry Patterson: Of course. This whole issue of the balance between what British statesmen, British Cabinet, do about Ireland and the internal regional balance of political and social forces within the broader Protestant unionist communities, it's… I think myself and Brendan will differ on this because fundamentally I think if you look at what happened within the British Cabinet when you get the ceasefire in 1921 and the beginning of negotiations between the British State and the leadership of Sinn Féin, the immediate pressure of Lloyd George, on Craig, is to go into some form of Dominion Home Rule, in the greater imperial interest. But Craig isn't interested in the greater imperial interest. He's interested in maintaining the power that he's established with British assistance but fundamentally on the basis of that class alliance which was built up really from the 1880s when these issues first emerged. And I mean, the problem for people on the left in the shipyards then or in other places of work after during the history of the Northern Ireland state, it varies from period to period. There's a big upsurge of support during the war. Again, in the end of the 1950s. So, it depends on the broader conjuncture. I agree with Brendan when these other issues to do with whether or not we're talking about in '68, and I remember '68 well being involved in these things. Whether we're talking about reform of the Northern Ireland State which we ultra-left people in student organisations dismissed as not enough. We thought it would open up a broader transformation of both states. How naïve we were. I should have known better because these are my people. The people on the picket lines against our marches were people like my aunt and uncle, cousins, people like that. But basically, partly I think because if you went to a State grammar school like I did, the only Irish history I knew before I went to Queens in '66 was six weeks on Grattan's parliament and the Irish Volunteers. So, in a way I was easy meat for somebody like Michael Farrell, (author of *Northern*

Ireland: The Orange State)[1] in terms of Michael Farrell's view of the world which I shared for at least six months.

John Bowman: You were in the People's Democracy then, were you?

Henry Patterson: I was in People's Democracy.

John Bowman: The original PDs!

Henry Patterson: Oh, the ultra-left. The ultra-left.

John Bowman: Lindsey, what's your opinion of the role of women in all of this? Because you've brought out in your own paper admittedly about the south and the pensions and all that. Their voices were really ignored for so long, weren't they?

Lindsey Earner-Byrne: I think that's kind of complex because it's so classist, it is so important to consider which female voices you were going to hear anyway. I think the biggest loss in a sense were all those lived experiences and what kind of a State might have been shaped had there been any space for those experiences to have been heard. And also, what I'm interested in I suppose is the way on a day-to-day basis a lack of representation from women and broader experiences impacted on whether or not you were going to get a pension, whether or not you were going to have to complete a pregnancy that for you was difficult to do, or whether or not you were going to end up in an institution or have an illegal adoption. So, for me, they're all connected and we tend to write a history that puts that as chapter nine. But I think it's fundamental actually to the way in which control and power was meted out in the State, and the kind of… the political dispensation is really important to that.

John Bowman: President, you again mentioned – as you have at earlier *Machnamh*s – the importance of literature and the voice in fiction to hear some of the voices we haven't heard from the historians. Would you like to expand on that?

President Higgins: I think when I referred to it previously, it was in the context of emigration. It's that if you want to get the feel and experience of emigration in its many different forms, you find it in Irish literature. I taught the very first courses in the Sociology of Migration and migration wasn't actually part of the curriculum until quite late into the 1970s. In relation to this, I think the topic we're discussing in this *Machnamh* V, I think that there is a problem, and that is that I sense a post-hoc heroism in some of the accounts that are best known. I'm thinking of people that… I'll be careful, well, not really. But the point about it is when I look at Ernie O'Malley's work and I look at Peadar O'Donnell's '*The Gates Flew Open*'[2] and all of these, I have a feeling that what it has for me is a heroism that was invented after. What I'm very interested in, and why I went for the Joseph Campbell diary in many ways, is that it's about food, it's about people being pushed, and I have to say it was very difficult getting the information. We don't know how many people were pushed into any one of these huts. One descendent of one person mentioned to me that it was the person who arrived first went nearest the window and you just kept pushing people in, and there were up to 18 people in any hut at any time. There was a very important part as well and that is that while the hunger strike was on, the Church had said that people were not to get the sacraments, they were not to be administered to them. And there is a very moving part in it where a young man from Ballyfermot is very, very, very ill. The priest comes after four and a half hours and he says 'there's only three of us and there's 3,500 of you to be looked after'. And then the others want to know what has he said to the young man and things like that, but he says, 'We're not supposed to be dealing with people like you while this is going on.' And I do think that there was a level reached that was very low in relation to the treatment of the people. The difficulty I had, I said it is known in the records, from my father's records and that, whilst I didn't want to ignore it, but I am interested myself in how these… when the people come out of the camp and places have changed. The estates aren't divided. My father's name would be handed in to the police and nobody would speak to him after second mass. So, the point is people actually are going to mass and they've got their land and they want more, and that raises other issues. It would be vital in the future, may I say, for there to be access to the Land Commission records. They are just so important in relation to understanding social history as to how it worked. It would be one of the best gestures in my view of whoever is taking the decision in this period to announce that the Land Commission records were going to be made available for research.

John Bowman: Yes, because they are very rich in detail, aren't they? Extraordinarily rich.

1 Published by Pluto Press, London, 1976

2 Although its full title is '*The Gates Flew Open: An Irish Civil War Prison Diary*', it was manifestly written after the event. It was first published by Jonathan Cape {London} in 1932.

Fifth year History students Erica Magee (L) and Lily Dwyer (R) at Dominican College, Muckross Park, Dublin, contributing to the discussion.

Daltaí Staire ón gcúigiú bliain, Erica Magee (ar chlé) agus Lily Dwyer (ar dheis), ar Choláiste Doiminiceach, Páirc Mhucrois, Baile Átha Cliath, iad ag cur leis an bplé.

President Higgins: Yes, and the argument that it's 'too difficult' doesn't stand up because the portion of them dealing with Northern Ireland has already been transferred and is available.

John Bowman: And they're on public record?

President Higgins: And they're on public record.

John Bowman: The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is making them available. Do, we have a contributor perhaps? Yes?

Martin O'Halloran: My name is Martin O'Halloran and I'd like to address a question to the President. In his address, he gave a lot of detail on the land question in Ireland and I feel that the land question in Ireland is really told and captured in the 8.5 million records of the Irish Land Commission which is a closed archive in Portlaoise. In the Oireachtas debates in 1989 on the Land Commission Dissolution Bill, an undertaking was given by government which has yet to be honoured to ensure that that rich archive is rendered available to scholars and the public.

John Bowman: And you've published something on this already, haven't you?

Martin O'Halloran: Yes, I have had limited access. So, I have direct visibility of the wealth and the richness of that archive. History, geography, sociology, economics, genealogy, and it goes on. It's like Lindsey described. It's not a single simple archive. It's a very complex archive comprehensively covering all aspects of life in Ireland, and I suppose really my question to the President, would he like to see the government's commitment of 1989 honoured? And would the centenary of the enactment of the 1923 Land Act on the 8th of August 1923, which is just a little bit over a year away, be the appropriate event to mark?

John Bowman: The deadline, yes.

Martin O'Halloran: ...the deadline, to ensure that this is honoured and that some progress is achieved?

John Bowman: President?

President Higgins: Yes. I completely agree and I think the choice of date in the centenary of the 1923 Land Act would be perfect, and it would be a very significant, substantial contribution towards commemoration. And you're right, it's only when one looks for example at the Limerick Rural Survey later and what these younger farmers were saying, that even labourers are better off than... because you only have one person inheriting. And in relation to women, you had the category in the census, relatives assisting. And when I looked at this a long time ago when I was doing sociology, what they were left is a room in the house, a seat in the car to mass. When you look at Wills dealing with the period, we've only one inheriting. They did it. I wrote somewhere else that, well, what you had was that assurance of a room in the house and a seat in the car to mass and your High Nelly bicycle. That was women in Ireland.

John Bowman: Can I ask some of the younger students here, is there anything – I'm sure there has to be a fair bit, that unless they will be very distinguished young students if they knew all that they learned in the last two or three hours. What's been the most interesting new idea that you've come across?

Erica Magee: Hi, I am Erica Magee, fifth year history student at Dominican College Muckross Park, Dublin. My main take from *Machnamh 100* is of course the importance of self-reflection. And as Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne spoke about, how women were viewed during the Civil War and the 20th century, what really resonated with

me was the roles in which women were expected to play as homemakers and if they went against this role, they were shunned by society. Also, the roles that women played in Ireland's fight for independence really had a huge impact on me, and I find the fact that they were expected to return home as homemakers even though they had such an impact on Ireland's fight for independence I find hard to believe, and how their experiences were not heard. It also allowed me to reflect on how much Irish society has changed since then in terms of how women are viewed in society and how women are viewed all around the world. Thank you.

John Bowman: Anybody else from the younger students there? Yes?

Lily Dwyer: I'm Lily Dwyer also a fifth year history student at Dominican College Muckross Park, and I think the most important thing that I've taken away today is the electoral systems and their effect on kind of how our country works and how the politics in Ireland work. I think it was really interesting to hear about proportional systems and how they created more representation, and about how disproportionality decreases with certain systems. And I think that especially among our age group it's important for us to be able to have an understanding of that. Not just knowing about it but actually being able to understand it, and kind of take it in and use it to kind of form our own opinions rather than just going by what's in our books or what we hear other people say.

John Bowman: Right. Thank you for both of those. Lindsey, do you want to comment on that?

Lindsey Earner-Byrne: Just when I hear their feedback, I just think the future is safe. Sorry, but you're both so articulate and you really just took such great points from the papers and it's fantastic. It's just fantastic. That's all, sorry. I was just so thrilled.

John Bowman: And the importance of course of history at second level and at all levels in our schools is important, isn't it? Brendan, yes?

Brendan O Leary: I'd like to make two comments on proportional representation since you've given me an opportunity. Theresa gave a very good and accurate exposition. I think that the expression "first past the post" is complete propaganda. It implies there's a fixed post which the horses have to race by and the horse that gets past the post first wins. It sounds fair. That's an absolutely inaccurate description of the system because the winner could have 2% of the vote; the rest could have 98% of the vote between them. It's the winner who takes all. There's no fixed post. So, the correct way to describe the system in my view is "winner takes all". And that describes the mentality as well. Winner takes all of the available power, point one. Point two, the South can learn from the North. The North learned from the south that it was better to have proportional representation. It took a hard learning, a civil war. But we can now learn from the North if we're Southerners. In the north, they have uniform district magnitude. You heard Theresa describe that. So, each constituency returns the same number of people. That means there's no favour shown to the larger parties. Here in the South, there are still plenty of districts with only three candidates elected, and that's unjust, improper, disproportional. So, any future Irish Electoral Commission has to have uniform district magnitude as its first priority. Thank you for-

John Bowman: It's very fond of county boundaries as well. The Irish electoral system. It has a loyalty to counties and...

Brendan O Leary: (laughing) County boundaries are colonial jurisdictions which this State need not respect, except in GAA!

John Bowman: Well, it was the GAA which popularised them indeed.

President Higgins: And they have been a major obstruction to proper planning or regional planning or meaningful participatory planning.

John Bowman: Yes, but they're in the Irish mind. They'll be very hard to dislodge. They're there. They're part of the furniture as well, yes.

Theresa Reidy: I think we could certainly increase the district magnitude while still respecting the psychological attachment that people have to county boundaries.

John Bowman: Yes. So, how about finally, Henry Patterson, before going to *Machnamh* VI, which I do want to ask the President about what shape that will be, but what about the way the centenary has been marked? You were part of the advisory committee in Northern Ireland about the centenary of Northern Ireland itself. How has that panned out in your view?

Henry Patterson: Well, it has two aspects. The committee contained a wide range of viewpoints on the formation of the State and its subsequent behaviour. However, we worked well together and achieved a number of things of which probably the most important was persuading the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to release the long-embargoed personnel files of the Ulster Special Constabulary – for the thousands of Protestants who joined this organisation from 1920 onwards.

John Bowman: These will be sensitive files too for some people, yes?

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

Henry Patterson: Sensitive files. We also produced a collection of essays, many by younger scholars, which has been published by the Ulster Historical Foundation: *Northern Ireland 1921-2021 Centenary Historical Perspectives*. This covers a broad range of topics: politics, empire, economic history, culture and sexuality. One is by Connal Parr whose great book on the class division and drama in the Protestant imagination I mentioned in my talk. The centenary year was surprisingly low key and a lot of interesting work was done by local, grass roots initiatives.

John Bowman: Love of place is a very important matter, isn't it? And it's very significant.

Henry Patterson: Things worked out very differently. I think it was John Whyte who pointed out in his *Interpreting Northern Ireland* that although it's a small region it contained very different experiences between, for example, an area like North Down, where I was brought up and border areas like Strabane/Sion Mills and Enniskillen. And that came out in the way the commemoration was dealt with at a local level.

John Bowman: And before going to the President on *Machnamh* VI, anybody in the audience want to talk about the phenomenon of *Machnamh* itself and how useful they found it or otherwise? Yes? Your name please?

Deirdre MacMathuna: My name is Deirdre MacMathuna and I'm here-

John Bowman: The History Teachers Association as well, aren't you?

Deirdre MacMathuna: Yes. In fact, I'm here with my colleagues from the History Teachers

Association of Ireland. And I would first of all just like to acknowledge the series of reflections of *Machnamh* that have been going on during this Decade of Centenaries, and I'd like also if I may just to remind ourselves that while it's a joy to look at the senior girls here from Muckross who have chosen to study history at senior level, there was an incredible irony at the launch of the Decade of Centenaries back in 2011/2012 because that same time, the framework document on education was also launched which was proposing that history become an optional subject at secondary level. Now, we in the History Teachers Association have been involved for many years in trying to retain history as a core subject within the curriculum. And it was a battle. And as I say, we were just so aware of the irony that on the one hand here is the decade where we are commemorating the great and complex history of the foundation of the State and at the same time the Minister for Education at that time wanted to marginalise history. We then fast forward and we've travelled this journey with you, Professor, through the decade and we also want to acknowledge you're championing the cause of history and the importance of history in education. And it was a great day back in October, the 1st of October 2019, where the Minister for Education announced formally that history was now to be given a special position of privilege within the core curriculum. So, you know, it's been an interesting journey. We've had a lot of people on our side, including your good self, Mr.

President Michael D. Higgins and participants
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus na rannpháirtithe

President, but I think it should be acknowledged that it's a great, great time to be a history teacher, and also to be a student, because every student in this country up to Junior Cert level now will be given the opportunity to learn their history, which was fragile for a time being. So, it's been a very, very interesting journey, John. I'd like that acknowledged as part of the *Machnamh* series as well.

John Bowman: Thank you, Deirdre, very much. Yes. President?

President Higgins: I totally agree that it was very important that what would have been a very bad decision was reversed. And hopefully we don't see it again. It's a very good time to be studying history but it's a good time to be reading history. The quality of what is available now is so wide-ranging. I do want to say to the question about how the commemoration is being done, there's a huge difference between what *Machnamh* is attempting to do and what I call eventing. It is simply very important to deal with histories substantively as best we can by introducing new material and new evidence, but it has to have the ring of authenticity. But what's entirely false, it seems to me, is to take contemporary expressions of the State and start offering these as if you could have a standard version in which you have the same event for just about everything that ever happened. It is very important that there be a ring of authenticity in it so when one is speaking about women in different circumstances, the people can feel that this material is being taken seriously in the same way. That's why I put it in the present period, because you have to touch it. But the idea that you could have some kind of ritualistic contemporary expression of the State in any of its forms, that would be a substitute for this. It is what it is. It's a substitute. And it's a very inadequate substitute. There's nothing more encouraging than to be inviting the citizens to reflect on what went before. It isn't only the case of the State making representation. And when the State does it, it's a very difficult thing to have my sympathy because the history, which I will be dealing with again, isn't good in relation to that. Sometimes they had decided to solve their problem by silence. Sometimes they have decided on totally inappropriate manifestations. And other times are simply saying you just have the one formula and you just roll it out for just any aspect about history. That just won't do anymore and I think that not just young people deserve better, we all do.

