A COMMUNITY AT WAR: THE IRISH IN BRITAIN AND THE
WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

by

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Abstract

The Irish in Britain are paradoxically Britain's longest established major ethnic group and also its least researched. British sociologists influenced by the race relations paradigm that has dominated ethnic research have ignored the caucasian, English language speaking, Irish in Britain; dismissing them as having no specific ethnic linked problems. This thesis strongly argues however that the Irish in Britain do have ethnic linked problems; essentially stemming from the nature of the political relationship between Britain and Ireland. This thesis locates the 'uniqueness' of the Irish in Britain historical experience in this bipolar relationship and in particular the anti-colonial struggle which resulted in Southern Ireland being the first British colony to win its political independence by military means in this century. Very few other British colonies repeated this experience and only in the Irish case did the colonial violence spill over into the metropolitan country in the form of organized 'second front' operations. Every generation of Irish immigrants in the last 120 years has seen some of its members participating in these activities; generating widespread macro societal hostility. This thesis focuses on the particularly traumatic 1916-23 period. It makes a substantial contribution to the little explored political sociology of non-electoral participant organizations by its detailed investigation of the Irish Self Determination League: the largest ethnic political organization to emerge in England and Wales. This thesis also breaks new ground in evaluating the contribution made by the IRA units in Britain towards winning political independence for Southern Ireland. This thesis also compares the response of the Irish in Britain to the anti-colonial struggle with that of the other Irish Diaspora communities; the Jewish and Cypriot communities in Britain and Algerians in France to similar events in Palestine, Cyprus, Algeria and France.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY
Preface

Historical sociology must surely be the most difficult research field for sociologists particularly for those writing a Ph.D thesis. And quite frankly I only resorted to an historical sociological investigation when all other approaches had been blocked. My original intention was to research the contemporary political sociology of the Irish in Britain but unfortunately my, then, known public relations role in the Irish Republican Movement prevented the satisfactory undertaking of a traditional questionnaire/interview survey of the Irish community's response to events in Ireland. Subsequent developments then compelled me to abandon my pioneering participant observation study of the Republican milieu and investigation of its political/military interface; when it proved impossible to document this research in the rigorous manner required for a Ph.D thesis. The collection of documents which could result in the deportation or even the imprisonment of people, especially those no longer actively involved, should pose major ethical questions for any researcher. In my own case this was not however an abstract problem as I was awaiting trial on serious charges in which the prosecution's case rested totally on the alleged handling of certain documents. (I was subsequently acquitted without a jury even being empanelled: the charges had been laid shortly after I instigated legal proceedings against the British Government and its forces).

I realize that mentioning such problems is probably unprecedented in a thesis introduction but I do so because they are very relevant to understanding the research orientation my thesis finally took. My own political organizational experience has been a very useful secondary research tool in analyzing an earlier Republican milieu but it has also imposed major constraints even when I focused my investigation on events that occurred over 60 years ago. These constraints
and not any personal ideological perspectives regrettably forced me to do little more than merely notice the existence of a strong Irish Unionist or loyalist pro-British, presence in Britain, particularly in Scotland. As even if I could have gained access to Unionist Party archives in Belfast - which given my political background is indeed very doubtful - I have unfortunately, until very recently, found it inadvisable to make anything but the briefest visit back to Belfast, my home town. And having required a police escort out of Glasgow after Orange Lodge members attacked a meeting I was addressing; I could hardly subsequently approach the Scottish Orange Lodges for permission to research their archives. I have also found it impossible to consult the surviving records of the Scottish Sinn Fein organization. Access to these is controlled by those who took a different direction when the Republican Movement split in 1969 and the ensuing bitterness has probably put them beyond my reach for ever.

