

Ireland: Nationalist Ideology on the Road to Independence 1914-1922

by

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BA Hons., University of Victoria, 2016

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Supervisory Committee

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Table of Contents

Supervisory Committee	ii
Abstract	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Introduction.....	1
Origins of Dysfunction	11
Government of Ireland (Home Rule) Bill (1912-1914).....	20
Rising to Free State (1916-1921).....	29
Bibliography	47

Carleton Hayes 1926: During the nineteenth century the tide of nationalism rose steadily. Perhaps flood tide has been reached in the Great War of the twentieth century. But who knows? The mighty surge of nationalist propaganda still booms loud.¹

* * *

colonial endeavours throughout the empire.⁴ Brendan Bradshaw argues that Ireland represented a unique situation in that it “enjoyed a form of devolved government unknown elsewhere in the Crown’s dominions.”⁵ Paul Bew claims that the Act of Union

quote William Gladstone, there was “no blacker or fouler transaction in the history of man.”¹⁰

Bew enumerates possible reasons for Ireland’s developmental delay as being a failure of the English to achieve *moral hegemony*, in addition to uneven economic outcomes between the agrarian south and a more industrialized north, and the evolution of an enduring nationalist agenda that resisted the constant imposition of an uneven power dynamic.¹¹ A major complication was, of course, religious differences between the predominantly Catholic south and Ulster in the north, with Protestants and unionists forced to co-exist alongside Catholic republicans. The creation of separate nationalist/unionist discourses evolved around oversimplified binaries that portrayed the narrative of Ulster as being overwhelmingly Protestant and urban, the industrial northern powerhouse, versus the impoverished Catholic agrarian republican south. This narrative ignored historical realities that were far more complicated and difficult to unravel.¹²

In a 2006 speech commemorating the Easter Rising of 1916, Irish Foreign Minister Dermot Ahern spoke of “two histories, separate and in conflict.”¹³ The commemoration sparked riots in Dublin as Ulster unionists attempted to parade down O’Connell Street in remembrance of Protestant victims of The Troubles of 1969. With

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relenting on the issue of providing wheat and coal to the Guinness brewery) cut supply lines during the Second World War.²⁴ However, this historical self-consciousness

Christine Kinealy notes that the negotiation of a 1994 cease-fire was instrumental in freeing native Irish historians from an oppressive revisionist national narrative that had been cemented into place within a very limited historiography, particularly around “sanitized” versions of traditional Famine narratives that glossed over atrocities or elided any less-than-noble intentions of the British élite.²⁷ As national preparations for commemoration of the Great Famine began in 1994, troubling questions arose around authenticity, agency and voice.²⁸ With political suppression of anti-British voices temporarily suspended by the peace process (bombing would resume in London in 1996), historians, some of whom were funded by the government, seized the opportunity to embark upon fresh forays into the archives in order to address the lopsided revisionism that had held sway for so long. Kinealy notes that it was at this point that historians also began to examine old assumptions about the behaviours of Irish Catholic landowners in the same period.

The fact that it took until the 1990s to arrive at a place where academics felt safe enough to rework old stories and bring uncomfortable truths into the light speaks to the

ties with Britain may never be completely undone, but the transition to independence for Éire at the turn of the twentieth century was a defining moment in the history of the relationship. The surviving polities of that moment represent a bundle of contradictions within a fractured society cohabiting a partitioned state, forever grappling with the complications arising from 700 years of conflict and subjugation.

The violence that periodically erupted in the nineteenth century from bitter religious and ideological differences served to hinder Ireland's entry into the modern age of liberalism, based on standards of individualism, liberty, and property as defined by Ian McKay.³⁰ By the 1840s, with the country decimated by famine, emigration, and the subsequent destruction of much of its domestic infrastructure, it had become clear that Ireland was going to be Britain's problem child. A growing electorate under Daniel O'Connell pursued its own agenda, driven by a very different understanding of liberty as winning independence from a British state that had been engaging in "criminal misgovernment" for centuries.³¹ Kinealy argues that optimistic liberals saw the post-Famine period as an opportunity for overhauling social relations that had fallen into a pattern of inertia between an unmotivated peasantry and landholders who had taken no initiative in making improvements to their properties.³² Land reforms were intended to restart the engines with the application of the energies of a new class of commercial farmers and an injection of English capital to revive a decimated economy.³³

counterproductive.³⁴ How then did the mechanisms of the free market fail to hasten the modernization of Irish society through tried-and-true methods of economic stimulus?