John Bowman: And *Machnamh* VI, the final *Machnamh*, will be?

President Higgins: *Machnamh* VI will be recorded in the Autumn (2022). It will be broadcast and available on the RTÉ Player on Thursday, 17th of November. It will be entitled '*Memory, History and Imagination*'. And what it's going to be looking at is how reflection has been made across the different seminars we've had: in relation to how the personal and the public has been handled; what impulses and imperatives have been at play in each case of the different versions we've heard; and who decides what to commemorate and how and in what form; and how can we do it best and how can we do it in a way that is pluralist and inclusive. *Machnamh* VI is a look back, and also dealing with how we can deal properly with the past that leaves us open to the present and enabled in relation to different models for the future.

John Bowman: And that too will eventually then be published in book form as well and in eBook form as the first three *Machnamh*s have been. Find it on: www.president.ie if you want to source that

eBook. It is free. It remains for me to thank our audience here, and to also thank Professors Henry Patterson, Lindsey Earner-Byrne and Dr. Theresa Reidy. And of course, to Professor Brendan O'Leary who's our key speaker for his very distinguished paper and his continuing efforts. And also to President Higgins for the initiative of *Machnamh 100* and for hosting us here in the Hyde Room in Áras an Uachtaráin. And thank you also for watching, wherever you are, anywhere in the world. Thank you indeed.

President Michael D. Higgins and participants

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus na rannpháirtithe

Machnamh 100 - Seminar V guests

Aíonna Seimineár V – *Machnamh 100*

Left to right: Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne, Professor Brendan O'Leary, President Michael D. Higgins, Dr John Bowman, Professor Henry Patterson, and Dr Theresa Reidy.

Ó chlé go deas: An tOllamh Lindsey Earner-Byrne, an tOllamh Brendan O'Leary, an tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn, an Dr John Bowman, an tOllamh Henry Patterson, agus an Dr Theresa Reidy.

President Michael D. Higgins and Professor Brendan O'Leary

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus an tOllamh Brendan Brendan O'Leary

Sabina Higgins and Dr John Bowman

Sabina Higgins agus an Dr John Bowman

President Michael D. Higgins and guests

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus aíonna

Machnamh 100

President of Ireland
Centenary Reflections

Sixth Seminar

Memory, History and Imagination

17 November 2022

Photo EXHIBIT 2 *Central News Service*

IMPERIAL BRITISH FORCES ARRESTING A PHOTOGRAPHER ON THE STREETS OF DUBLIN.

Photo from the Imaging Conflict Exhibition

Grianghraf ón Taispeántas Coimhlint a Íomháú

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Opening Words

President Michael D. Higgins

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

Today's Machnamh 100 seminar, Machnamh VI, is bringing to a close a series of six seminars which I have organised over the past two years in Áras an Uachtaráin to reflect on the seminal events, and their social basis too, that would later result in the birth of the Irish Republic. In our consideration we were conscious of the roles of memory, history and imagination in the task of ethical commemoration. In doing so we were respecting the inherent complexity, as well as the inevitable aspects of contestation, that such a consideration may suggest.

Far from seeking to achieve a single perspective, we sought, drawing on new and refreshed research and publication, to lay out a factual framework in as inclusive a way as possible.

This final *Machnamh 100* seminar provides an opportunity for reflection looking back across all five seminars. Over the past two years, these seminars have examined a wide range of subjects, such as the challenges of public commemorations; empire: instincts, interests, power and resistance; land, social class, gender and sources of violence; the experience 'from below'; and constitutional, institutional and ideological foundations: complexity and contestation.

The seminars have intentionally encompassed a wide breath of historiographical subject matter and have had contributions from an equally wide and diverse group of experts, to whom I am profoundly grateful.

Today, as before, I have invited leading scholars with diverse experience and perspectives to share their insights on the context and events of that formative period of a century ago, and if they wish, to make a reflection on the nature of the act of commemoration itself.

The motivation in convening *Machnamh 100* has been to tackle with authenticity the complexity of the period, to participate in the investigation of motives, tease out social contexts, including those perhaps insufficiently acknowledged 'from below'. Our purpose was not the assertion of definitive conclusions, rather to leave matters open. Our efforts are aimed at understanding – understanding in relation to the past, which I hope may assist us in addressing our present and future challenges on this our shared island.

May I thank once more Dr John Bowman for chairing these seminars and for the outstanding job he has done throughout, and may I also pay a special thanks to Professor Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh for his invaluable advice and assistance over the past two years.

May I thank, too, those who agreed to participate in today's final *Machnamh 100* seminar by providing original papers on various aspects of this period under examination. We are fortunate to have with us distinguished and remarkable contributors.

Today's principal address will be provided by author and historian Professor Declan Kiberd of the University of Notre Dame, Dublin and University College Dublin. Responses will be made by cultural theorist and practitioner, and film producer Lelia Doolan, academic Professor Angela Bourke of University College Dublin and Fergal Keane, journalist and author with the BBC. My own address will be entitled '1922 – The Most Significant Year?'

As to our previous seminars –

Our inaugural seminar, held in December 2020, examined the nature and concept of commemoration itself in the contexts of today, and of the national and global events of a century ago. Speakers included Professors Ciarán Benson, Michael Laffan, Joep Leerssen, Dr Anne Dolan and myself, and together we set out our intentions for what we were hoping to achieve from this series.

In February 2021, I hosted the second seminar which focused on Empire, imperial attitudes and responses as they related to circumstances in Ireland. The main reflection was given by Professor John Horne, with responses from Dr Niamh Gallagher, Professor Eunan O'Halpin, Professor Alvin Jackson, Dr Marie Coleman and myself.

The third *Machnamh 100* seminar took place in May 2021 and was entitled 'Recovering Reimagined Futures'. This seminar focused on issues of land, social class, gender and the sources of violence, and speakers included Dr Margaret O'Callaghan, Ms. Catriona Crowe, Dr John Cunningham, Dr Caitriona Clear, Professor Linda Connolly and myself.

The fourth seminar took place in November 2021, focusing on the Truce, the Treaty and Partition. It saw Professor Diarmaid Ferriter of University College Dublin provide the principal address, and respondents in addition to myself included Professor Fearghal McGarry of Queen's University Belfast, Professor Mary E. Daly of University College Dublin, Dr Daithí Ó Corráin of Dublin City University, and Professor Margaret Kelleher of University College Dublin.

Our penultimate seminar, held in May this year (2022), considered the constitutional, institutional and ideological foundations of the emerging Irish State a century ago. The principal address was provided by Professor Brendan O'Leary of the University of Pennsylvania, with responses from Professor Henry Patterson of the Ulster University, Professor Lindsey Earner-Byrne of University College Cork, Dr Theresa Reidy, also of University College Cork, and myself.

All of these previous papers are available to view on the '*Machnamh 100*' section of the President of Ireland website, and may I take this opportunity to thank RTÉ for hosting the entire series on the RTÉ Player which ensured a wide and global audience.

I hope that you find Machnamh VI, our final seminar, thought-provoking, perhaps even challenging and, above all, a reminder that the work which we have undertaken over these six seminars represents an invitation to history which, when its complexity and fullness is respected, can make such a valuable contribution to the vital task that is ethical commemoration.

Fáilte romhaibh uilig. Bain taithneamh as an seminar.

Professor Declan Declan Kiberd

University of Notre Dame

Ideas, Memory, Imagination

Professor Declan Kiberd
An tOllamh Declan Kiberd

Early in 2016, I got a phone-call from The Irish Times. Two of my great-uncle Edward Keegan's 1916 medals had gone on sale in New York; and though the newspaper wished to purchase, its directors very considerately wanted to check that this was acceptable to the Keegan family. Edward had been dismissed from the paper after the Rising and The Irish Times would like to make amends.

I phoned my aunt Maura, the oldest surviving Keegan and younger sister of my dead mother; and, after some debate, we agreed that it was a nice idea – especially as the newspaper would put the medals on display. On the same day that the medals were unveiled in Tara Street, Edward's name was added, with those of the Pearse brothers, Tom MacDonagh and Sean Connolly to a memorial plaque in the foyer of the Abbey Theatre. Edward had so impressed W B Yeats with his acting that he'd been offered a full-time post in the theatre; but his wife, who had children also to consider, thought W B a bit flakey and urged her husband to hold onto his reliable job in the ads section of The Irish Times. Edward was shot through the lung in hand-to-hand fighting in the South Dublin Union and never again enjoyed full health. His family probably had to pawn the medals. In a gesture of kindness, the Abbey gave him a job as assistant stage manager which he had at the time of his death in 1938. In the years before that, he did much voluntary work advancing the case for pensions for forgotten veterans of the Rising.

Classroom in Waterpark College, Waterford.

Seomra ranga i gColáiste Waterpark, Port Láirge.

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Like his brothers Joe and Thomas (my maternal grandfather), he had been a member of the Laurence O'Toole Pipe Band and its associated hurling club, as well as of the Keating Branch of the Gaelic League and of the Irish Volunteers. And, like each brother, he took no part in the Civil War, regarding it as a disaster that former friends should kill one another on the basis of rather abstract arguments.

In this the Keegans were fairly typical of the 1916 generation, surprisingly few of whom fought in Cogadh na gCarad. Instead, they returned to the cultural activities which had first brought them into the national movement.

The Abbey plaque was the brainchild of Stephen Rea, who said a few gentle words at its unveiling. The later event at The Irish Times was rather different – there was a brief mention of Edward Keegan, after which an academic historian spoke for over thirty-five minutes on the importance of Cumann na nGaelıFine Gael in the establishment and consolidation of the State.

I found this in some ways strange, in some ways not. In recent years, the Decade of Commemorations was dominated by speakers from Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, neither of which actually existed in the period 1912-1922. It was as if these latecomers to the feast were obsessed with inserting themselves into the narrative; and when more recently the time came to commemorate the Civil War, the joint presence of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael speakers at Béal na mBláth was seen as a sign of maturity and a great break-through into open-heartedness. The bipolar theory that veterans of the war of Independence had all taken one side or the other in the Civil War was seen as axiomatic, as the two parties which emerged from that war jockeyed their representatives into self-congratulatory positions.

The role of the Labour party leader Tom Johnson in seeking peace between the belligerents scarcely received a mention. Nor did the part played by the Labour movement in many other events commemorated (the agonised non-participation in 1918 election; the Soviet established in Limerick in 1919; ongoing agitation for rights of women and children). A private security firm had been hired, with no sense of irony, to control and monitor crowds which marked the anniversary of the Dublin Lock-Out of 1913. It was all too remeniscent of Conor Cruise O'Brien's remark, during the 1966 commemorations, that the two major parties were in danger of commemorating themselves to death. Although I live in Clontarf, I do not recall any major public event at Tom Johnson's grave in the local cemetery; or any mention that his suggestion that the rights of children, which had featured in the radical ideas of the Democratic Programme of the First Dáil 1919, be written into the 1922 Constitution.

In a previous Machnamh paper, President Higgins has recalled how Tom Johnson's condemnation of non-judicial executions "brought him not any thanks but death-threats from Liam Lynch on behalf of the anti-Treatyites". The reluctance to reproduce many of the radical ideas of the Easter Proclamation or Democratic Programme in subsequent Constitutions was probably based on the notion that ideas were dangerous. People often blamed the Civil War on hair-splitting exponents of abstract notions. Such an allergy to radical, challenging new ideas was amplified, especially when they were supported by female intellectuals. Although Maud Gonne and Mary MacSwiney won reputations as "unmanageable revolutionaries", most women of the period wanted peace; and confined their gestures to sending papers and tobacco to comfort men in jail, sometimes helping a person on the run to find a dug-out in which to hide.

School classroom

Seomra ranga scoile

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The role of women in trying to broker peace in 1922 – "republicans without malice" as Augusta Gregory called them – proved futile. Hanna Sheehy Skeffington has written of how, when she went to plead with Collins, she found only "a man with a touch of the dictator" whose ideal Ireland was a replica of the British state, "with the usual soldier's contempt for civilians, particularly women, though these had often risked their lives to help him". Lady Gregory's deputation to Kevin O'Higgins got short shrift, derided as "hysterical young women who ought to be playing five-finger exercises or helping their mothers with the brasses".

What, then, was the Civil War all about? Hardly the North, which many felt Collins intended to invade and reclaim. Or was it the Oath of Allegiance? Hardly that either, except for those extreme idealists who lacked patience to wait for expanded versions of freedom – they could have sworn the Oath as an empty coercive formula and forgotten it. The Civil war may have drawn in such idealists, but also the sort of male who had by 1922 become convinced that alternative organisations of militancy were not available and had come to regard a state of war as normal. It is significant that wherever the British went they created a cult around the world of soldierhood; and when they withdrew from a country, they often left conditions ripe for civil strife. Of course in any but a strictly military sense, it's often difficult to assign a specific date to a civil war – in the Irish case there were internal divisions well before 1922; and these were still played out in attempts by Fianna Fáil to dominate the 1966 memorial events or by Fine Gael to make similar efforts to link their party traditions to key moments in the Decade of Commemoration.

The British often withdrew precipitately before they had trained the colonised people in the art of government (although it's only fair to add that the civil service witnessed a fairly seamless transition). George Russell, cooperator and poet, foresaw the forthcoming political crisis in civic politics as early as 1916:

> *"There is a danger in revolution if the revolutionary spirit is much more advanced than the moral qualities which alone can secure the success of a revolt. These intellectual and moral qualities – the skill to organise, the wisdom to control large undertakings, are not natural gifts but the result of experience."*

It was of such qualities that W B Yeats was thinking, perhaps, when he composed the closing question of his poem Leda and the Swan – if Leda is the perennial Irish girl and the Swan a version of the invading power, the question makes a sudden political sense:

> *Did she put on his knowledge with his power*
>
> *Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?*

The girl has "feeling", the Swan "knowledge" – the poem a reworking of a story of rape and brutal withdrawal. That final question could be asking: when the Irish took over "power" from the empire, did they also take on the centuries-honed skills of self-government ("knowledge"). The indifferent beak – whose violence is captured in the monosyllabic plosives of "beak" and "drop" – becomes Yeats's judgement on the callous suddenness of an ill-prepared British withdrawal – something that would be repeated in India, Cyprus, etc., etc.

So is this closer to what the Civil War was about? "Out of the quarrel with ourselves we make poetry", said Yeats, perhaps thinking of what Ernie O'Malley called "the lyric phase" of the revolution; "but from the quarrel with others we make prose" – that bitter, hard-edged realism which led to appalling atrocities by Free Stater and Republican, and the burning-out of many decent people such as Horace Plunkett at just that point when he intended to bequeath his house to the nation. George Russell said that from the idealism of Yeats, Ireland had followed Joyce and O'Flaherty into an exploration of the sewers: a perhaps inevitable antidote. Joyce was made inevitable by the poetry of Yeats; for the lyric phase was bound sooner or later to contain the essential criticism of the poetry to which it adhered.

As to the rhetoric which characterised all of these events, the robust integrity of the Treaty Debates might be considered the last, high-voltage expression of the nation's quarrel with itself – on citizens' rights, social democracy, cultural self-determination. That disputants capable of such eloquence should soon be at war with one another was a calamity indeed. Yet there hangs over that intense debate a sense of uncertainty. Its speakers had sought various dreams of which they could not fully speak; they could speak only of having sought them. Like Joyce's Ulysses, their Ireland was becoming an answer to a question which had not yet been fully asked; the disputants, in the words of Patrick O'Farrell, were looking not so much for an answer as for a meaning to their question.