My thesis centres around a detailed investigation of the Irish Self Determination League and so events in Ireland are only considered insofar as they influenced the 'ebb-flow tide sentiment' that gave rise to the ISDL and then destroyed it. Similarly the attitude of organizations like the Catholic Church and the Labour Party to events in Ireland are only considered insofar as they intruded into the 'inter-organizational field' of the ISDL. For sociologists the most interesting stages in an organization's life history are its birth and death. But whereas 'mobilization' is a well explored topic, little attention has however been devoted to organizational disappearance. And so I have not only examined in considerable detail the 'death' of the ISDL I have also utilized the 'if' mode of investigation; constructing a possible alternative scenario for the ISDL if it had been able to survive until a more propitious period. I have endeavoured within the requirements of sociologically analyzing historical phenomenon to retain a chronological approach to events except
in the case of my study of the IRA. This material is both sufficiently extensive in quantity and different in scope to require its own separate section. I have also tried to facilitate the reader of what is of necessity a very long thesis by grouping the chapters into eight parts; each introduced by its own overview.

This thesis will hopefully both make a useful, if modest, contribution to the sociology of non-electoral participant political organizations and encourage other researchers to explore the evolution of the Irish community in Britain during the last sixty years.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have aided my research; some would not wish to be identified and space prevents my naming all but a few. Without my late father's self sacrifice I could never have pursued my education. My mother has never failed to offer a welcome even when my presence endangered her. She like my late brother Denis, who actively supported the other national identity in Northern Ireland, would however wish to dissociate themselves from the subject matter of my thesis. Nevertheless Denis facilitated my research trips to Belfast. Dorothy Lewis somehow ensured that I learnt enough sociology to undertake postgraduate study. Professor Asher Tropp offered me the opportunity to research a thesis and staunchly maintained his informed interest despite my slow progress and repeated changes of research orientation. Dr. Michael Hornsby-Smith has uncomplainingly undertaken the main burden of my research supervision with great care and unfailing helpful assistance. Seldom can a supervisor have had a student who has caused him so much work. My research has also benefitted from the informed comments of other Sociology Department staff and my fellow research students. Naomi Brennan provided a welcome base for research in Dublin. Brendan MacLua of the Irish Post not only published articles based on my research thereby helping to defray costs but greatly facilitated my contacting surviving veterans. Harry O'Brien very kindly allowed me to copy his own very interesting personal reminiscences. Helen Lackner took time off her own research to proof read the typescript that Paul and Anne somehow managed to produce from my hand written copy. Finally I owe a particular debt of gratitude to Jackie O'Malley for without her this thesis could never have been completed.

The subject matter of this thesis is the contribution made by the Irish in Britain towards the attainment of Irish self determination and so it is only fitting that this thesis is dedicated to all those who have worked and suffered in Britain to make Ireland 'a nation once again'.

Abbreviations used in this thesis

CAB - Cabinet.
CP - Cabinet Paper.
H.C. Debs. - House of Commons Debates.
IDL - Irish Democratic League.
IFL - Irish Freedom League.
IRA - Irish Republican Army.
IRB - Irish Republican Brotherhood.
ISDL - Irish Self Determination League.
IUA - Irish Unionist Alliance.
Ms - Manuscript.
NLI - National Library of Ireland.
PRONI - Public Records Office, Belfast.
OC - Officer Commanding.
ROR - Report on Revolutionary Organizations.
SPO - State Paper Office, Dublin.
TCD - Trinity College, Dublin.
UCD - University College, Dublin.
UIL - United Irish League.

Irish/English translations

English translations of Irish words are often inaccurate and hence it is sometimes necessary to indicate this. There are also some regional variations in the various Irish dialects notably with regard to the prefix Mac with the 'a' often dispensed with as in MacSwiney/McSwiney and MacGrath/McGrath.
Part 1 commences with a brief essay tracing the evolution of historical sociology. Historical sociology while offering sociologists the valuable opportunities of researching types of organisations beyond the reach of contemporary investigation also presents a wide range of problems. These centre around the problems of sources in general and documentary verification in particular. Much of my source documentary material was produced by intelligence agencies. Few researchers seem however to have given much thought to the manner in which intelligence agencies produce their reports.¹ My suggested outline approach to a possible sociology of intelligence stems from a professional interest in intelligence matters which has perhaps given me a heightened appreciation of the methodology of intelligence collection and evaluation. In Chapters 3 and 4 I consider the theoretical problems and perspectives of my thesis which centre around the concept of ethnicity and the sociology of political organizations.