Joe Cleary offers an explanation in his Marxist analysis of the Famine as an economic disaster that severely retarded the development of an urban working class. He argues that the exodus of a young generation of more mobile Irish to the more prosperous areas of Britain and Europe left a vestigial rural peasantry that remained “the revolutionary motor of social change.”³⁵ An efflorescence of Gaelic culture after 1890 saw a conscious revival of Irish language, literature, and the arts that further undermined the British project of assimilation and gave shape to the nationalist agenda of Sinn Féin, who ultimately pronounced the Anglo-Norman conquest a failure.³⁶ The power and persistence of linguistic and cultural memory that defied every attempt at eradication became very clear with the election of Éamon De Valéra in 1917, when “[o]ld men and women who had never before ventured to a polling booth came down from remote cabins on July 10 to vote.”³⁷

In Cleary’s analysis, the socio-economic repercussions of the Famine represented an unprecedented and utterly unanticipated disruption of the British imperial agenda. The conundrum was further complicated by the fact that the Irish were now embedded within the British state and, as such, could not be denied their rights to full participation in the

³⁴ Cormac O Grada, *Black '47 and Beyond: The Great Irish Famine in History, Economy, and Memory* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1999), 6.

³⁵ Joe Cleary, “‘Misplaced Ideas’?: Colonialism, Location, and Dislocation in Irish Studies,” 40, and David Lloyd, “After History: Historicism and Postcolonial Studies,” *Ireland and Postcolonial Theory*, 56.

³⁶ Ginnell, 23.

³⁷ Macardle, 224.

democratic process.³⁸ Despite these developments, the British public, reluctant to embrace the fact of a shared identity as imperial subjects, remained at odds with the idea that the Irish would ever be their equals.³⁹ In any assessment of Irish historiography, the question of race inevitably arises. How did the British government justify the subjugation

Luke Gibbons notes that these perceptions of the Irish as not even having “the redeeming qualities of the noble savage” continued well into the nineteenth century.⁴⁴

The racist discourse was magnified by an intense ancestral fear and loathing of Catholicism, which Catherine Hall notes was sustained within the Protestant population while simultaneously diminishing within government circles in the years leading up to the Reform Act of 1832. Hall notes the repercussions of Catholic Emancipation in 1829:

...the figure of the Irish rebel continued to haunt the English imagination. Irish

be a pivotal moment in the project of bringing the colonial population into the fold of 'civilization.'

for the Republic. Joe Cleary argues that a key problem was that equality and liberty for the Irish were consistently perceived as a threat to the very structure of the Empire. This reinforces the idea that there was a power structure in place that would never be anything but a colonial one.⁵³

Despite further electoral reforms in 1867 and 1885 which increased the Irish franchise to 700,000 as a ‘peasant deluge’ joined the ranks, race and ethnicity continued to problematize Anglo-Irish relations.⁵⁴ The pot that had simmered throughout the nineteenth century boiled over with the Lords’ refusal to pass the budget in 1909, precipitating an election. The Liberal government returned to power with a hair’s-breadth majority and the backing of the IPP in December of 1910.⁵⁵ The trade-off was to be Home Rule for Ireland, and the vehicle for making it a reality – the Parliament Act of 1911 – challenged the ancestral authority of a House of Lords heavily weighted with Unionists.⁵⁶ Conservative outrage was palpable during debate on the third passage of the bill:

THE EARL OF HALSBURY: ...[i]t is suggested that His Majesty has been applied to, and has agreed to make as many Peers as will be necessary to force this Bill through the House. I want to deal plainly in this matter, and I say that that is a gross violation of Parliamentary decency.

...

⁵³ Cleary, 43.

⁵⁴ F. Hugh O’Donnell, *A History of the Irish Parliamentary Party*, (London: Longmans Green & Co. 1910), 189-90. O’Donnell characterized the Irish electorate as “mainly composed of the most uninstructed multitude to be found in Western Europe ... the risen tide of the enfranchised bogtrotters and clodhoppers.” This type of language coming from a British-born Irish MP highlights further divisions related to class consciousness which served to complicate the nationalist project even further.