Back in 1916 the rebels had played a role: assuming a republic in order to prove its existence, many had behaved like actors – indeed, many like Edward Keegan were actors. The problem was like that defined a generation earlier by Oscar Wilde: "the first duty in life is to adopt a pose: what the second is nobody has yet found out." Had the contributors to the Treaty Debates any real agreement as to what they were fighting for? Land, undoubtedly, for many of the poorer participants, like the Keegans, had been evicted in earlier decades from a family farm. But beyond that? When Tomás Ó Criomhthain asked fellow-islanders on the Blasket in Allagar na hInse "abair an focal republic i nGaoluinn" (say the word republic in Irish), his interlocutors found that they had none: "agus is beag a chuir a soláthar imní ach oiread oraibh" (and it's little its attainment worried you either), was Tomás's laconic reply.

The burning-out of Protestant houses seldom had a sectarian dimension – its exponents just wanted the return of their land. Compared with Russia, few enough big houses got burned in the War of Independence – more were torched in the Civil War, often by persons who expected to obtain more land for their farms. But many perpetrators, half-apologetic for what they were doing, helped the aristocrats to save family heirlooms. (Other more crude operatives simply looted them). Catholic landlords were shot too, because their land was also felt to have been stolen in the past from its rightful owners.

Doubtless, many Protestants who left for England felt no longer welcome in Ireland or loved – and the closing of their houses and final abandonment of their demesnes removed good jobs from many (both Catholic and Protestant). But again, there is complexity here too. My TCD room-mate's grandfather was a doctor in Greystones and Dalkey, who served in Crown forces and was wounded in World War One; but who also cared for the local poor, often without charge. When his name was added to a list of men to be assassinated, members of the local IRA alerted him and kept him in a hidden place until the danger had passed. His family and descendants lived on happily in Ireland.

But these were frenetic times. The sheer effort expended in expelling the British from 26 counties (not to mention fighting for small countries in World War One and the Black-and-Tan Terror) left everyone exhausted and in no condition to reimagine the national condition. A majority wearily accepted the Treaty as the freedom to win further freedom. Great things were done in the early years of the State, such as building a power station, or broadcasting the first live sporting event, or improving the housing supply; but the old imperial capital Dublin was not replaced by a different city and attitudes to schooling hardly changed at all. If anything, things went backward. Pearse's idea of a child-centred, arts-and-craft education made way for a dismal imitation of English schools, with their rote-learning and corporal punishment designed to bring rebellious individualists into line. It was no surprise that many lapsed back onto the received old forms – with imperial postboxes painted green and British guns, once aimed at Easter rebels, now borrowed to shoot out the rebels in the Four Courts.

In all of this there is what Erich Fromm would later call "the fear of freedom". The bleakness of freedom could seem lonely indeed, unconsciously projected (perhaps) by the sheer blankness that made the map of Ireland seem empty on the first Free State postage stamps. Bernard Shaw captured this sense of baffled vacancy when he wrote in The Irish Statesman in 1928: "When we were given a free hand to make good, we found ourselves with a shock that has taken all the moral pluck out of us as completely as shell-

shock. We can recover ourselves only by forcing ourselves to face new ideas." Meanwhile, the people, cowed by a rule-obsessed ecclesiocracy, behaved like apple-lickers – people who, if tempted in the Garden of Eden, would (in the words of Seán O'Faoláin) have licked rather than bitten the apple.

So we are back to Wilde's question: what was that second idea, after the initial pose was abandoned? Some 1916 rebels thought they had got closer to it. Tom MacDonagh said that the mystic "seeks to express the things of God that are made known to him in no language". This might be an explanation of the British complaint that whenever they came up with an answer, the Irish changed the question. That was because they had no real idea as to exactly what the question was – some sort of mystical republic beyond description in any available language. James Joyce spoke of the "uncreated conscience" of the race and said that the Irish middle class had yet to be made. Pearse, being Pearse, went farther:

> *What if the dream come true? And if millions unborn shall dwell*
>
> *In the house that I shaped in my heart, the noble house of my thought?*

This assigns a key role to the Unconscious, an imaginative surplus to be revealed only in the future… in the Ireland of the coming times. Hamlet was a play known well to many rebels, in the course of which the Player King says:

> *But orderly to end where I begun*
>
> *Our wills and faces do so contrary run*
>
> *That our devices still are overthrown;*
>
> *Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of our own.*

The deed subverts its intended outcome; and the Unconscious does its will, bringing the people to a place they never expected to be. Or, as another Shakespearean king says "No thought is contented", for it will seek its object in the strange and the new. If the people had known their destination to begin with, they would never have needed to go there.

One needs a self to narrate one's story, but how can one presume to know a self until after the story is told? How can you represent the new in a language shop-soiled with messy precedents – the unknown in terms of the known? The fuzzy font of the Easter Proclamation represents the problem, as did O'Casey in keeping his rebels mostly offstage. The same question was put by W B Yeats in his play Resurrection: "What if there is always something that lies outside knowledge, outside order? What if at that moment when knowledge or order seem complete that something appears?"

So the fight was to be about MEANING – and it would seek an answer to a question never asked (for nobody had thought through the ramifications of a republic in the days of the Irish Parliamentary Party, just as nobody thought of a book like Ulysses in the era of realist novels). But, as in classic tragedy, the unaskable question, once put, would shatter all paradigms of the known world. In order to act, the Irish had to forget or transcend many scruples based on the past and to move by intuition. They acted upon impulse, simply to discover what might happen next. And history, as Joyce thought it might, gave them a back kick.

I've noted that civil wars tend not to start or end on exact dates. Before she died, Joan Didion observed that the United States version was not yet over but carried forward into modern times by Trump's hatred of Obama. One could say the same about the competitive behaviour of civil war parties in Ireland.

The effects of our Civil War have been massive. Silence was one. Emotional breakdown another – see McGahern's Amongst Women for samples. Exile was a common reaction. Though de Valera accused emigrants of apostasy, many went to the US where their business skills flourished at a time when Ireland badly stood in need of such gifts. How often did one see a van bearing a name like "FX Brennan Est 1927" in New York and lament the loss to an Ireland filled with timid professional men, cautious professional men and few risk-taking entrepreneurs? As for the ranchers who replaced landlords, their role had been anticipated and foretold over a hundred years earlier, when Thady Quirk took over Castle Rackrent on terms most favourable to every middle-man who followed him.

Indeed the Civil War had multiple antecedents – if we wished, we could find them as far back as that internal strife of the twelfth century which led to the invasion of Ireland.

An amazing number of intellectuals, whether participant or not, were so disgusted by the vicious civil strife that they opted for various forms of emigration. Flann Campbell went to the US in 1925 and effectively founded Irish Studies there after the collapse of his marriage – Fordham University amalgamated his school into its English Department in 1932 and he stayed until 1939. Seán Ó Faoláin left for literary study and teaching at Harvard. Prison had allowed such figures to rethink their nationalist politics, as Frank O'Connor illustrated in his story "Guests

of the Nation", about the plight of men forced to kill those who have become their friends.

The losers of the Civil War were often socially disgraced and many found it hard to get regular work in their old trades – or indeed communion at some altar rails. Most were landless labourers and some went into the small-time pub trade. Not for them a large farm of rolling acres after the Land Acts. Yet the revolutionary spirit sweeping Europe after 1918 led them to understand that they were persons of consequence in their own right.

John McGahern, however, did not regard 1922 as a significant date: it was simply, he said, a moment when responsibility for managing the decline of a rural Ireland passed from one elite to another. The emerging grazier class was more interested in land ownership than in land use... and in securing enough affluence to place a son in a diocesan college or make another offspring an apprentice solicitor – people "killed with respectability" who could be relied upon to promote the appropriate ideology.

There were few to speak for the landless labourers – who left in great numbers. His utter lack of interest in the radical ideas of the Democratic Programme of 1919 meant that de Valera got fewer votes than he might have done in the early years of Fianna Fáil. Allegations that he was a Bolshevik put paid to all that. His idolator and biographer Dorothy McArdle finally rebuked him for timidity in 1937, lamenting in a letter that Ireland was now a necropolis.

By then George Russell, editor of The Irish Statesman, had decamped to England (where he helped P L Travers craft the tale of Mary Poppins) and thence to the US where he advised the administration during the "dustbowl years" on the merits of rural cooperation. His friend, Stephen MacKenna, the great translator of Plotinus, companion of Synge and editor of An Claidheamh Soluis, had also left for England. More than one in two persons born in the island after 1900 were gone by the 1930s. What is remarkable is that so many with vibrant minds stayed – and made things so much better in the 1960s, with expressions of cultural self-belief linked to programmes for economic development.

Independence created immense possibilities for a country denied self-government for more than a century; but this exciting thought was tempered by the sense that things had changed mainly so that they could remain the same. The Civil War had led to a distrust of anyone who made an idea or a scheme the basis for action. Science was not greatly esteemed in most schools; nor was literature, which had helped invent Ireland but now found itself often censored by the very country it helped to create. Science and poetry were all very well in their place, the authorities implied, but it was a subordinate place and "one could have too much of that kind of thing".

The idea of a rights-based secular society which informed the Proclamation of 1916 and the Democratic Programme of 1919 was replaced by a narrowly-defined ethnic nationalism, notably in the 1937 Constitution.

The Irish language ceased to feel like a recoverable gift and too many schoolchildren appeared more in the guise of a threat. Interdictions in schools tended to be barked out in the native language; and religion was reduced to a set of rules rather than a version of imaginative possibility. "If we had more real religion, we might have less morals", lamented W B Yeats; but few people really understood what he meant. The study of the Catechism of Catholic Doctrine and of the intricacies of grammar in the Irish language took up many hours of the school day. Teachers were encouraged to see themselves as the non-commissioned officers of the official church.

As Ireland hovered between sovereign status and empire affiliate, it found itself caught in a posture of waiting – for full republican sovereignty, social democracy, economic lift-off, even spiritual renewal. "Do you believe in a life to come?" asks one of Beckett's characters in Endgame, a play staged in 1957, only to be told "Mine was always that". It would be many more decades before the full fruits of independence would be tasted in the 1960s and again in the 1990s, but even then only by a lucky minority.

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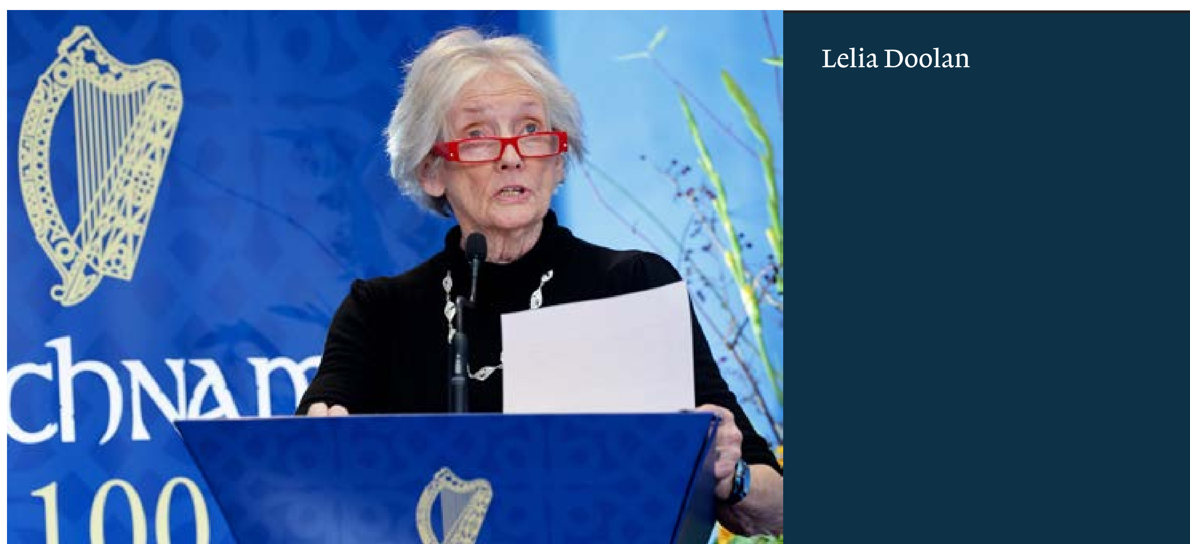
Respondent

Lelia Doolan

Memory and Imagination mediated for a 'mass' audience



Lelia Doolan

Over fifty years ago, we used to do the politics programme, **7 Days,** every Monday night on RTÉ. With proper ructions on occasion. We were off the air for the summer and I was on a holiday in Camp, Co. Kerry when on August 20th, 1968, the Warsaw Pact countries, led by the Soviet Union, (now Russia), rolled tanks and troops into Czechoslovakia, into Prague, to put a stop to the gentle rebirth of freedoms and an end to Dubček's reforms. I remember lying out to get a signal in those starlit nights listening to news on shortwave radio from New York, to the meetings of the United Nations. The Czech plenipotentiary came to plead with his global compatriots to come to their aid. On that crackly radio, his voice was urgent and emotional and his words were most affecting. I was riveted. I could see those tanks, the horror of the people, the suddenness. It is still an unforgettable moment to me – the shock of war. We're all too familiar with it today, with the sounds and the images from the heart-rending scenes in Ukraine.

What would it have been like more than fifty years earlier, to hear on radio when the gunboat Helga came up the Liffey to put an end to our declaration of a free and independent republic? There was no United Nations to appeal to, then; few enough to hear, except by word of mouth, that fearful, poetic and resolute, strangely elated moment. Most people were unaware. There were no moving cameras to follow every awesome moment. James Stephens walked the streets to and from his office, writing about what he saw in his simple, graphic, calm way. Máire Comerford circled the cut-off city, enchanted and frustrated.

The Rising. The risen people. It is an emotional image. I would have been as riveted by the dream of those passionate poets and unexpected soldiers – and as caught up in those later moments of ghastly retribution – the executions. They changed everything. And then the War of Independence, the Treaty and its debates. What would it have been like to see the Four Courts under siege, the tragedy of comrade against comrade? And our emerging slightly Free State. The amputated North of Ireland. A League of Nations reject until 1923. Few phones, little radio but morse code; photographers, yes; and contending headlines and propaganda.

Michael Collins, then eighteen years old, sat in the London offices of the British Civil Service, opposite my father, two years his junior in 1908.

Michael was already a member of the IRB, the secret Fenian army who rose from the Famine and became the brotherhood that finally created what Nuala O'Faolain called "our damp little shambles of a democracy".

But there was no public medium to help us know the dreams and hopes of all those Irish language and literary enthusiasts, the trades unionists and suffragettes, those young military and sportspeople — what did they have in common? How were we to know? Were all their aims compatible? Did they meet everyone's aspirations?

Was it freedom to run their own affairs? Of course. A more equal society? Less poverty? A fair-minded country that gave everyone a chance to flourish?

Or was it about a bit more land for me? A decent job? A bigger farm? A bigger shop? My son the priest? A new life of *respectability*? Bernadette McAliskey used to say: it's always about land.

The women of Citizen Army and Volunteers, the Suffrage movement and the majority of Cumann na mBan members had the bad manners to believe in the rhetoric and ideas of the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916 and in the Democratic Programme. They believed that the republic would be built on new, Irish-structured organisations and systems to suit the innate creativity and eccentric idealism of the Irish, different from English bureaucracy, maybe, with a more open spirituality based on an earlier, less misogynistic Catholicism and the centuries-old generosity of broad swathes of Irish citizens. But those men who had survived the Rising and terms in prison, described these womanly bad manners as shrill and unbending. Would the existence of a contemporary media have offered a different view?