¹ For example Susan Bruley; Socialism and Feminism in the Communist Party of Great Britain 1920-39, unpublished London School of Economic Ph.D thesis (1980) has made very minimal use of the Home Office Intelligence reports that I have found invaluable. Bruley strongly argues that as these are mostly the product of 'informers' they are very dubious and generally worthless.
CHAPTER 1

Sociology and History: A Symbiotic Relationship

"The student of Sociology must know a good deal of history."¹ This advice by Macrae is even more strongly expressed in C.W. Mills' observation: "History is the shank of social study."² While Messenger's a-historical study of an Irish rural community³ is a classical example of the pitfall; awaiting a social scientist who has ignored, at his peril, MacRae and Mills' warning. Early European sociology was deeply permeated by the much longer established historical tradition of research⁴, and indeed most of the early sociologists like Weber actually began their research careers as historians⁵; an evolution that led some historians, notably Collingwood to suspiciously view sociology as a serious threat to the survival of historical research itself⁶. This wary and often outright hostile

³ John Messenger, Inis Beag: Isle of Ireland, (New York, 1973) is a social anthropological study of the 'decay' of Irish peasant society on Arran Island in contemporary Ireland which almost totally ignores the historical reality that this society was the product of generations of mass emigration.
⁵ For Weber's evolution from historian to sociologist see Guenther Roth, 'History and Sociology in the work of Max Weber', British Journal of Sociology, 27(1976), 306-18,
attitude on the part of historians, especially in Britain, to sociology generated a counter opposition to historical research with the unfortunate consequences that British sociology developed an a-historical research tradition to a much greater extent than mainstream continental sociology. A pattern of development followed even more rigidly in America where sociologists so resolutely ignored even recent historical events; that in their scathing review of the content of American sociological journals, Gerth and Laundau vigorously protested such major political developments as the growth of Marxism and Nazism, with all their consequences for contemporary society, hardly featured at all in the deliberations of American sociologists. Then in the late 1950's some of


2 In the first fifty years of its existence, the American Journal of Sociology published only three articles on Marxism - none of them citing Lenin - and only two articles on Nazism between 1933-47; see H. Gerth and S. Laundau: 'The Relevance of History to the Sociological Ethos' in M. Stein and A. Vidieh (edt), Sociology on Trial, (New Jersey, 1963).
the American sociologists, notably Lipset\(^1\), conscious of the gap between European and American sociological traditions and aware of the manner in which European sociology had been enriched by historical research, began advocating a more historical approach to sociological investigation. The result of this fundamental reorientation of sociological research was a flood of studies utilizing historical data, initially focussing around the contemporary American sociological preoccupation with industrial societal development as reflected in Bendix\(^2\) and Smelser's\(^3\) work; but in the subsequent decade, broadening out to encompass multi-societal comparative sociological investigations as exemplified by Barrington Moore\(^4\), and Swanson's\(^5\) analysis of the Reformation. This new emphasis on the importance of historical research for sociologists was institutionally recognized by American sociologists with the introduction, in 1976, of


the Sorokin Prize for sociological works with an historical orientation and four years earlier in Britain, by the formation of an Historical Section of the British Sociological Association.

Today as Blumer shows in his review\(^1\), historical research is an accepted facet of sociological investigation in Britain encompassing and transcending the various schools of research from Marxists like Anderson\(^2\) to functionalists like Goldthorpe\(^3\). While at the same time British historians like Thompson\(^4\) have encouraged the growth of a new dialectical relationship between history and sociology taking up Carr's argument that this can only benefit both disciplines:

"The more sociological history becomes and the more historical sociology becomes, the better for both.\(^5\)"

In America this new interest by historians in the use of sociological techniques as exemplified in the work of Sylvia Thrupp\(^6\) led to the publication of a journal

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1 Blumer op. cit.


6 Raymond Grew and Nicholas H. Steneck (eds), *Society and History: Essays by Sylvia Thrupp*, (Ann Arbor, 1977)
Comparative Studies in Society and History\textsuperscript{1} specifically to encourage this rapprochement between sociologists and historians. With even military historians; who for so long typified the traditional school of historical research, now employing sociological techniques\textsuperscript{2} there has developed a school of thought that questions the continued existence of history and sociology as separate disciplines. This approach is perhaps best seen in Wallerstein's argument "to reify the motives of scholars in doing particular research into two disciplines -- the first history, the second social science -- is to give misleading substance to the accidental and passing and to miss the intellectual unity of the two enterprises"\textsuperscript{3}. For some, particularly those involved in the production of the History Workshop Journal, this question of the future relationship between history and sociology has already been decisively resolved in favour of a new history; the construction of an historical science as advocated by Therborn\textsuperscript{4} and Stedman Jones who dismiss sociology's "scientific pretentiousness"\textsuperscript{5}. But

\textsuperscript{1} Founded in 1958.