⁵⁵ “The Polls,” *The Times*, 20 December 1910, 7.

⁵⁶ Philip Norton, “Resisting the Inevitable? The Parliament Act 1911,” *Parliamentary History*, Vol. 31, Part 3 (2012), 449-450.

I do not believe the people of the country understand what is going on in Parliament. They do not know that the Constitution of the country is in peril.⁵⁷

The Marquess of Londonderry was unequivocal on the issue of Home Rule:

We have always asserted, and we assert again, that a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland will mean ruin, bankruptcy, and, in all probability, civil war.⁵⁸

The following week in Belfast, Andrew Bonar Law addressed a massive unionist rally

...larger than the whole white population of South Africa. It is no light thing to endeavour to thrust such a body of our fellow-citizens out of the place which they have inherited with us in the British Constitution, and to impose upon them a domination which they abhor.⁶⁴

Bonar Law exhorted the crowd to hold fast to the unionist ideal by remembering their shared history: “You hold the pass for the empire. You are besieged. Let the picture of the past, the glorious past with which you are familiar, rise again before your eyes.”⁶⁵ It would be two more years before the Home Rule Bill made its way through three sessions in the House of Commons and two in the House of Lords. By the time it received royal

One of the most contentious pieces of legislation in modern British history, the Government of Ireland (Home Rule) Bill, was tabled in the House of Commons on 11 April 1912 by Liberal leader Herbert Asquith. Terms of the Bill had been the subject of a controversial and highly-charged meeting in Belfast between Redmond and Winston Churchill in February, although Redmond was not made privy to the details until debate began in the House. The *Daily Mail*, reporting on the opening of Parliament a few days later, noted:

This is to be above all a Home Rule session. None the less the odds are about 10 to 1

deliberate constitutional demands of the vast majority of the nation, repeated and ratified...

Sir C. KINLOCH COOKE: *What nation?* [emphasis added]

The Prime Minister: What nation? The Irish nation - repeated and ratified time after time during the best part of the life of a generation.⁶⁷

The interjection by the Conservative MP on the use of the term tells us that Asquith's characterization of an Irish 'nation' was somewhat premature and still extremely problematical. In his preface to *Home Rule in a Nutshell*, Winston Churchill depicted nationalism (or 'nationality' with a capital "N") as emanating from the spiritual plane, intimating that to deny Ireland her right to independence would be a violation of the natural order of things:

The spirit of Nationality demands self-government, and that spirit cannot be eradicated. Nationality may be only a sentiment, but sentiment rules the world, and no wise statesman seeks to ignore it. Centuries of oppression have failed to suppress Irish Nationality, it has spoken from the battlefield, from the felon's cell, from the scaffold, from the platform, from the ballot-box, from the Senate. The impulse of Nationality comes from higher than earthly powers, and is indestructible.

and cumbersome. In Churchill's view, "Commons is overwhelmed with unsifted business," and Home Rule was the only sensible solution to the problem.⁷¹

Asquith unveiled the proposal to relieve the purported parliamentary congestion and held up examples of successful self-government among the dominions to bolster his argument.⁷² Redmond reiterated the theme and stated his case for Home Rule as a panacea against separatism:

We on these benches stand precisely where Parnell stood. We want peace with this country. We deny that we are separatists, and we say we are willing, as Parnell was willing, to accept a subordinate Parliament created by Statute of this Imperial Legislature, as a final settlement of Ireland's claims.⁷³

Viscount Castlereagh denied parliamentary congestion was a valid reason for Home Rule and claimed that Asquith was being disingenuous and mendacious.

Captain Craig, the Unionist architect of the Ulster Covenant, denounced the Bill as a travesty:

I

The King's fears of a Home Rule backlash were soon realized. Following a security conference in London on 18 and 19 March, amid rumours of mass resignations of officers stationed at the Curragh camp, the main base of British military forces in Ulster, General Sir Arthur Paget issued orders to move more troops into Ireland in the interests of protecting supply depots and barracks.⁸¹ Carson was welcomed back to Belfast on 20 March by an enthusiastic crowd of Ulster Volunteers; the *Daily Mail* reported that "in the excitement, revolver shots were fired," and *The Times* noted that guards at the Curragh had been issued carbines and ammunition in place of lances and swords, such preparations being "to an extent unprecedented since Fenian days." Both Carson and Redmond appealed for calm, and a Nationalist parade was cancelled in the interests of averting a major incident.⁸²