Maybe I'm foolish to believe that the inclusion of a woman among the plenipotentiaries could have led to a more generally acceptable outcome. What about the involvement of figures like Mary MacSwiney in the Treaty negotiations? Her intellect and force of character, or the down-to-earth imperiousness of the Countess could have resisted the bullying of Churchill and Birkenhead and the wiliness of Lloyd George. But it was left to young Irish women's shorthand excellence, not to their arguments. Maybe this was the beginning of the exclusion of women from public life, after a British civil service model? Mary MacSwiney's grandnephew, Cathal MacSwiney Brugha, spoke about his aunt in a recent documentary by the Cork film collective, Frameworks and local historians called **Ordinary Women in Extraordinary Times.** He revealed that she had wanted to go to London for the negotiations – but people like Collins and Griffiths rejected her. Too argumentative...

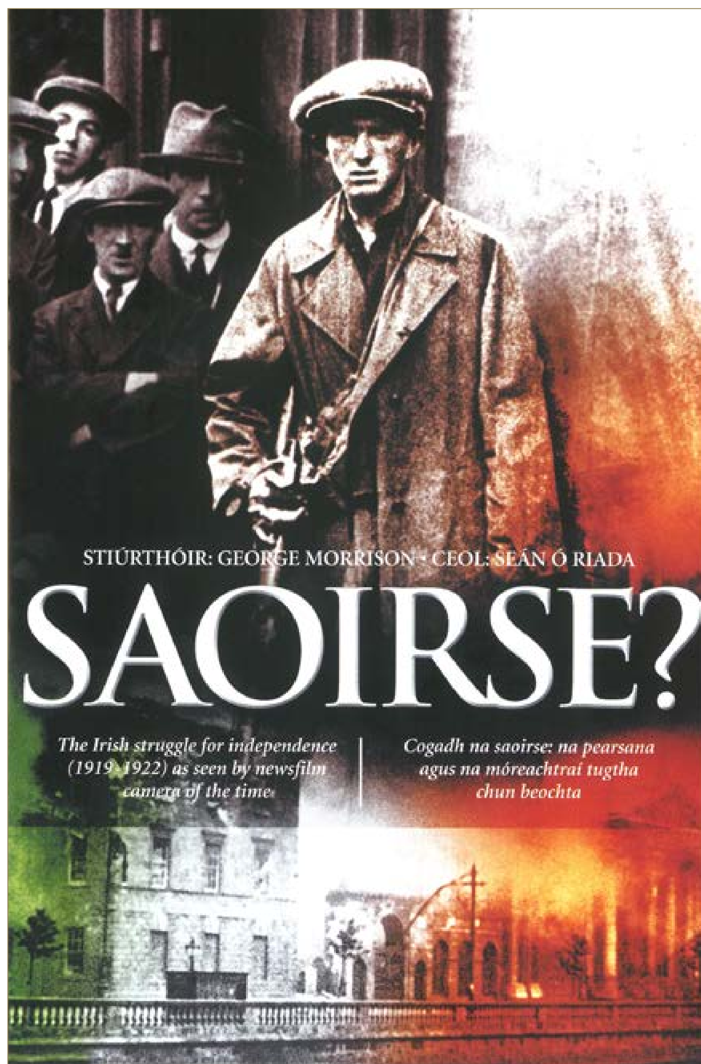
It did not take long for women's roles in the Revolution as messengers, combatants, spies and intelligence officers, despatch riders, jailbirds, organisers of rallies and protests, hunger strikers, writers, educators and full-time providers of safe houses, to be scrubbed from the record until a new generation of scholars and historians led by the likes of Margaret MacCurtain, Margaret Ward and others, began to set the record straight. No mass media at work there to balance that record – until after the events. For instance, it was last May when we had an opportunity to see and taste the dreams and heartbreak of the seven women survivors of the leaders in the documentary on RTÉ – **Forgotten: Widows of The Irish Revolution.** Sé Merry Doyle's **The Rebel Doctor** has kept alive for us the life's work of Kathleen Lynn, great saviour of poor children and their penniless mothers.

So how, in earlier times, were those days and aspirations conveyed to every citizen?

Four years after the end of the Civil War, the independent Irish radio station 2RN went on air – situated high up in the shoulder of the GPO. It became Radio Éireann, within the Department of Posts and Telegraphs – beloved of farmers for weather forecasts, and saving the dry battery for Mícheál Ó hEithir and the great pictures he made of hurling matches; dear to those who loved the radio play on Sunday nights, and the Kilfenora Céilí Band... the poultry instructor, the Making and Mending man.

Later, in the early fifties until 1964, Gael Linn, the inventive Irish language promoters, produced a fortnightly newsreel of Irish life, Amharc Éireann, by Colm Ó Laoghaire, with Jim Mulkerns. They were so popular that the Rank film organisation agreed to show the newsreels in all their cinemas. Gael Linn was one of those who offered their services to run an Irish television service but was unsuccessful...

The State's belief in the efficacy of the advance factory idea led to the establishment of Ardmore Film Studios in 1958, to welcome American films and promote the Abbey Theatre and Irish actors. It was the brainchild of Emmet Dalton, recovered veteran of the Civil War, Michael Collins' friend. It was less welcome to Irish film-makers and activists like Louis Marcus and Tiernan MacBride who thought supporting Ireland's own film-makers should be our first priority. One of the early films there, in 1959 was **Shake Hands With The Devil,** a big action film, from a 1933 novel by Rearden Conner. It was set in the War of Independence at the start of the Black and Tan era and ended with the Truce. It starred James



DVD cover of 'Saoirse'

Clúdach DVD 'Saoirse'

Le caoinchead ó Gael Linn

Cagney as a slightly believable IRA commandant and Trinity College medical professor, with Michael Redgrave as Michael Collins – the General. It had a huge cast of great Irish actors. Cyril Cusack as a philosopher and Irish language poet on the run is a lovely mystical thread in the tweedy mix! It was an undeniably pro-Treaty document, showing that the anti-Treaty argument was far too unrealistic, far too extreme. Not a word about any socialist dimension to those days, however...

In a sense, that was left to **Saoirse?** – with a question mark – George Morrison's monumental, tragic sequel in 1961 to the more hopeful **Mise Éire,** a hymn to patriotic romanticism with Seán Ó Riada's majestic score.

And then, that same year, Irish television. Understandably, as with the earlier thinking of Collins and Griffith – and then de Valera and John Charles McQuaid – in 1959, Michael Hilliard was able to declare in the Dáil "This television service will not be run by Beelzebub but by nine responsible people" – no irony that the nine responsible people were eight men and one woman – at least better than the Council of State where there was not a single woman in 1966.

Nevertheless, as in literature, there were enough creative souls to draw attention to the anomalies and corruptions as well as to the marvels of the State. Nowadays, many tell their stories through independent television and film companies and collectives outside rather than within RTÉ. But starting back then, the absolutist position of the religious, political and cultural male elites who looked after censorship of films and books, the policing and imprisoning of young pregnant women in loveless institutions and the villainy of corrupt businessmen became slowly more obvious to the watching public... Mary Raftery on TV, Marian Finucane and Katie Hannon on radio, among others, have told the hard truths about our democracy.

In general, though, as with the foundation of the State and many matters Irish, television was that strange child of ambiguous creativity, pinioned between national intelligence and national

pragmatism – political and commercial forces. Too dangerous to leave broadcasting to the broadcasters...

And then came the commemorations. Like Yeats's question "did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?" we might ask the same of RTÉ's 1966 anniversary programming: John Bowman, here present, records it as somewhat alarming that RTÉ's Authority and senior editorial team had decided that the commemoration was to be shown "as a nationalist rather than a socialist" event and that the approach in programming would be 'idealistic and emotional' rather than 'interpretive and analytical'. There were eight "newsreels" transmitted every night, reports and reconstructions of what would have happened each day of the conflict, called **Insurrection!** written by Hugh Leonard. They were stirring reminders of the nation's aspirations. There is good reason to reflect on the perceived influence these high octane dramas had on the subsequent civil rights movements and then on the openly armed hostilities in Northern Ireland – the 'unfinished' business – meaning unfinished military business...

However, these newsreels were balanced by thoughtful interviews with descendants and relations of the executed signatories and combatants. Most memorable and affecting among these was the remembrance of Nora Connolly O'Brien, James Connolly's daughter. She recalled the night before her father was executed. Her mother and she, as eldest daughter, were called to see him in Dublin Castle. He greeted them and said 'Well Lily, I suppose you know what this means' and she said 'but your life, James, your beautiful life' and he replied: 'but wasn't it a full life and isn't this a good end!' It was a moment of real feeling. Without media, those moments and their insights would have been lost to our imaginations. It made broadcasting a valuable addition to Irish conversation.

And, still later, RTÉ's great production by Tony Barry of James Plunkett Kelly's **Strumpet City** did remind people that there had been a Larkin and a Connolly and Irish women and men socialists at war with Church and commerce associated with nationalist pretenders. The many strands of Irish life and class were not forever with O'Leary in the grave.

So how well have our public media worked in informing, educating and entertaining the mass about the Decade of Centenaries?

I incline to the theory that there is no such thing as the mass – rather there are overlapping families of interest and attention, some with a similar intentionality – like all those varied, complicated parties, striving for Irish liberty. What is undeniable is certain people's propensity to manipulation by elites...

Nowadays, the mass, in effect, is a carefully delineated order of groups and sub-groups — to whom to sell things: ideas, wants, aspirations. In the old days, it was the Church who generally held the cards of totalitarian cultural power; the national illusion is that these cards are held by government and opposition. The reality nowadays is that corporations and their electronic voices and technologically uniform structures rule everything.

The last of the State's public media supports, TG4, opened in 1996, a lively and innovative addition to our media. Like every Irish broadcaster, it has engaged with the decade of commemorations. TG4 have broadcast programmes about Tom Barry, Dan Breen, Ernie O'Malley, films on women's role and, directly on the Civil War – an independent film by Jerry O'Callaghan is to be shown in December – **Marú in Íarthar Chorcaí – Cogadh Saoirse no Cogadh Seicteach?** (**Massacre in West Cork – Civil War or Sectarian War?**).

RTÉ TV's **Nationwide** has done almost thirty short pieces since 2016 – historical reconstructions and remembrances, mostly by the redoubtable Donal Byrne. All commemorative events have been covered live and online by RTÉ.

As for the Civil War itself Neil Jordan's **Michael Collins** is concerned in large part with the Civil War and the roles of Collins and de Valera within it. He recently said that he believes his treatment of Dev was not fair. For me it was the playing of de Valera by the overly nasal, sadly departed, actor, Alan Rickman that did a lot of the damage. Independent documentaries like **The Limits of Liberty** take on the State's conduct of the ideals of the Rising and examine the extent to which we have carried them out – concluding that we have not yet realised those dreams. In **Keepers of the Flame**, a full length feature documentary, there is poignant evidence from some of the descendants of those thousands overlooked and impoverished for following the republican vision of their ancestors.

But chief among Civil War film work and challenges to our national sensitivities, must be Ken Loach's unapologetically socialist **The Wind that Shakes the Barley.** In one scene at Mass, the priest thunders the bishops' belief in the virtues of the Treaty and its promise of peace – against the left wing obduracy of the anti-Treaty attitude – "I suppose next ye'll want to nationalise the twelve apostles!"

It is good to remember a major challenge in all film and documentary work. It is essentially expensive. It is essentially group work. As a small country, we cannot achieve the total financing of a feature or a documentary. It generally takes four or five – or more – financial partners. It is tedious, hard work. Nowadays, more and more, the State's application requirements can run to 45 pages of questions. The mania for reams of defence documentation is all-pervasive. It takes a major effort to maintain a creative spark. The armies of administrators, each with an opinion, a criticism, a small bit of power, believe, as in days of old, that each one has a divine right to wield that power.

No wonder people under forty rarely look at television nowadays. Social media, the often hateful shorthand of social encounters, and drama series on other media publishers, are the draw. Do ancient viewers still switch on the **Late Late Show** on Fridays, knowing from Wednesday morning who will be there – repeated ad nauseam during the programme itself to insult the audience's intelligence – and to fill advertising slots.

There is forever, thank god, beyond hierarchies of silly class and power abuses, the awkwardly independent and charmingly irrepressible Irish genius for ad hoc arrangements for difficult truth-telling.

Yeats will always remind me of the persistent emotion of civil war at the tower at Ballylee, of daily life itself:

> *We are closed in and the key is turned*
>
> *On our uncertainty*

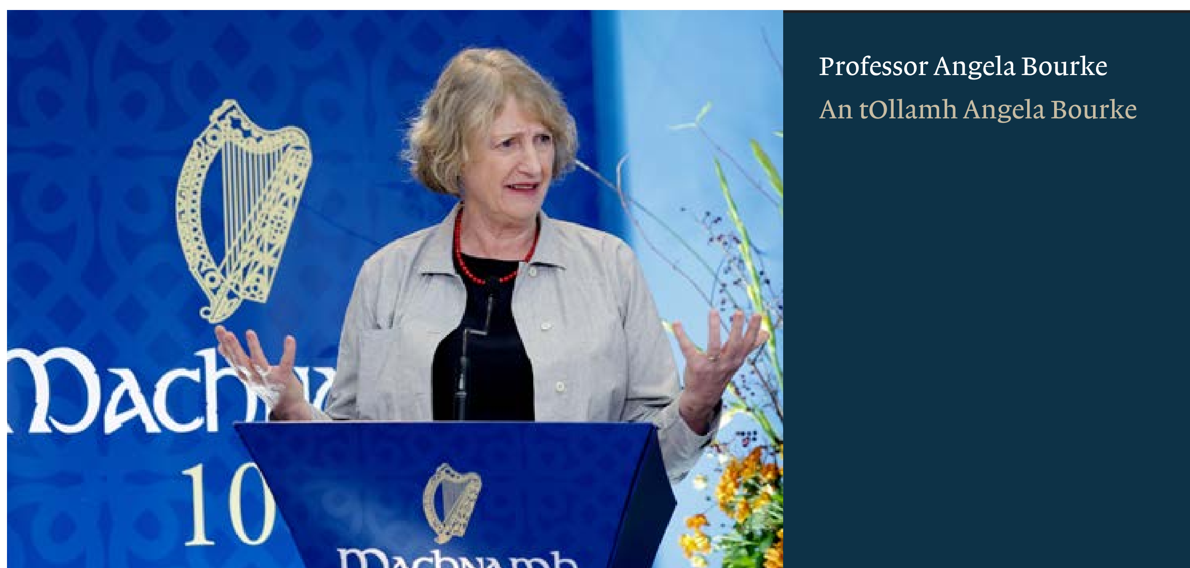
One of the most compelling Civil War memories this year is of Martin McDonagh's moving, brutal and hilarious **The Banshees of Inisherin**; the loving eccentricity of character, the rending of friendship, the self-mutilation and tragedy that ensues. In the vast grandeur of our countryside, that kind of remembering is thought-provoking, ethical, and magnanimous.

Respondent

Professor Angela Bourke

University College Dublin

Memory, myth and history: What is transmitted and what is suppressed



Professor Angela Bourke
An tOllamh Angela Bourke

A Uachtaráin, a Dhaoine Uaisle, a Chairde,

Is mór liom an onóir agus an ócáid, agus mé thar a bheith buíoch den Uachtarán Higgins as a chuireadh teacht chuig Áras an Uachtaráin agus píosa cainte a dhéanamh libh.

When that terrible explosion devastated Creeslough, Co. Donegal, last month, people rushed to the scene, co-ordinating their practical and personal resources to rescue the injured and offer comfort. President Higgins cut short his official business in Strasbourg and arrived without delay. He embraced the bereaved, and listened. He remained there until the last victim was laid to rest. When he spoke in public he expressed gratitude that people in ever widening circles across this island and beyond were '...able to reveal their feelings and that their hearts are breaking.'