\textsuperscript{2} For a review of this development see, Colin Jones, 'New Military History for Old? War and Society in Early Modern Europe', European Studies Review, 12(1982), 97-108.

\textsuperscript{3} Immanuel Wallerstein, The Capitalist World Economy (1979) 33.


\textsuperscript{5} Gareth Stedman Jones, 'From Historical Sociology to Theoretical History', British Journal of Sociology, (1976), 295-305; also see Richard Johnson, 'Thompson, Genovese and Socialist Humanist History', History Workshop 6, (Autumn, 1978).
this new emphasis on sociological technique has also presented historians with their own problems stemming from their realization of history's largely a-theoretical orientation. Unlike sociology, history evolved without any real theoretical analysis; originally it was essentially the study of 'elites' - monarchs, political leaders etc., often simply using the documentary records of the elites themselves and compiled in an almost totally narrative manner. In this historical tradition the masses were virtually ignored: their historical role seen by historians of a liberal viewpoint simply in terms of how they benefited from the civilization process and as a potential threat by the conservatives. Proctological history - literally 'history from the bottom up' - is a relatively recent development if only because the lack of sources or widespread distribution of available data has deterred less committed and often non-professional historians.

Thompson's seminal work on the English proletariat

1 For a review of these problems facing historians see Victoria E. Bonnell, 'The Uses of Theory; Concepts and Comparison in Historical Sociology', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 22(1980), 156-73.

2 For a concise but extremely readable account of the evolution of historical research see Bernard S. Cohn, 'History and Anthropology: The State of Play', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 22(1980), 198-221.

showed what could be achieved through diligent research by a determined individual working in an hitherto ignored field. In France this focus of historical research was more systematic and took its name, the 'Annales School', from the journal, 'Annales: Economies, Societies and Civilizations' which first appeared in 1929, as an effort to fuse not only the various subdisciplines of history; economic, social and political, but in a manner that utilized structuralist and functional theory\(^1\). This new history emphasized 'quantification'\(^2\) but in a more total societal mode of analysis than the parallel development in economics of 'Cliometrics or Econometrics'\(^3\) and has perhaps reached its peak in the work of Le Roy Ladurie\(^4\)

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who has employed 'serialism' - the collection of a huge range of socio-economic statistics - to vividly recreate French medieval life\(^1\).

Yet this new 'scientific history' while utilizing sociological techniques especially, its emphasis on empirical research, does not represent a fundamental move in the direction of an eventual unity with mainstream sociology\(^2\); rather it is impressionistic social science; more dependent on anthropology and psychology than sociology. There is still a wide gap between sociology and history for despite the similarity of techniques employed by both disciplines the analytical focus is still very different. When the early historical sociologists were still dependent on published works by historians to provide them with their raw data, then this difference in the methodological approaches of the two disciplines tended to be overlooked but this 'turning a blind eye'

\(^1\) See the magnificent reconstruction of the social environment in which the Cathar heresy flourished in 14th century Southern France; Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Montaillou, Cathars and Catholics in a French Village, 1294-1324, (1980), and his attempt to explore the socio-economic lines of social conflict in Carnival: A People's Uprising in Romans, 1579-1580, (1980).

stance was not so sustainable when sociologists like Tilly\(^1\) and Aminzade\(^2\) began doing their own in-depth primary source research; often in fields ignored by historians. In this new situation it is no longer possible; if indeed it ever was, to simply interpret the essential methodological difference between history and historical sociology as stemming from the historians inductive investigation of primary data and the sociologists deductive investigation of secondary data. The different approaches to a common problem go back to the respective professional training of sociologists and historians; for whereas sociologists are broadly educated to select research problems in terms of their utility for evaluating theories and concepts so that they can, ideally, turn attention to any sociological investigation, historians,