Paget arrived in Dublin and informed his officers that those residing in Belfast who objected to Home Rule could withdraw from participating in quelling any disturbances; others were given two hours to decide whether or not to accept an ultimatum to follow orders or risk dismissal and forfeiture of their pensions.⁸³ The crisis deepened with proliferating rumours and confusion regarding troop movements and impending military action against the north.⁸⁴ Lloyd George was quoted in *The Times* accusing Ulster of being "the spoilt child of Ireland" and calling the Home Rule crisis

⁸¹ Connelly, 539.

⁸² "The Bullying of Ulster," *Daily Mail*, 21 March 1914, 5. "The Army and Ulster," *The Times*, 21 March 1914, 8.

⁸³ Connelly, 539.

⁸⁴ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 60, 23 March 19 1914, 71-72, 396-397.

“the greatest issue raised in this country since the days of the Stuarts.”⁸⁵ Deeply disturbed

Palace later that month ended in yet another impasse, just as Austria was preparing to declare war on Serbia.⁸⁹

In the years leading up to the Great War, Ireland had begun to recover from the demographic effects of decades of famine and migration, a factor that gave fresh energy to the nationalist cause.

For generations there had not been so many young men in Ireland at one time. An increase in prosperity among Irish farmers and stoppage of emigration owing to the war as well as their own desire to serve in the national movement had kept them at home. 200,000 of military age and fine physique were organizing resistance to British rule.⁹⁵

In spite of the Suspensory Bill, the long-awaited passage of Home Rule set the tone for the rest of the war years, lighting a match to a powder keg of pent-up patriotism.

Unionists reacted with demonstrations and drills in a show of force that ramped up tensions all over the country. In Ulster, Carson's UVF had become an extremely well-organized and well-armed contingent thanks to the addition to its arsenal of 20,000 Austrian-made rifles acquired in a gun-running operation that encountered no interference from British authorities in the spring of 1914.⁹⁶

Republican Volunteers were less well-equipped, and their movements were closely watched by the RIC and reported to Dublin Castle. On 26 July, Irish Volunteers marching into Dublin with a cache of rifles landed at Howth were confronted by a large contingent of police backed by 160 soldiers from the King's Own Scottish Borderers.⁹⁷ After a brief skirmish, in which some of the local constabulary refused to participate, the Volunteers escaped, and, as the regiment returned to Dublin, soldiers fired into a large

⁹⁵ Macardle, 236.

⁹⁶ aan de Wiel, 663.

⁹⁷ *Hansard*, Fifth Series, Vol. 65, 27 July 1914, 935.

increasingly bold activities of Sinn Féin.¹⁰² Conscription was implemented in Britain in January of 1916 with an exemption for Ireland that incensed the Unionists; Carson labelled it “an insult and humiliation to the loyal and patriotic population of that country.”¹⁰³

By March the waiting game was intensifying, with Volunteers openly drilling in the countryside and conducting mock raids in Dublin. Under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA), concrete evidence of ‘hostile association’ was required in order to prosecute for sedition. With the RIC effectively embedded as an impressively efficient network of informants throughout the country, authorities conducted raids, dismantled printing presses, and arrested individuals without cause as war measures became more draconian.¹⁰⁴ At an Irish Race Convention in New York City, Friends of Irish Freedom declared its mission to bring international attention to the situation in Ireland by taking a delegation to the post-war peace conference.¹⁰⁵ In Dublin, plans were made to meet a German boat carrying a shipment of guns to be delivered on Easter Sunday, with the intention of holding the city long enough to achieve belligerent status and thus be eligible for a place at the table in Paris.¹⁰⁶

becoming infuriated against the Government on account of these executions, and, as I am informed by letters received this morning, that feeling is spreading throughout the country in a most dangerous degree.¹¹²

The convergence of the Rising with the contingencies of war measures created a situation that drove British occupying forces to employ exceedingly cruel punishments that drew unfavourable comparisons to German atrocities. George Bernard Shaw justified Irish resistance as being in the true spirit of the European underdog fighting a righteous war.¹¹³ Sinn Féin MP Laurence Ginnell gave a bitter speech in the House about prisoners whose remains were buried in an unmarked mass grave in Dublin after their executions:

You wanted our young men to remember Belgium—

disaffection' under the terms of DORA, and there was much derisory debate over its rigorous application.¹¹⁷

Laurence Ginnell, now a prisoner himself, composed a republican manifesto after his arrest for land agitation shortly after John Redmond's death on 6 March.¹²³ "The Irish Republic: Why?" was an impassioned polemic that outlined Ireland's case for independence. The document, smuggled into the United States in the hopes that it would be given to Woodrow Wilson, stated the case for Ireland to retain an inalienable right to nationhood. Echoing Wilson's "Fourteen Points," Ginnell's text appears under the heading "Fourteen Propositions."¹²⁴ He builds a powerful argument in favour of self-determination based on Ireland's ancient rights of sovereignty never surrendered or extinguished despite the best efforts of Britain to exterminate them by force.

It was at this critical juncture that De Valéra emerged as a leader with a steadfast focus on establishing a sovereign republic as he set out to rally the attention of Irish people on both sides of the Atlantic. Throughout the war, military authorities continued to invoke and expand DORA, shutting down presses and arresting anyone suspected of even a hint of association with Sinn Féin, actions that did nothing but inflict unnecessary economic hardship and amplify anti-British resentments.¹²⁵ With an American presidential election on the horizon, De Valéra planned to draw international attention and raise funds for Sinn Féin by canvassing the powerful Irish-American lobby. An unfortunate setback to this endeavour was the fact that he had been targeted in the "German Plot" arrests of May of 1918 along with 73 Sinn Féin members and incarcerated

¹²³ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 104, 11 March 1918, 1329. "John Redmond Dies; Many Pay Tributes," *New York Times*, 7 Mar 1918, 11. Redmond's last words: "I am a broken-hearted man."

under high security.¹²⁶ News reports speculated that the arrests would turn the tide of public opinion against Irish nationalists as German sympathizers, particularly in light of the ongoing opposition to conscription that “has estranged American sympathy.”¹²⁷ An American tour had the potential to be a panacea.

The extraordinary Irish election of December 1918, the first in which women were given a limited franchise, yielded 73 seats for Sinn Féin under De Valéra’s leadership, spelling the end of the Irish Nationalist Party. Reporting on plans to assemble a Sinn Féin government, *The Times* speculated that “the immediate future in Ireland can only be described as dark, dangerous and doubtful.”¹²⁸ Of 73 new MPs, 47 were in jail, including De Valéra; the remaining 26 convened on 7 January 1919 to discuss the creation of the Dáil Éireann, the new Assembly of Ireland.¹²⁹ Plans to appeal to the international community continued apace; Ireland’s new leader would visit America on his own terms, as President of the Republic.

A detailed account of De Valéra’s escape from Lincoln Prison in February of 1919 was a tribute to Gaelic ingenuity, involving a gardener conveying coded messages in Irish ballads sung beneath the jailhouse window, key impressions made from wax purloined from candles used in daily Mass, a convoy of decoy cars, and two girls recruited from Dublin to distract the guards.¹³⁰ With the Paris Peace Conference under way, the most famous political prisoner in the world appeared for the first time in public

¹²⁶ Diarmaid Ferriter, *Judging Dev: A Reassessment of the Life and Legacy of Eamon De Valera* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy 2007), 33.

¹²⁷ “German-Irish Plot,” *The Times*, 20 May 1918, 7. “Sinn Fein Leaders Seized,” *New York Times*, 18 May 1918, 1.

¹²⁸ “Sinn Fein Triumph in Ireland,” *The Times*, 30 December 1918, 10.

¹²⁹ Macardle, 265-271.

¹³⁰ Macardle, 265. “Girls Free De Valera,” *Washington Post*, 3 March 1919, 15.

in his capacity as “Irish President” on 24 June 1919 after first paying private visits to his mother in Rochester and brother in Boston.¹³¹

The announcement of his arrival at the Waldorf Hotel shared the front page of the *New York Times* with the news regarding Germany’s capitulation to the terms of the peace treaty, and the expected return of Woodrow Wilson from France on 4 July:

In the waiting crowd were about thirty Catholic priests and one man in Irish costume – green from head to foot, except one space where his kilts left off and his heavy, tur

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Ireland as a delegate, he expressed disappointment that President Wilson had chosen not to include the country in his Fourteen Points as he had with Poland.¹³⁴