'Being able to take the grief of other people into ourselves', the President said in Creeslough, shows 'a very important aspect of character, of a person, of a community and of a people.'

Reading this in *The Irish Times*, I was grateful, because for so long in this country, revealing that your heart was breaking was unthinkable, at least in hegemonic middle-class culture. I thought of the *bean chaointe*, the traditional lamenter of the dead, whom so many visitors described before the Great Famine, as did John Synge, early in the 20th century, in *The Aran Islands*. She wasted no time in getting to the place of death; she took the grief into herself.[1]

To leave a dead person unlamented, people said, was to treat their body like the carcass of a cow or a horse: as less than human. For a man of any standing not to be keened by several women was a disgrace: a stain on a family's reputation. A long, bespoke, sung poem, on the other

1 A. Bourke (1993) 'More in anger than in sorrow: Irish women's lament poetry', in J. N. Radner, ed., *Feminist messages: coding in women's folk culture*, Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, pp. 160-82.

hand, extemporised over the body from the traditional stock-in-trade of the oral tradition, was an honour and something to treasure, and remember.[2] Most of the texts we possess were written down long after being composed in performance, transcribed from women who'd memorised them, and had filled any gaps in the wording from their own familiarity with the practice. All keens follow the same pattern, but no two are quite alike, and many are unique.

Before the Famine, all the women in a household might be expected to range themselves around a dead body, or above a grave, to lift their arms above their heads and move back and forth, raising 'the Irish cry': a loud, repeated, drawn-out *Óchón ó!* or *Olagón!* Those are sounds the body makes, sobbing and groaning, when the worst has happened, and words won't come. It seems that this theatrical performance triggered a conditioned reflex, as mourners and neighbours gathered in large numbers, and each newcomer joined in the weeping and wailing. Still, not every woman could compose the kind of poem we call a *caoineadh*.

The noted *bean chaointe* was a solo artist, and a community therapist. She expressed the distress, disorientation, affection and fury people felt, now that life had been changed forever by the loss of this person. Her raised voice, active body and loosened hair, the words and melody she chose from a large shared stock that she carried in memory, constituted the *caoineadh*, anglicised as 'keen'. Traditional phrases and themes offer praise or vituperation, depending on whom they address. They describe grand hospitality, flourishing crops, thoroughbred horses, silver-hilted swords – even if the deceased had no such resources. They use images we might associate with horror films, to confront the physical reality of decomposition. The performance, like a tragic drama, must have had a huge therapeutic effect, allowing people in attendance to 'reveal the grief they feel, and that their hearts are breaking', as the President said in Creeslough.[3]

A mourner at a wake or funeral might not always be heartbroken, but everybody has had experience of grief, and it may be a consolation if their community can acknowledge that. Better too, perhaps, if the horror-movie images appear in the mind's eye while you're in company, when all attention is on what has been lost, and others are around to hold you.

Traditional keeners didn't just praise the dead; they used their position to call out injustice, dishonesty, abuse, avarice and oppression–as oral poets have done since Homer's time, and earlier. Sometimes they were even hired to publicise political meetings.

During the last three decades, as awful revelations have emerged about the conduct of our institutions and of trusted individuals, Irish artists have taken up the *bean chaointe*'s toolkit to express grief and anger at some of the atrocities that have come to light, and deal with other kinds of trauma.

Sinéad O'Connor called herself a keener 30 years ago, when she used her fame to cry out against the physical and sexual abuse of children, in church-run institutions and in families–and suffered severe punishment for doing so.[4] Alanna O'Kelly had returned from London by then, after postgraduate study at the Slade School of Art. She'd already begun exploring Irish identity, language and the Famine, using her own keening voice alongside installation, video and painting. Official commemoration of the Famine's 150th anniversary in the mid-1990s favoured academic approaches, but in O'Kelly's work, later acquired by Carrick-on-Shannon, Co. Leitrim, for its Workhouse Attic, the sound of her keening accompanied video of her breast milk moving through bathwater, asserting woman's authority and perspective much as the *bean chaointe* used to.[5]

And younger artists have taken up *caoineadh* as vocal art. Michelle Collins, who completed a 2014 MA in Norway on 'de-ritualisation and re-ritualisation' of *caoineadh* in Ireland, last year facilitated workshops with Marymount University Hospital and Hospice in her native

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2 For the music of *caoineadh* see B. Ó Madagáin (1982) 'Irish vocal music of lament and syllabic poetry' in R. O'Driscoll, ed., *The Celtic consciousness*, Mountrath: Dolmen, pp. 311-31; (2005) *Caointe agus seancheolta eile/keening and other old Irish musics*, Indreabhán, Conamara: Cló Iar-Chonnachta; M. Nic an Airchinnigh & L. Ó Laoire (2014) 'Caointe agus amhráin chrúite: "Is le gach bó a lao agus is le gach caoineadh a cheol"', *Aiste* 4, pp. 155–176.

3 A. Bourke (2000) 'Keening as theatre: J.M. Synge and the Irish lament tradition', in N. Grene, ed., *Interpreting Synge: essays from the Synge Summer School, 1991-2000*. Dublin: Lilliput.

4 J. Waters (1995) 'Sinéad the keener', *The Irish Times*, 28 January; E. Nolan (2010) 'Sinéad O'Connor: The story of a voice,' *Field Day Review* 6, pp. 53-69: https://fieldday.ie/wp-. content/uploads/2015/12/9780946755493-FDR6.pdf

5 A. Bourke (2016) *Voices underfoot: memory, forgetting, and oral verbal art*, Famine Folios series, ed., N. O'Sullivan, Hamden, Connecticut: Quinnipiac University Press, and Cork: Cork University Press.

'The Aran Fisherman's Drowned Child' by Frederic William Burton. 1841.

'The Aran Fisherman's Drowned Child' le Frederic William Burton. 1841.

Courtesy of the National Gallery of Ireland
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Cork to support its Service for Older People.[6] In Galway, starting on Nollaig na mBan (6 January) 2014, Ceara Conway brought asylum seekers together with local people for public condemnation and lamenting of the Direct Provision system, by candlelight. This year, she has gone back, as Sinéad O'Connor did for a while, to old songs of grief, mostly from Connemara, reinterpreting them for these times.[7]

Even people with no Irish are learning to sing those songs. Some, who have spent their lives insisting they don't know any Irish–like Hungarians with Russian, after the Soviet Union fell, because it was compulsory, and they'd hated it–are discovering that there may be something in it after all. This year too, the National Gallery has honoured the heroic Catherine Corless, once dismissed as a 'local historian', by purchasing Paul MacCormaic's fine 2021 portrait of her.[8]

Thirty years ago Cormac Ó Gráda drew attention to the 'sanitized and apologetic approach to the Famine' among Irish-based historians, contrasting it with work by scholars in the US.

He noted too that 'a leading Dublin academic' had derided Robert Kee's 1980 television documentary *Famine*, as 'lending succor to terrorism.'[9]

Teaching at American universities around that time, I met many Irish-Americans. What struck me was the difference in social memory between the people I was meeting and what was familiar to me at home–from people I knew, from spending time in Gaeltacht areas, reading Gaeltacht autobiographies, and going through manuscripts of what's now the National Folklore Collection (NFC).

Irish-Americans I met spoke about 'the Potato Famine', injustice, poverty, mental illness and alcoholism. But the Famine was hardly mentioned in Ireland, nor was poverty, though people donated generously to famine relief in

6 Anon. (2021) 'Marymount and Cork County Council receive seed grant', *The Avondhu* 11 March: https://www.pressreader.com/ireland/the-avondhu/20210311/282011855108371.

7 Conway's album, *Caoin* (2022) was released on 30 March. For her *Making visible* (2014), see https://www.cearaconway.ie/recent-work.

8 P. MacCormaic (2022) 'She changed my life', *The Gallery: National Gallery of Ireland magazine*, Autumn/Winter, pp. 14-15.

9 C. Ó Gráda (1993 [1988]) mentions American historians Joel Mokyr, James S. Donnelly and Timothy O'Neill: *Ireland before and after the Famine*, Manchester University Press, pp. 98-101, p. 145, n.8.

Africa. I knew next to nothing about our Famine. Clearly, different stories had been told on either side of the Atlantic. What is transmitted and what is suppressed doesn't only depend on which stories people tell, however; it depends also on what people are willing to hear.

It has been obvious here since the 1990s that people were telling their stories, over and over, but that they weren't being listened to – or weren't being believed. Misogyny was at work, of course, because so many of the people telling the stories were female, or poor, or both. Now, though, men who attended some of the country's most prestigious schools are coming forward with the pain they've carried for decades. A myth can either be a story that's completely wrong, or it can be a treasured narrative that tells a community how things came to be the way they are. Either way, it occupies a place somewhere between memory and history, and merits looking at.

Since the Famine commemorations of the mid-'90s, I've come across many statements that 'Nobody died here', though quite a few accounts mention a place ten miles away, where 'things were very bad.' And yet when radio producer Cathal Póirtéir went through the NFC manuscripts, in search of material to make documentaries for RTÉ, he found stories of land-grabbing farmers, land agents and gombeen men, who abused and cheated the starving poor. And I recall reading about a farming family who fed new milk to their pigs, while destitute people starved in their boundary ditches.

Póirtéir published books in English and Irish on his research. His excellent Introduction to some 500 items in English discusses historians' reluctance to engage with the folklore record as evidence. That may be based on a false premise, he suggests, 'that the folklore of the Famine, by dint of its nature as folklore, carries a nationalist interpretation of the causes, events and effects of the calamity'; he had found both unionist and nationalist views expressed in the manuscripts, however.[10]

Famine had been a major issue during the Land War, when the west of Ireland was again experiencing hunger and deprivation after hard, wet winters and bad harvests. By then, though, among strong farmers and big shopkeepers in particular, the Great Hunger was best forgotten. That class was doing well in the late 19th century, and the country was recovering, despite agrarian outrages in various places.

Contracts for supplying bread or meal or coffins to a workhouse had been lucrative; the English language and the Catholic Church were in the ascendant; railways were extending across the country, and newly middle-class Catholics were cultivating respectability.[11] They dressed well, wore shoes, read newspapers, and sometimes books, avoided rough speech, kept a parlour for special occasions, sent their daughters to convent boarding schools, and in the case of the farmers, aspired to have 'a bull in the field, a pump in the yard, and a son in Maynooth.' They were careful whom their children married, and many of their offspring remained single, leaving large legacies to the church. A great many young women entered convents. If their parents could afford to send a fine piano or equivalent with them as 'dowry', they became choir sisters. Girls from poorer households became lay sisters, who did the heavy work.[12]

Poorer households in this rural society were those of small farmers and farm labourers. That second group was considered inferior, its members badly exploited until the 1960s, and most of their children emigrated. The people who could not be spoken of were the cottiers, living in pitiable conditions since the potato became established as a subsistence food, and the population of the poor and marginalised exploded. When the potatoes failed, there was no slack in the system, so the Irish-speaking casual labourers and beggars were the first to starve and to die of various diseases. They threw up shelters against ditches for themselves, their children, their hens and pig, if those hadn't been sold. Sometimes a landlord or a charitable organisation packed them into ships and 'emigrated them'. Huge numbers died at sea, or just after reaching Québec. But the land they left meant more for farmers and graziers. Historian Breandán Mac Suibhne, now of University of Galway, broke one silence in 2017 with *The end of outrage*, where he carefully traces names that disappeared in the 19th century from his own home townland in southwest Donegal.[13]

For the new middle class, strongest east of the Shannon, *caoineadh* became embarrassing after the Famine, as did bare feet, and speaking Irish. Good manners required women in particular to disavow the body and sexuality, never to give in

10 C. Póirtéir (1995), *Famine echoes*; his (1996) *Glórtha ón Ghorta* uses similar material in Irish.

11 T. Inglis (1998 [1987]) *Moral monopoly: the rise and fall of the Catholic Church in modern Ireland*, Dublin: UCD Press.

12 C. Clear (1988), *Nuns in nineteenth-century Ireland*. Dublin: Gill and Macmillan.

13 B. Mac Suibhne (2017) *The end of outrage: post-Famine adjustment in rural Ireland.* Oxford.

to strong emotion. *Caoineadh*, by contrast, spoke frankly of the body and sexuality, the *bean chaointe* sometimes baring her breasts as well as her feet, loosening her hair.

When a woman called Alma Curtin asked a little girl in Cahersiveen, Co. Kerry, in 1893 about speaking Irish, the child's reply was that she didn't like to speak it, because it was 'so common in itself'. Alma was a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant from Vermont, visiting with her husband, Jeremiah Curtin, collecting tales and legends to publish in English. The little girl was from a big farm nearby; she used to visit the Americans, bringing gifts of butter, potatoes or honey.

My paternal grandfather was born on that kind of farm in Co. Kilkenny. Úna Bolger, mother of the *New Yorker* writer Maeve Brennan, came from another, in Co. Wexford.[14] Both got married early in the 20th century, neither to the kind of person their parents might have chosen for them.

Robert Brennan's mother kept a small shop in Wexford town; his father had been a pig-dealer. Bob became a journalist, and met his wife in nationalist circles. Both took part in the Rising in Enniscorthy, and he spent much of the next two years in various jails. Early in 1918, when Sinn Féin set up a Propaganda Department in anticipation of an end to the Great War, and an election, Éamon de Valera invited him to be its Director, at £3 a week. The Brennans moved to Dublin with their two young daughters, renting a house from Count Plunkett.

Their third daughter, Deirdre (Derry), was born that October, and three years later, while the plenipotentiaries were in London, the Brennans bought a small house in Ranelagh. Maeve turned five on the day before the Treaty was ratified in 1922, and her father went on the run, yet again. In 1934, when de Valera sent him to Washington, the whole family went too. Maeve was 17.

On 24 October 1953 *The New Yorker* published 'The Day We Got Our Own Back', by Maeve Brennan. Deceptively brief and simple, as though told by a five-year-old, though no child could have written it, its action begins soon after that fifth birthday. Úna is alone with her younger daughters in their new house in Ranelagh when a Free State search party arrives. Derry is upstairs, sick in bed. Downstairs, one man tries to get Maeve to say where her father is, until her mother, a tiny, quiet woman, flies at him.

When the men left, Maeve writes, she was 'spellbound with gratitude, excitement, and astonishment that the strange man had included me.' But the story isn't over, and a second raid a year later raises it into three dimensions, like a house inside a bottle, allowing many points of view.

This second raid, when the soldiers wrecked the house, illustrates what Declan told us about men 'addicted to fighting', and also what he quoted from Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, about 'the usual soldier's contempt for civilians, particularly women, though these had often risked their lives to help him.' One of them got his comeuppance, though, when he tried to look up the chimney, and brought down a load of soot on himself and on the carpet. Úna, whom her daughter usually portrayed as timid, anxious and houseproud, 'laughed as though her heart would break.'

I could say a great deal more about Maeve Brennan and the stories she set in that house, with their silences, and her characters' powerful, unspoken feelings.[15] She died in 1993 in a nursing home in Long Island, where *The New Yorker*, apparently, had placed her, after she became a danger to herself. She exemplified the 'silence, emotional breakdown, and exile' Declan identified among the 'massive' effects of the Civil War. Neither she nor her sister Derry could abide de Valera, after all he had inflicted on their family.

14 A. Bourke (2016 [2004]) *Maeve Brennan: homesick at* The New Yorker, London & New York, 2004; Berkeley, CA, 2016.

15 See Bourke (2016 [2004]).

Respondent

Fergal Keane

Fergal Keane

My words today are the consequence of witness. They come from what I have seen and what I have heard. The long conversations with the survivors of violence, but also with the perpetrators. Traumatic memory is not confined to those on whom violence was inflicted.

I have spent much of my lifetime away at the wars. Most frequently civil wars: the scenes of genocide, ethnic cleansing, man-made starvation.

I have gone into the noise and fury of battle, and afterwards into the anguished, complex silences, and I have explored the necessary fictions that men and women construct to protect their minds from the consequences of the violence they have wrought.

I have come to the conclusion that there is nothing – no cruelty, no indignity – human beings are not capable of inflicting upon each other. But I am also convinced that humanity in extremis is capable of immense generosity – of that which might help bind wounds and lay foundations that help us to move away from the possibility of a return to violence.

I believe that in order to heal the wounds of war, we must heed the pain of others. We must do it especially, when they belong to what in divided societies we see as the 'other' side.

Above all, we must look on the atrocities of the past – whoever carried them out – with clear eyes. To heed is to see things as they actually were.

The body parts shovelled from the ground after the IRA bombs on Bloody Friday.

The mutilated remains of the victims of the Shankill Butchers found in Belfast laneways.

The dying man, bleeding out from a paratrooper's bullet on Bloody Sunday.

To heal, is to acknowledge and be respectful towards the pain of others as well as to our own.

As a consequence, I am impatient with keyboard warriors, barroom balladeers, and social media's manipulative liars. I fear the ease with which it is possible to create narratives that offer us comforting fictions about the true nature of killing.

My words for you today are a personal reflection. I do not speak on behalf of anybody. And my experience of reporting on atrocity has taught me not to believe that anything I say can make much, if any, difference to the course of violent events. I am familiar with moral injury: in my own case the fear that held me paralysed in Rwanda in 1994. To want to intervene, but to be too terrified for one's own safety to take the risk. I can speak to you now at some distance in time from the wars I have witnessed. Yet they live with me in everyday trauma. In vivid detail. I think of Brian Friel's line from 'Translations': *To remember everything is a form of madness.*

I don't write, report, speak because I think I will draw people back from the brink, or remotely imagine that the words of a reporter will pierce the mental armour of those who have spent years rationalizing to themselves the necessity of killing. I am here because I believe that the act of witness has rights of its own. That what I

report can join with the voices of others who try to stand outside the clamour of conflict and offer true stories that might become part of a larger institutional memory.

I am here because of the President's generous invitation, because I believe this series of conversations, while rooted in the past, can inspire a dialogue about the present which has as its hallmarks generosity, compassion and honesty. And these values, heeded in the heart and mind, might shape an Ireland in which we can talk of healing.

ii.

I shouldn't have needed a psychiatrist to tell me that family history and the history of the island on which I grew up were part of what sent me to explore the trauma of others.

But when he did I was greatly relieved. Because until then I had wondered whether my relentless returning to scenes of violence was not perverse or, as one well-meaning older relative asked me once: 'what do you want going into all that old stuff for?'

It is a good question for today.

The reason I go into the 'old stuff' – and whether that is the stuff of the 1920s, or of the nineteen seventies or eighties, is because it lives with me: in the memory of the stories I heard, and the Troubles I myself reported. It is central to the shaping of this island now.

I was not the first of my family to experience the terror of war.

My grandmother Hannah Purtill was fifteen when the Irish Revolution began. By the time the fighting stopped, seven years later, I believe she had been changed by what she witnessed on country lanes and on the streets of Listowel.

War in north Kerry was... the broken corpses of comrades after torture, the blood of a policeman congealing in a gutter, the revolver pointed towards her head in a threat of execution, and night after night waiting for a battering on the door.

As a member of Cumann na mBan my grandmother Hannah spied and smuggled messages and weapons.

Heading into the winter of 1920/21 an atmosphere of terror envelopes north Kerry. The guerrillas attack a police patrol; a village is raided and burned in retaliation. Prisoners are tied to the front of lorries as human shields to forestall ambush. Others are dragged behind vehicles along country roads, leaving them battered to a pulp. One is tied to a horse and dragged across the countryside. Savage beatings of anybody suspected of IRA allegiances are routine. Many in the ranks of the newly arrived Black and Tans and the Auxiliaries are men already brutalised by years of horror on the Western front.

People are fingered by IRA intelligence as spies, then abducted and shot dead, their bodies left on the roadside with signs proclaiming: 'Spies Beware of the IRA'. Two police are kidnapped in north Kerry and tortured. They are released but five weeks later one suffers a mental breakdown and cuts his throat. There are bodies bleeding out on the street, bodies buried in bogs where they will never be found, lying from one century to the next deep in the peat; there are bodies that are still alive being beaten and kicked in the cells of the police barracks or, like the young trainee priest home on leave for Christmas, battered to death in the town square.

The IRA shoots District Inspector Tobias O'Sullivan of the RIC. He is a father of three young children. He lives a few minutes up the street from the Keane family home on Church Street, where my grandmother would go to visit her future in-laws. His wife Mary – known to her family as May – sees the blood flowing from his ruined head. She dies within a year. May is broken by grief. O'Sullivan's movements to and from the police barracks on Church Street have been tracked by spies. As one of the assassins remarks: 'We had been informed of his regular movements by a number of scouts in Listowel who had been put on his trail as soon as the order was received.'[1] It is as simple and irrevocable as that.

Four local IRA men walking along the road outside Listowel are picked up by the Tans, badly beaten and then lined up before a firing squad and shot. Despite being wounded, one runs for his life and survives to tell the tale. My grandmother, Hannah Purtill, is among the group of women detailed with making sure the dead men are given a decent burial in accordance with the rights of the Church, and the customs of the country. A Cumann na mBan member who witnesses the arrival of the bodies at Tralee barracks recalls that 'the face of one, a fine young fellow whom I knew personally, was all smashed in.'

Some of the women tending the bodies are verbally abused and beaten. They find the dead men dumped in a shed used by the police for storing turf. They wash and clean them. How easy to write that, and then stopping myself and imagining these countrywomen painstakingly cleaning away the blood and gore, how that imprints on the mind and the spirit.

When a retired local policeman, James Kane, is killed by the IRA as a suspected informer, his family is boycotted. They are refused service in

shops and forced to walk long distances because no taxi will take them. A brass nameplate is removed from their front door. They live among people who wished to erase their presence.

In the British National Archives I read the letters of Kane's traumatised children and feel shame at the hatred that engulfed some in our town. James's daughter Elizabeth was, like my grandmother, a draper's assistant in Listowel. After the killing 'the staff refused to work with her' despite her having been an employee for fifteen years. She could not find another job.[2] 'After our father's death,' Elizabeth wrote, 'people whom we looked on as our friends turned their back on us and at one particular social entertainment (the first I attended in the town after our father's death) I was the only girl ignored.'

A younger sister had a nervous breakdown and became 'a complete wreck'. The adult Kane children became destitute and were evicted from their home in the centre of town. Eventually they scattered from the story of Listowel. When Elizabeth's lawyers wrote to a local solicitor to try and gather evidence in support of her claim for compensation, they were told that 'there is a great reluctance to admit having taken part in a boycott of this kind, or on the part of anybody to give evidence against neighbours... all parties in Ireland are anxious to forget the troubles of the years 1921, 1922 and banish them as a hideous nightmare'.

But in the minds of the traumatised there is no banishing. Down the generations the trauma goes.

I think of Tobias O'Sullivan, RIC, whose killing was one of the most infamous in the Revolutionary war in Kerry. Yet when I asked a relative why their experience of the war had not been written into the national narrative, I was told: "Nobody ever asked." Yet the pain of what had been done reverberates for his descendants to this day.

Last year, I sat with the son of Jack Ahern, one of Tobias' assassins. When I ask about his father, Seán's eyes fill with tears. He struggles to accept that his kind, warm-hearted, hard-working father could have killed in cold blood. 'I mean how could you live with that? To walk up behind a man and shoot him in the back of the head in front of his wife and child?' The seventy-five-year-old son of a long-dead gunman carries the trauma of what his father had done over a hundred years before.

In my grandmother's house Tobias O'Sullivan became a ghost story told by my father, a green figure – nameless – who stalked the house after dark. Trauma present yet ethereal, mediated through story telling. He was a dead British soldier I was told, a ghost who would wander forever. But did my father know that he was in fact an Irish policeman? That he was gunned down by men who were comrades in arms and friends of my people? There was too much that was – to my inquiring child's mind – unknown.

My early knowledge of the Revolutionary period was shaped by my father's stories, by what I heard in a Listowel kitchen. My father was one of life's romantics. When he was picked to play the role of a hero of 1798 rebellion in the RTÉ film 'When do you Die Friend' his performance won a Jacobs Award. That was in 1966 – fifty years after the Revolution and three years before the war erupted in the north and our commemorations could never be the same again. Never so simple, so lacking in nuance, so embedded in the narrative of origin constructed in the exhausted aftermath of the Civil War.

For those who were the families of the dead of our Revolution – on all sides – there was no healing space. The war of independence gave way to the Civil War, and that in turn led some to the horrifying realisation of the savagery we were capable of inflicting on each other without any help from the British. Later on we sang the rebel songs. We kept to the safe lines of memorialisation dictated from on high. Our remembering was not an exchange between survivors and descendants. In truth I can think of very few countries where it has been.

We did not speak openly of mental wounds. Then the Troubles came.

It was not until years later, when I found myself at the scene of shootings, bombings, assassinations, funerals that the meaning of violence, the human dimension in all its blood, body parts... its tears and empty stares... came home to me. There in Belfast, Lurgan, Derry, and in small towns and villages, and again in Rwanda, Iraq, Algeria, Lebanon, Colombia, Congo, and so many more, my hatred of war hardened.

I also saw in South Africa, and in smaller localised initiatives in the Balkans and the Middle East, attempts to heal through processes of truth telling. I am a firm believer in the power of communities addressing what Seamus Heaney called the tragedy of 'neighbourly murder' through mediated exchanges.

But I am especially concerned today with leaders. My experience has convinced me that for leaders to confront the trauma of the past they must speak with generosity – particularly leaders, on whatever side, who represent those who bear responsibility for some of that violence. The greatest, most transformative leadership involves humility. It means setting to one side justifications, blaming, politicking, whataboutery, and speaking directly to the pain of those who still live with the trauma of the murdered father, mother, brother, sister, son, daughter.

It means openly acknowledging the pain caused, seeing it from the side of those still suffering with the legacy of violence. It means that we must pay full attention to the pain caused by words, gestures, slogans, chants. This is a universal responsibility for political leaders, as is the imperative of creating mechanisms that honestly address the actions of all those – out of uniform or in uniform – who took part in violence.

We cannot have a partitioning of concern for victims according to partisan loyalties. In relation to the conflict on this island, leaders need to heed the pain of families of Bloody Sunday, Bloody Friday, Warrington, Loughinisland, Enniskillen and so many more places. To do so is to prove that we are learning the lessons offered by the past, so that to paraphrase the words of Van Morrison, the healing can begin.

Respondent

President Michael D. Higgins

"1922 – The Most Significant Year?"

President Michael D. Higgins
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn

It is to be welcomed that, during the period of our *Machnamh 100* seminars, so much new work has been published on the period of the War of Independence, the Civil War and the early years of the establishment of the Free State that would, some decades later, be declared the Irish Republic.

Among such is *Ireland 22* edited by Darragh Gannon and Fearghal McGarry, published by the Royal Irish Academy. The 50 pieces from 50 contributors on 50 chosen themes of 1922 are an attractive invitation to reading below the surface of what was a most important but horrific year, 1922. The Irish Labour History Society's *Seeking No Honours* on Tom Johnson published by Trade Union Forsa, is essential for an understanding of the period, as is Colum Kenny's work on Arthur Griffith. Both Tom Johnson and Arthur Griffith have been drawn out of neglect by such recent work.

1922 to 1925 is a defining period in much more than constitutional terms. It is a period in which the rawness of division has exacted great hurt, a hurt that perhaps should be acknowledged before any attempts at narratives of State formation success are presented as singular accounts.

When Basil Chubb wrote many years ago of 'Ireland a successful Democracy' he was right, but the judgment was of an institutional success.

The period is significantly lessened in terms of non-violent possibilities by the absence of the idealistic or pragmatic leaders of the previous decade, such as Arthur Griffith, Michael Collins, or, earlier again, James Connolly. This is shown in how events fell out, events that were sometimes calculated, more often spontaneous or uncontrolled.

In terms of interpretation of events, this creates a complexity that cannot but be dealt with by a diversity of narratives and at several different levels.

Neither is working the relation of memory to history any single challenge. Layers of memory wrestle with each other and from differing perspectives. It is an unending struggle, producing tentative but temporary conclusions.

In contemporary times those of us exercising imagination to recover the period must seek to begin with the fullest bag of pencils we may have to draw some semblance of what life was like in the struggle to come from under the blanket of empire – a smothering that had in its time sought its implementation by the forbidding of most rights to freedom, of belief, freedom of speech in one of the oldest languages. It had invoked dispossession, debasement, all based on the assumption that those who were seeking freedom constituted a dangerous threat, that they were

a lesser, backward, untrustworthy people that could, at best, be but possessors of a quaint, but still dangerous, disposition.

Generation after generation of our ancestors lived through a complex set of exclusions and humiliations that should serve as a qualification of any contemporary hubris. It is not the case that our ancestors were passive, in any simple Gramscian sense, that they did not know what the sources of exclusion or repression were. It is not any false consciousness that restrained them.

Something very real, important for the future, was being stored. It is a supressed experience of hurt, that based on humiliation, of being regarded as lesser. It is one that is transmitted through the generations.

The hurt, such as is inflicted, is not cast aside, forgotten, but imbued with anger, takes on a shape that enables it to be available for its catalytic release. James C. Scott has described such so well in his *Domination and the Arts of Resistance* using literary materials as well as ethnographic research.

It is a great challenge, beyond the task of inclusive integrating of acts of memory, the accepting of distance from what was painful, and seeking to do so with a rejection of any false palliative amnesia, recognising that our task is to live ethically in the present, create futures with possibilities. There will be, no doubt, some who might suggest that creating pictures of the past to accommodate the present should appeal, but such will not suffice for any adequate response to present or future. The acknowledgement of the role of myth is of an entirely different order.

By 1922, the Irish people were a wounded people. They had suffered the First World War, both in terms of participation and in resistance to conscription terms, many had died in the Great Flu, an election that had released a great energy and desire for change, that, had its result been accepted, would have made a War of Independence and an ensuing Civil War unnecessary. The obduracy of imperial pressure, however, would require that the opportunities for peace be thrown aside, and such tragic folly would be repeated during the Civil War.

The year 1922, and its events, are ones of heroic commitment to their tasks in the most difficult circumstances on the part of many, but it is a year which is marked so deeply, not just by the failure of diplomacy, as indeed we are in our current times, but by the reliance on such a coercive force of unscrupulous practices, such as would prevent any peaceful departure from the gripping fingers of empire. Empires, in so many settings, have shown that this would also be the experience of others of the colonised.

Security of tenancy holding had given way to security of ownership. “To Hell with Home Rule. It’s the land we are after”, George Bermingham was told in his day in the late 19th century in Mayo.

There is a violence that comes from land hunger. It is impossible to understand the events of 1922 and the year that followed without recognising the importance of the land issue. The long journey from the 1880s in terms of land division was not over. In 1923 there were 114,000 untenanted farms, 3,125,000 acres of domain land, yet to be distributed.

The 1923 Land Act that was coming would offer reward to some, give an opening opportunity to some congests, but would, in its allocations too, exclude not just those regarded as still dangerous in 1923 – ‘irregulars’, many of whom would remain incarcerated until 1924, even though the arms surrender had been on May 24th 1923 – but those too who were ‘on the wrong side’.