De Valéra then travelled to Boston for an appearance at Fenway Park before a rambunctious crowd of 40,000 “who surged out of the stands and carried press tables and all police arrangements with them. Several women fainted in the jam.”¹³⁵ His appearance at Madison Square Garden on 10 July was noted as drawing a 10-minute standing ovation as fire marshalls and police struggled to contain “the greatest crowd in its history.”¹³⁶ The President’s tour had not gone unnoticed at home. Reports from Belfast that same week excoriated Edward Carson for stirring up Ulster with “an amazing tirade” against Home Rule, including a warning to the United States:

I say today seriously to America, ‘You attend to your own affairs, and we will attend to ours. You look after your own questions at home and we will look after ours, but we will not brook interference in our affairs by any country, however powerful. It was not for that that we waged the great war of independence just concluded.’¹³⁷

Carson was conspicuously absent from Parliament as the House debated whether or not his speech had been ‘calculated to spread disaffection among His Majesty’s subjects.’ The decision not to prosecute him for seditious libel was a significant one.

campaign of suppression of the duly elected republican government in Ireland, the Dáil went underground under the leadership of Arthur Griffith as acting president.¹³⁹

In the spring of 1920, a coroner's inquest into the shocking murder of the Lord Mayor of Cork presented damning evidence that the killing had been "organized and carried out by the Royal Constabulary, officially directed by the British Government."¹⁴⁰

Everybody asks what is to be the end of the present *regime* and no one can supply an answer. Meanwhile the customary Irish *joie de vivre* continues without abatement in spite of an atmosphere of political discontent and violence.¹⁴⁴

With the country in this bizarre limbo, the government's answer was to expand its powers under DORA with the passage of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act,

enrolment of 800,000 members.¹⁴⁸ In November he attended a requiem mass in New York for Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork, who died after a hunger strike in Brixton prison. Mourners rioted and smashed windows after spotting a British flag displayed in the Union Club across the street from St. Patrick's Cathedral, requiring a cordon of 200 police to contain the mêlée.¹⁴⁹

With the situation at home becoming increasingly dire, De Valéra returned to a country in a state bordering on total anarchy as British forces became increasingly more desperate to win the upper hand.¹⁵⁰ Throughout the fall and winter, assassinations and reprisals continued, with Catholic evacuations from rioting in Ulster causing one observer to draw comparisons to the plight of Belgian refugees.¹⁵¹ In November, Macready's tactics came under fire again as the House c

own accord achieve unity. I sincerely hope that this Act, the fruit of more than thirty years of ceaseless controversy, will finally bring about unity and friendship between all the peoples of My Kingdom.¹⁵⁴

Six months later, debate in the House was addressing the finer points of the legality of reprisals against supporters of Sinn Féin. In the House of Lords, the Earl of Dunraven was protesting that the situation in Ireland amounted to a military dictatorship, and the Marquess of Crewe called for an immediate resolution to the deadlock:

The Imperial Conference is taking place to deal with many matters of the greatest moment to the Empire, but there is no question there which approaches, at any rate in urgency, this one of Ireland. ... I protest most strongly against a comparison of that form of military rule which is to be put into force over there with the humane, and in all cases representative, government which rules in the Crown Colonies.¹⁵⁵

The American Commission on Conditions in Ireland conducted a damning post mortem on what is variously called the Anglo-Irish War and the War of Independence, collecting oral testimony in a series of hearings between November 1920 to January 1921. Witnesses from both republican and loyalist sides were invited to testify. Republicans encountered difficulties in obtaining travel documents, and many undertook the journey to New York in secrecy. Invitations extended to unionist officials and other British politicians were for the most part ignored. The Commission's interim report issued in May of 1921 called the operation of martial law by British forces in Ireland into question:

¹⁵⁴ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 136, 23 Dec 1920, 952.