In my paper for *Machnamh* V, I drew on Eiléan Ní Chuilleanáin’s work on the Prison Diary of Joseph Campbell as a source for reflection on what those incarcerated discussed between May 24th 1923 and their release. They had lost, would not get their jobs back, would not be getting land, and the ban on emigration to the U.S. by de Valera would not be lifted until July 1925.

I have a personal connection to the period. My father, uncles and aunt were activists in the War of Independence but my father and uncle were on opposite sides in the Civil War. My uncle was in the National Army, my father in Hut 3 in the Curragh Internment Camp. Later applying over a 22-year period, my father wrote to the Pensions Board:

> *“I was in employment as a Grocer’s Assistant at a salary of £130 per year plus £50 for travelling after my release from internment camp. A deputation [he mentions his previous employer] approached and asked for me to be taken back in his employment. He refused to do so, with the result that I was idle until 1st August 1924 when I got a position as a junior assistant from Michael Nolan, Eyre St, Newbridge, at a salary of £50 per year indoor. At the time very few people would employ an ex-internee”.*

W.T. Cosgrave and others arriving at Earlsfort Terrace.

W.T. Cosgrave agus daoine eile ag sroicheadh Ardán Phort an Iarla.

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Group arriving at Earlsfort Terrace for Treaty ratification talks.

Grúpa ag sroicheadh Ardán Phort an Iarla i gcomhair cainteanna chun an Conradh a dhaingniú.

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What I have quoted was the signed statement of my father, John Higgins, dated 18th April 1935, in support of his application which he, like so many others, would repeat, for a military service pension. The Pension Files contained in the National Archives record their long and exhausting battle for a small pension, which in my father's case was eventually granted in 1956, almost 22 years after his first application, and just eight years before he died in December 1964.

Such was the bitter reality for many of the non-landed. The internees, who were now unemployed, too many perceived as unemployable, the previous comrades in the newly emerging Irish State, were now estranged from them.

A State was coming into being, one of which it would quickly become clear that it was modelling its administrative practices, not on any Michael Collins type of administrative radicalism, but on a mimesis of what it felt might be the excellences of imperial practices.

Ireland's ongoing 'Decade of Commemorations' and our six *Machnamh 100* seminars have sought, and it is welcome, to focus attention not only on the political and constitutional context of the events of 1912–1923, but also on the wider experiences of war, conflict, the Great Flu, and the horrific political violence associated with land security and land hunger within Irish society, and not only that violence which was being imitated or reciprocated, but new forms of violence, including gendered violence. The period carries so many examples of cruel punishments as well as killings.

This broadening of scholarly perspectives beyond constitutional and military history has greatly enhanced our understanding of how conflict and war is experienced and registered as a cultural, social and emotional phenomenon within Ireland's recent past, as Guy Beiner's work has shown.

Among what remains to be given adequate space in the historical accounts are the efforts of those who sought peace – be it Archbishop Clune in the War of Independence, the Trade Union Movement, the Labour Party, the People's Rights Association in Cork. However, the security of land, its promise, the urge to acquire more, something far beyond sufficiency, is the dominant feature in the background.

There is a privileging in the period of the achievement of order, of a necessary coercive authority. It is one which would lead to State executions in response to assassinations. This would in time have the outcome of a State with strong authoritarian tendency and practice, one that would cede control in key areas of policy to an authoritarian version of the Church.

Of those who put parliamentary process and peace first, contemporary writing is sparse. One could not but have been moved when one read of a visit by young Jim Larkin and Barry Desmond to Tom and Marie Johnson, Tom a peace-pursuer and foundational parliamentarian, then retired.

He was found living in straitened circumstances, no pension, broken TV set, struggling to heat his home. This was the fate that befell the Leader of the Opposition in the Parliament of 1922.

The objective of achieving and maintaining a 'respectability', one sustained by having property, as a launching pad, was paramount; respectability of the name, of the immediate family, an essential aspect of the decision as to whether you were being really called for the dioceses. The Christian Brothers to a large extent were left to source the missions.

For so many people in the 1920s, in diverse circumstances and in overt and covert ways, loss of dignity and humiliation were being experienced – be it those who were incarcerated, such as others had in national memory been enduringly symbolised in John Mitchell's iconic *Jail Journal*, one of the most widely read books of its time.

Such loss of dignity could have results that were near irreparable and were transferable. It was not solely individuals who were affected. Loss of health, the consequences of life with Flying Columns, sleeping in dugouts, all had consequences that families were left to carry.

Not all nationalists had the response James C. Scott describes of a stored response for future delivery. Responses to authoritarianism old and new could take different forms. Interestingly, it was in their direct response to such breaches that was the distinctive feature of Fenianism within Nationalism. It was said that Fenians could be identified by their "readiness to meet the eye of the priest, landlord or policeman". Fenians prided themselves on their self-respect and refusal to conform to traditional deference. Fenians were anti-aristocratic democrats who had forged links with English radicalism and harboured notions of just reforms, particularly agrarian.

However, overall, any egalitarian tendency was a weak light within the general nationalist movement. In the prosecution of the fruits of its struggle, nationalism, as is found in so many cases of formal independence, would, in the administrative procedures, imperceptibly at times, take on Empire's assumptions replacing the previous colonial authority with a new, but similar, version, one that bore authoritarian tendencies, for example, in notions of who constituted the 'deserving'.

While it is true that, in many settings, the cold influence of Empire's administrative practice was indeed in decline, the absence of equality as the driving force of an alternative would give rise to a retained emphasis on status, respectability and, in terms of religion, one that offered not a spirituality, but rather required a piety in the service of docility and a further gendered inferiority.

The pension's application process, to which those who had made the sacrifices that achieved independence were applying, was an insensitive rejection of such people, many of whom were sinking into poverty and ill-health.

It was in terms of bureaucratic oppression, one that was deeply humiliating, with requirements that were impossible to meet being inflicted on applicants, all done in an official, Chekhovian form of communication and judgmentalism, for example, interviews in Garda barracks, for an evaluation that suggested inferiority, something that can only be counted as a callous response to poverty in most cases.

Neither policy nor practice constituted a normative behaviour that had either egalitarianism or the necessary dignity of citizenship at its centre. The values seen as necessary for the sustenance of status, respectability, repression, docility were assumed to be ones quite likely to be beyond that attainment of the lesser propertied.

Economic weakness was seen as a corollary of moral weakness. The 1920s were the foundation for a dreadful decade of the 1930s, a decade of repression, bigotry, inculcated fear, and, for many, flight, if one could.

Just as nature abhors a vacuum, the vacant spaces in the emerging Ireland were moved into by the Church. By the 1930s, the New Ireland was one in which perhaps vocationalism at best might be tolerated, seen as a mild, legitimate, 'safe' and an alternative to any dismantling of class or property-based order that might be advocated, discussed or allowed. It was one which might fit within the authoritarianism of Bishops.

An anti-intellectualism was rampant, particularly in the Church and its institutional presence. North-South exchanges descended into being competing excesses of sectarianism, were often brutal and offensive, reinforcing divisions, toxicity, any acceptable notions of 'the Other'.

There were winners and losers then of the Civil War. They in their differing circumstances would form the basis of the new social strata: "The losers [...] found it hard to get regular work in their old trades – or indeed communion at some altar rails", as Declan Kiberd put it today. The professions on the other hand were being re-peopled by families that would go on to create dynasties, and in cultural terms embrace 'modernity' as they saw it.

There was an oppositional intelligentsia stirring. Writers such as George Russell, Seán Ó Faoláin, Séan O'Casey, Denis Johnston, Samuel Beckett and Flann O'Brien all provided a counter-narrative. Institutions such as the Gate Theatre became the centre for subversive writings. However, "literature", as Declan Kiberd notes, "which had helped invent Ireland now found itself often censored by the very country it helped to create".

The Censorship of Films Act 1923 was an early arrival. Under the Censorship of Films Act (1923), a censorship film certificate could be denied for public exhibition if it was deemed to be indecent, obscene or blasphemous, or contrary to public morality. Under this regime, more than 2,500 films were banned, and over 11,000 films were cut by film censors between the 1920s and the 1980s. The first Film Censor, James Montgomery, declared that he acted as a "moral sieve", and used the Ten Commandments as his guide.

Then, too, the moral attitudes of the Committee on Evil Literature (1926) Report permeated the first Censorship of Publications Act (1929). Sexuality, reproduction and matters relating to the corporal all were of the greatest concern to the Irish censors, and censorship enshrined an ideology that was deeply suspicious of the uncovered body, sight of flesh, expressions of human complexity and beauty.

Censorship, as Peter Martin has noted, had its moral entrepreneurs, who, with an energy they suggested was created from divine sources, went from creating moral panics to legislative victories over any expression of sensibility or, 'Heaven save us', something sexual:

> *"The first organised campaigns began in 1911 in Limerick and swiftly spread to Dublin and then around the country. Campaigners were mostly Catholic, members of confraternities, vigilance associations and other groups of laymen and priests. They received support from the hierarchy, but their passion came from their own values which blended piety with a middle-class puritanism that would have been familiar to their British or Unionist equivalents".*

Censorship was too part of a wider exclusionary manifesto in the new State, one that focused its energies too on differentiating Irishness from Britishness. When it was discovered, for example, that the incoming Mayo County Librarian Letitia Dunbar-Harrison was a Protestant whose *alma mater* was Trinity College, the controversy resulted in her position becoming untenable, a Protestant putting a book into a Catholic child's hands!

While cinema was considered suspect, crossroads dancing, seen initially as a far healthier pastime and was promoted, yet, by 1934 it too would have to go, requiring a clerically controlled alternative. The strict segregation of the sexes was a remarkable feature of the Irish countryside of the time, as was being noted by several visiting anthropologists and journalists.

Those who could no longer, for whatever reason, remain in the repressive environment of 1920s' and 1930s' Ireland emigrated, mostly to England, and were termed "lost souls" in some of the editorials of the Irish daily newspapers.

It was the legislative atmosphere of the 1920s that laid the foundations for all of the extremism of the 1930s which would become a decade of misery, exclusion and subjugation for so many.

As we reflect back on the early years of the new State, we should consider too the price we have all paid from an unethical memory. If memory is both the recall of a historical experience and carries the accrual of layers of meaning through which the events have been repeatedly reconstructed, these layers of memory were to be left orphaned for so many decades in the newly independent Ireland, resulting in so much lost opportunity. Thankfully, there now is a rich scholarship, but we should never forget those who had to plough what was the lonely furrow.

As we look to the future, I believe it is one in which we can muster hope for the citizens of this country. The search for, and identification of, a common ground built on a shared humanity is our best hope.

A reflection has been made, now the work is handed over. All are welcome to come forward. The process of ethical recall, with which we have been engaged through these six seminars of *Machnamh 100* over the past two years, the reflection we have made, as well as other commemorative events, can aid us all in this, our shared journey together, towards an emancipatory future, one that is marked by inclusivity, diversity, possibility, and a sharing of memory in conditions of peace – in a diverse Republic of which we can all be proud, be always open to revise, make better.

Beir beannacht

Panel Discussion

Machnamh 100 – Seminar Six

17 November 2022

President Michael D. Higgins, Dr John Bowman, and participants.
An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn, an Dr John Bowman, agus na rannpháirtithe.

John Bowman: Well, so much to consider here now, we're going to the audience, and can I ask people when making a contribution or asking a question to also stand, the better for the cameras to record them. So, first contribution here.

Padraig Yeates: It's just a couple of points that are based on things that Fergal Keane said. One is on qualified amnesia; and the other is on generosity and his comment about the danger of renewed conflict on this island. If we go back to 1922, the British government issued a general amnesty for the War of Independence. If we go back to 1924, the Free State government gave a general amnesty for the Civil War. That framed a context in which any further debate could take place. We come forward to 1998. The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement did not include an amnesty and what we've seen in recent years – not immediately but very soon afterwards – was the war being fought out again in the courts. Now, I'm old enough, as many people here are, to remember those days. And I can tell you that some of the court reports I've read and some of the inquests I've covered bear no resemblance to what I can remember of those events which I witnessed. And we need to find a new way of addressing them, and a few of us, from various backgrounds, are trying to do that.

John Bowman: And Padraig Yeates, you're involved in this yourself, so what's your initiative and what do you propose?

Padraig Yeates: It's a Truth Recovery Process. What we're proposing is a conditional amnesty system that is very different from what the British government is proposing. It is the provision of conditional amnesties based on a mediation system under judicial oversight by both governments in compliance with the terms of the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement, where people can give information in return for immunity provided it's done in good faith and accurately rather than in a courtroom. And I'll just finish very quickly with this: in the Ballymurphy inquest, I gave evidence – and I'm not going to talk about my evidence – but it was highly contested both by a barrister for the relatives and a barrister for the British government. That didn't bother me. What bothered me was that other people who said that they would give evidence changed their mind when they saw what happened with me in the court. A court is a battleground. They're not using battle-axes or swords but it's still trial by combat, and we have to get away from that. As Fergal Keane has said, and Willem Verwoerd said recently as well, we need to have generosity in having this discussion. We need honesty and we're not getting either.

Chris Shouldice contributing to the discussion.

Chris Shouldice ag cur leis an bplé.

Machnamh 100 - Seminar VI guests

Aíonna seimineár VI – *Machnamh 100*

John Bowman: Yes? Colm Kenny.

Colm Kenny: Thank you very much. We heard some wonderful contributions that I just want to comment briefly on two points. One about the use of the word 'republic'; and the other about Arthur Griffith and women. In relation to this business about Irish not having the word 'republic' in it, it was Lloyd George who used it with his cabinet secretary when they spoke Welsh together to have a go at de Valera: a little jibe when Dev went over in July 1921 to arrange the Treaty talks. I really think it's a linguistic point rather than a political point. The Irish knew what they wanted and it was a republic. It was something that would belong to the public, to the people of Ireland, democratically in a way that Ireland did not belong and that's what really mattered. Nobody wanted that more than Arthur Griffith. He established Sinn Féin. He was driven by emigration, he constantly went on about the damage that emigration was doing and he sought economic welfare for his people; and I think that's what most people in Ireland wanted, the independence for economic welfare and they got that in 1922. A minority didn't like it and they resisted it.

As regards Dr Doolan's point that people like Collins and Griffith, I think were your words, resisted the appointment at least of one woman. I'm not sure what the evidence for that is myself because Griffith was quite sympathetic to women. He had, after all, worked hand in glove with Maud Gonne for a number of years to establish resistance to the Boer War and other nationalist objectives. He had resisted the exclusion of women from nationalist cultural organisations such as the Celtic Literary Society when others did not, and he had given women like Máire Ní Cillín a platform in his wonderful paper 'The United Irishmen' which has not been read enough. It's now digitised, fortunately. James Joyce called it the only paper in Dublin worth reading and it explains the breadth of Griffith's vision at that time. He has fallen victim to some extent to the myth that was created of the revolution and I think that maybe needs to be interrogated, and I think some of our speakers here have done that, and I think it's wonderful when the President mentions Tom Johnson and Griffith in the same breath, because the Labour Deputy, Cathal O'Shannon in a letter to

John Bowman: Thanks, Colm. I'm going to stop you there because there are so many people offering, but I take your point; and your own book on Griffith reassures many people that he is not being neglected. Yes, gentleman here.

Chris Shouldice: Thank you very much, Chair. Just to say how much we've been deeply moved and touched by the contributions today. One point I would like to make though, and it was mentioned by Professor Kiberd about Edward Keegan. My father, Jack Shouldice, and his brother Frank from about 1916 up to 1921 were very involved activists. My father in fact was sentenced to death in 1916, shook hands with Michael Mallin as Mallin was being brought out to be executed, heard the shots. But when 1921 came, he was a great friend of Harry Boland and he was deeply hurt by the events of the Civil War. Fortunately took no part in it, but instead was involved in the organising of a very important event from 1923 to '24 which was the Tailteann Games of 1924 and they were huge, equal in scope to the Paris Olympics. In fact they used a lot of the people from the Paris Olympics on their return back to America and other places to take part in the games. And they're not just games. Like track and field.