¹⁵⁵ *Hansard*, House of Commons Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 143, 21 June 1921, 1081-1083. House of Lords Debates, Fifth Series, Vol. 45, 21 June 1921, 679, 704-705.

recognized as retaining separate powers of government “which cannot be abrogated without their own consent.”¹⁵⁹ De Valéra’s response was unequivocal:

Ireland’s right to choose for herself the path she shall take to realize her own destiny must be accepted as indefeasible. It is a right that has been maintained through centuries of oppression and at the cost of unparalleled sacrifice and untold suffering, and it will not be surrendered.¹⁶⁰

The Prime Minister reiterated his insistence on Dominion status, and the two argued back and forth on the point of ‘geographical propinquity’ as a reason for Britain to retain control. De Valéra noted that if the rest of Europe were to conform to the British formula, no small nation would be safe from forcible annexation.¹⁶¹

During the 1980s, with Ireland experiencing yet another round of sectarian violence, and a fresh exodus of a young generation seeking work, historians turned toward a post-colonial perspective and began to work within the “New British” and “Atlantic model” schools of thought that drew bigger pictures of colonial relations within a global context. Economists began drawing connections between the modern Irish state and post-colonial outcomes in Third World countries to explain its failure to launch as a fully-realized product of progressive liberalism. Modernization theory argued that the project of Ireland’s transition from colonial possession to independent nation is far from complete.¹⁶⁴ In this context, one cannot help but wonder how the implications of Britain’s increasingly hostile relationship with the European Union will impact the Republic’s economic and social standing on the global stage. Cleary claims that post-colonial studies offer the potential for producing alternate discourses that would refute arguments equating the Irish colonial experience with that of the Third World, and issues a challenge to the academy to work on producing a “serviceable historicized typology of colonies” in aid of that project.¹⁶⁵ Richard English issues a similar call for scholarship that includes drawing parallels between developments in England and Ireland, such studies being essential to the project of broader understanding of nineteenth-century socio-political contexts.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Cleary, 19-20.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 29.

¹⁶⁶ Richard English, “History and Irish Nationalism,” *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 37, No. 147 (May 2011), 454-55.

Edward Said notes similarities between Ireland, Palestine, and Algeria, arguing that there are commonalities in Orientalism on the one hand and “Celticism” on the other that typify their relationships with the colonizers: famines; mutinies; prolonged military occupation; domination by settlers; unsuccessful negotiations; asymmetry of power; and disappointed/disappointing leaders.¹⁶⁷ Said argues that the “deep distortions” of colonization do not simply evaporate once the colonized are supposedly liberated, but rather a whole new phase of recovery from the “structural breaks” in the colony’s history begins, and the process of forming national identity is fraught with further complications, particularly in cases of partition:

To my Palestinian eyes, the idea that partition might resolve political disputes is a disastrously poor one. I have always preferred some form of bi-nationalism in cases where rival communities overlap.¹⁶⁸

Said cautions against “carving out smaller and smaller bits of history to fight over.” Like Cleary and Lloyd, he advocates for the broader view that a post-colonial perspective can achieve.

Lloyd argues that Ireland’s cultural and historical status as a colony continues to be contested.¹⁶⁹ Citing Fanon’s thesis on the violent transition from colonial to neo-colonial state, he positions post-colonial Ireland as having traded one form of subjugation for another in the service of globalized capital, considers colonization to be ongoing, and argues that the process of creating a true national identity remains unfinished.

decolonization, and cites Belfast as an example of Fanon's culturally traumatized colonial city within its Foucauldian panopticon of social control.¹⁷¹ His insights point to nationalism as an obstacle to achieving "maximum modernity" prescribed within the liberal order project.¹⁷²

In considering nationalism as an obstacle, it is helpful to look at how the mechanics of constructing national identity have operated in Ireland as a partitioned state. Another factor to consider is that Ireland as a whole remains profoundly traumatized by the events of the mid-nineteenth century and the convulsions in the wake of the Great War that "turned Europe upside down, dismembering empires and creating a host of new states from their shards."¹⁷³ To try to understand the extraordinary persistence and depth of the divide in Irish society, we can turn to this comment by nationalist MP T.P. O'Connor from the conscription debate in *Hansard* in 1916: "All my fellow countrymen know that an Irish Nationalist hates an Irish Catholic Unionist much worse than he hates the most virulent Orangeman."¹⁷⁴

If we compare this to a recent item in *The Guardian* detailing the latest iteration of the

The PSNI chief constable, George Hamilton, told the Guardian that some close relatives of those about to be attacked were plying their children with alcohol or giving them powerful painkillers before “appointments” with the “punishment” gangs.

Many of the victims are often savagely beaten after being accused by armed republican and loyalist factions o

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