John Bowman: They had literary prizes too, didn't they?

Chris Shouldice: And they included chess, drama, sculpture, plays; they were wonderful. W.B. Yeats was intimately involved. In any event, Daddy's main point was that it was a wonderful way in which the opponents from both sides were able to pull together, work together to set up these incredible games and it was just that I'd like to go on the record in saying that these things should not be forgotten.

John Bowman: Yes, thank you very much for that. Declan Kiberd, you made the point that many of those involved in 1916 did not then stay involved and possibly didn't participate, for instance, in the War of Independence and the Civil War.

Declan Kiberd: As I said, a lot of them returned precisely to the kind of cultural activities which had brought them into the movement in the first place – pipe bands, the Gaelic League and Gaelic Games and so on. So, I think that's a very important point, that all that was continuing. Just about the word 'republic', since Dr Kenny mentioned it, the people on the Blaskets had a king, a rí who was in fact elected, it was a paradoxical thing, an elected monarchy but this is why Ó Criomhthain was able to say that nobody could abair an focal 'republic' i nGaeilge. And maybe the idea of an elected monarchy is not the worst idea that has been come up with in the history of the human race.

John Bowman: Lelia Doolan, on the question of women on the delegation.

Lelia Doolan: The point was made by Cathal MacSwiney Brugha. It was in a documentary which I saw a short time ago called "Ordinary Women in Extraordinary Times". And he simply reported upon what his great aunt, Mary MacSwiney had told him or had passed down through the generations. And actually, I think he made a direct quote but I decided that might be a bit iffy so I just said that they rejected her. I mean if you listen to what they said about Hannah Sheehy Skeffington and Augusta Gregory, they were regarded as being, you know, a little bit uppity to be contemplating having anything really to do with politics. And that, it seems to me, had more to do with the culture of the time than it had to do with Griffith's particular view of women as perhaps cultural rather than political beings. And besides, it was a very important political thing, sending plenipotentiaries – my God, who'd have a woman, madness!

John Bowman: But among Mary MacSwiney's many attributes, diplomacy or negotiation wouldn't have been her strongest point.

Lelia Doolan: Exactly. It was not her strongest point. She was a good old argumentative creature, yes, and a talker at great length.

John Bowman: President?

President: I think there are just two points that struck me. In my own reference to the Fenians, there is in the Fenian tradition in relation to land, and it goes on to the Kettles for example, and from Fintan Lalor and many cases where there was a far more developed notion about how you would get the usage of the land. I know there's a new piece coming out in relation to the Kettle family, and they had a more advanced view within the debate on landlordism. I do think as well, and the point that is raised about 1922, I think there is a bit of myth building going on there. The suggestion, for example, that 1922 is the defining document in the passing of the 1922 constitution. The fact is Michael Collins opens the meeting, Darrell Figgis as vice chairman is there for most of the time, and you have four documents. But the fact of the matter is the document that is transmitted is rejected and the elements that were included – in fairness to those who put them in from the Democratic Programme – are rejected by the British and as well as that, as I understand it, the suggestion is that it would endanger land certainty and the Treaty.

And the other point I think, which I was very grateful to the publication by Fórsa for, was in relation to the oath of loyalty to the king which isn't there until the passing of the 1922 constitution and it isn't there in the months before when Tom Johnson is in fact in the Parliament. I was very grateful to them for the very long explanation that Tom Johnson did on behalf of his members, and all of that I think, is incredibly important. So, the notion that you have a single document, instrument, in 1922 from which everything is derived is quite capable of being trafficked and I think it's inaccurate.

John Bowman: Fergal, on the question of qualified amnesia, so many of the deaths in Civil Wars – and you've seen this – are intimate deaths. The killer knows the victim. This happened in Listowel with repercussions, so presumably there are such examples but they would be there in the culture of all the wars that you were yourself reporting.

Fergal Keane: It is, I mean the memory of the assassination of Tobias O'Sullivan, of James Kane, but also the killings which occurred during the Civil War and my own family took the Free State side. A grand-uncle was an intelligence officer with the Free State army; and one of the striking stories I heard when researching the period was of him returning home one evening and being

Pádraig Yeates contributing to the discussion.

Pádraig Yeats ag cur leis an bplé.

set upon by the relatives of people who held him responsible in a larger sense for being part of the Free State army and being badly beaten up. That again subsequently begat revenge against those who had beaten him. Some of his old Free State army comrades came along and sorted out, as it were, the people who had done that. And so in the back of my mind, through every conflict I've been in and whether that's in Rwanda which was – I have to qualify by saying that was propelled by a genocidal ideology – that was not the case here, but that intimacy and then the notion that ten years later, you're going to have... when you come out of prison, as was the case with Rwanda or happens in Bosnia, you're going to have to live in the same village with the people. And how do we, it strikes me the urgent, the imperative of this moment is how do we make that process possible on this island – in the north of this island – where people are expected to live alongside. Which you can do physically, of course you can do it physically; or you can, in the case in Belfast, as is happening at the moment, build ever higher, ever longer peace walls. But the great missed opportunity since 1998 has been to address the fundamental and that is how people live together, how they overcome the fear and the hatred which is the fuel of sectarianism, and it strikes me we really haven't even begun to address that.

John Bowman: So, what's your comment then to Padraig Yeates?

Fergal Keane: So, Padraig talks about and quite rightly, you know, addressing the issue of amnesty for those who were perpetrators of violence, but that will solve – I don't even say 'solve' – that will deal with a particular legal problem. It doesn't deal with the moral of crisis that underpins the tragedy of the north. The ongoing tragedy of the north. And, you know, better minds than mine have wrestled with this since signing the peace agreement but it does strike me as being imperative that our investment is at the level of communities of neighbourhoods and it's messy, it's frequently ten steps backwards for every step forward you take. But it is about that and investing in encouraging communities to speak with each other; and it is at the heart of what I said today about the responsibility of political leaders. About humility. It's not about declaring victory or saying we're on the march and you're stuffed. Whether you say that explicitly or implicitly.

John Bowman: And you're hearing that to some extent, are you?

Fergal Keane: I worry at some of the rhetoric that I hear, and it is not the language of this great island. It's not the language of generosity, of the generosity of which we are capable.

John Bowman: Angela Bourke?

Angela Bourke: Yes, I suppose I'd like to say something in favour of microhistory. The President was stretching out this idea of a point of time in 1922 when a given document is believed to have been constructed with everything flowing from that and it seems to me by proliferating individual accounts, as some of us have been doing today, particularly Fergal, and Declan talking about his great-uncle, one of the things that struck me, Declan says that his great-uncle, his great-aunt, I suppose, had children to consider and it has often struck me looking through this material – I'm not a trained historian, I work with language and literature and oral traditions – but in looking at this and looking at the individual families, they pass, they transitioned in the period of the decade of commemoration, they transitioned from idealistic teenagers or people in their early 20s to being the parents of families, and again I would applaud what Padraig Yeates has suggested.

Actually the year I left school was 1969, I had become through some process of attrition a member of the Red Cross as a schoolgirl and I got a call from a Franciscan in Gormanstown asking for volunteers to come to Gormanstown camp to look after the children who had been removed from Belfast. And they were mostly, of course, the marginal children, children who didn't have two parents – who were already being reared by a grandparent or whatever. And then, throughout the Troubles that followed, when I was a student, most of my friends were actually from Derry or Belfast, so I was in both cities when those things were happening. I was on the Lone Moor Road in Derry when rubber bullets were passing; but the idea that loud voices triumph and make these bullying narratives for their own purposes can be counteracted. The work that Catriona Crowe has done in archives is stupendous. And, you know, we have the ability now to actually honour individual voices. I would also perhaps echo what Cathal Póirtéir said about his findings about the Famine memories, that the material is there, it's in people's memories.

President: I think that there is an incredible demography that we're inclined to neglect. In 1901, the majority of the people born on the island of Ireland, more than 50%, were living outside of the island of Ireland. So much of what we're discussing has been made possible by the emptying out of the island – not just of individuals, but huge categories of people. I think the establishment, the extension of grazing for example, and Joe Lee has that right where he says in the post-Famine adjustment, that the 'families gave way to fields'. People don't really want to address that, more or less, suggesting that land is just land. Grazing; the transition to grazing in Mayo when John Gibbons and I did some work on what had happened to the landlords in Mayo, we found that you could put a map that fitted exactly down on top of the landlords with what the graziers owned. And this was the kind of thing which is a problem in history and in historiography: the reluctance to deal with class and it's just so important. I thought that in the last three Seminars that we made some progress on that, no more than we made in relation to the exclusion of women in the first lot, when we were doing the War of Independence.

John Bowman: Declan?

Declan Kiberd: The President mentioned Gramsci and Gramsci had an interesting theory about what happens to a society when there's a missing middle generation and this is what happened a lot of the time because of migration. The emptying out that the President has described. And what Gramsci says, if you have a missing generation in a community or a country, there's no one to interpret the radical ideals of the young or the steady hand of conservatism of the old and mediate them into a viable social narrative. They're just people indulging in alternate fantasies, and I think that was part one of the reasons there wasn't more social progress through the 20th century in Ireland. You go through a rural village and there was kind of gapped houses in the middle gone. And even your image of the films that got chopped up and we didn't see the middle key part, almost seems like a version of Gramsci's missing middle.

President: Half a million people gone to England in the 1950s alone. 40,000 a year between '55 and '60. So, this notion that there is a kind of modernity emerged and that it was inevitable. It was at a huge price.

Declan Kiberd: There was no conversation between the very old and the very young in a shared language because it wasn't possible – the middle people were so often missing.

John Bowman: Lelia, did you want to come in on that?

Lelia Doolan: All I want to add is not anything serious but something not serious. You mentioned, Declan, about some of the people whose houses were burnt out being assisted by the anti-Treaty forces. There is an absolutely hilarious article in the Irishman's Diary, written by Paddy Campbell, the son of Beaty (Beatrice) Glenavy, years later. She was one of the people who had a Big House near Dublin and the IRA came to burn it down and she, a rather imperious character in her own way, said, 'Ah, now, listen. Hold on a moment, you will not take that piece. And what about that piece and this other piece?' And eventually she had the entire group who had come to burn the house explaining to her which pieces she ought to retain and they would bring them out of the house. 'There's a good auld piano in there; we can't do that in' – and so on... So, I would like to record a note of humour. There is no humour in anything we have said. There is pain, of course, suffering, yes, definitely. But there's also that irrepressible Irish quality of going beyond, of finding a way of forgiving. You know? And that's what I guess in the end this is all about.

John Bowman: So, what is it all about then, President, if I can ask you that? *Machnamh 100*, what were you hoping to achieve with *Machnamh 100* and what do you believe has been achieved?

President: I think the complexity of history, the fact that the events about which people have been writing partially are complex and interconnected. That have been significant inclusions, even in what we're doing in number six here today when we were talking about Tom Johnson; I think

Tom Johnson, Labour Party TD and leader of the Parliamentary opposition in the Dáil 1922-27.

Tom Johnson, Teachta Dála i bPáirtí an Lucht Oibre, ceannaire an Fhreasúra Parlaiminte sa Dáil, 1922-27.

Courtesy of the Irish Labour History Society

that's very important. I also think as well, that it's for others to do it in relation to, what I call 'ethical remembering' and so forth. If you're going to be talking about ethics, no more than Hannah Arendt didn't forgive everybody, she didn't forgive one very significant person for very good reasons, and that was her philosopher teacher. But I think what we're stressing is that if the facts can be laid out and, therefore, people can make interpretations and different combinations, you get what I think Richard Kearney calls a narrative hospitality. That's one thing but the other part of it is, and what I was speaking about myself today, I wish I could say for example, that my father and my uncle reconciled. That is not the case. My father suffered degrading poverty till the day he died. And I think you have to be honest if you're going to do the thing straightforwardly, I think that what we've been trying to do is by letting everything in, you are then in a position really to stand back. And this is what one does, you don't invent a fiction. Fiction won't work. It isn't fiction. The point is lives have been lost, lives have been maimed, lives have been ruined. Other people have made vast fortunes on the backs of other people's misery. You cannot keep telling yourself that that's not the world you live in. For example, I hope, moving on, I realise where I am now even as President, I know the many people who speak to me who say they're finding it difficult to speak of peace, as if war was inevitable, that war is our natural condition. And we're in an intolerant moment in relation to that. Again and again, this arises. That somehow or another... this is a kind of a thing that I wish I had James Scott here to deal with... the notion that there's an inevitability that is in the possession of the powerful that mustn't be questioned. This happens in relation to it. This is when spirituality is corrupted by authoritarian religion and dogmatic nonsense and equally you have it in relation to the notion that, for example, there is only one kind of development possible on our planet and that is that we all become rather like the warlike nations that are in the modern capitalism. I'm very proud to have to say about it all, for example, when I became President was I supposed to say I have no beliefs anymore about anything? I believe all the stuff I did about human rights, I feel I very much identify with what Fergal said because I had that experience that he has had. But if you would try to fiction it, make it fiction, or invent abstractions, you're not helping anybody. The point about it is that go where the pain of doing the thing right is, and that means you live in the experience of the other person and you take the stuff into you. And then what you do, what it all is, because Lelia is right, there's a time for humour. There's a time for truth and humour is part of the truth and all the rest of it. And that is in fact how many people have survived their existence, by looking at the absurdity of those who thought that they were their betters. Just look at them and laugh.

John Bowman: On that point, we'd like to thank you, President, very much, for hosting all of this. President Michael D. Higgins. [applause]

President: Could I just say that our audience today consists of very many of the people who have contributed through the six seminars, and I want to say again, I thanked you when you did give your paper, but I thank you again and for all of the others who were interested. And all I can say, John, thank you so much for what you have done for us. It's been marvellous. And let us all say, may we always give history the importance and place that it deserves! History is so important, so necessary for our future. [applause]

John Bowman: That concludes our discussion today and indeed concludes this series of six *Machnamh 100* seminars. I've already mentioned that the proceedings of Machnamh's first three sessions have been published in book form and it's available as an e-book free of charge on the website www.president.ie. And the proceedings of the three Machnamh's since will also be published in due course. It's also the case that all the *Machnamh 100* seminars are available on the website www.president.ie and they can be watched at your own pace, either as a sequence of papers or as individual contributions to the themes being discussed in that particular session.

It remains for me just to thank the television production team who televised our proceedings, the staff at Áras an Uachtaráin for all their help, all our speakers and you who are watching; and the President for originating the initiative and hosting the proceedings here in the Hyde Room at Áras an Uachtaráin.

Sabina Higgins and Lelia Doolan

Sabina Higgins agus Lelia Doolan

President Michael D. Higgins and guests

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus aíonna

Left to right: Dr John Bowman, Lelia Doolan, President Michael D. Higgins, Fergal Keane, Professor Angela Bourke, and Professor Declan Kiberd.

Clé go deas: An Dr John Bowman, Lelia Doolan, an tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn, Fergal Keane, an tOllamh Angela Bourke, agus an tOllamh Declan Kiberd.

President Michael D. Higgins and participants

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus na rannpháirtithe

President Michael D. Higgins and Professor Declan Kiberd

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus an tOllamh Declan Kiberd

President Michael D. Higgins and Fergal Keane

An tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn agus Fergal Keane

Dr John Bowman and President Michael D. Higgins

An Dr John Bowman agus an tUachtarán Micheál D. Ó hUigínn