"ideally aim at becoming familiar with all aspects of the culture and period before singling out particular matters for investigation. This gives one hunches as to the points at which events, ideas, structures of relationships are taking a genuinely new turn, modifying or breaking with regularities and directions set in the past."\(^3\)

And whereas sociologists talk in terms of theory formation

1 Charles Tilly, *The Vendee*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964) is a seminal study of the resistance by the peasants of South West France to the 1789 Revolution.


through hypothesis testing in a scientific manner so even Sylvia Thrupp, an historian only too conscious of the need to rigidly test historical 'propositions',\(^1\) talks of 'hunches' rather than hypotheses and speaks of testing hunches by wide general reading and some checks of the primary sources of the proceeding period. But these she admits are "counsels of perfection that in practice are often bypassed as too laborious\(^2\). The use of computer techniques has revolutionized the 'quantitative' or 'serialist' historian's ability to evaluate a mass of data\(^3\) and vastly increase the research possibilities\(^4\); but it has simultaneously highlighted some of the weaknesses in the largely a-theoretical approach advocated by Thrupp.

Skocpol and Somers\(^5\) have evaluated the growing American historical tendency to analyze comparative history in terms of concepts, if not yet full fledged theories,

\(^1\) Raymond Grew and Sylvia Thrupp, 'Horizontal History in Search of Vertical Dimensions', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 8(1966), 250-64.

\(^2\) Grew and Steneck, ibid.

\(^3\) "If the bank is prerequisite for a capitalist economy, then the data bank is the prerequisite for a sociological history" - Cohn, op. cit.


but even this has merely involved the formulation of low level generalizations applicable to single or a small group of phenomena whereas sociologists aim routinely at deriving middle level generalizations applicable to at least a class of phenomena, if not universally. And even if sociologists and historians were employing essentially the same conceptual and theoretical tools of investigation, there would still; argues Bonnell¹ be important differences in the manner of their utilization. While few historians no longer uncritically follow the Rankian dictum, "history should be the study of what actually was"², they are still primarily concerned with relating the course of historical events even if their interpretation and analysis utilizes sociological tools of investigation³. Early sociological pioneers like Weber in his 'The City' used their historical data to formulate implicit sociological paradigms⁴ without loosing their sense of historical continuity. Wittvogel⁵ and Wallerstein⁶ have continued in this 'grand' historical

² Quoted in Cohn, op. cit.
sociological tradition, which it might be argued, dates even further back to "Das Kapital". And though located at a more micro level, Tilly's use of historical data to refute the Durkheimean analysis of social change and Bowen's very original use of the 'Jesse James and Younger Brothers' saga to test the relative deprivation hypothesis are still essentially in the Weberian tradition of historical sociology.

However as C.W. Mills' reference to the sociological "uses of history" implies there is another school of historical sociology, as exemplified in the work of Smelser, in which historical events, as its partial title; Sociological History indicates, are treated as 'nomothetic' models. This highly abstract model of research has been criticized by historians, notably


2 Don R. Bowen, 'Guerrilla War in Western Missouri, 1862-65: Historical Extensions of the Relative Deprivation Hypothesis', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 19(1977), 30-51. The James and Younger Brothers became outlaws as a result of their participation in a Confederate irregular unit - Quantrill Raiders and Bowen evaluates the socio-economic status of 194 members of this unit to test the relative deprivation hypothesis.

3 "Sociological imagination is founded on a sound appreciation of the 'uses of history" - C.W. Mills, op. cit., 143.

Anderson for its preoccupation with sociological theory at the expense of normative historical research. Smelser's approach effectively reduces historical research to the role of providing him with what he calls "empty theoretical boxes". Yet in the sociological sense Smelser's approach to history rests on rather weak theoretical foundations, for theory formulation requires repeated testing of concepts and hypotheses which in turn necessitates the employment of a very wide range of empirical data derived from several societies or alternatively the isolation of a small group of variables. And as Bendix has shown, such a particular historical situation is so rarely encountered that confronted by a combination of too many variables and too few relevant historical models, the best a sociologist can usually accomplish in these circumstances is the testing of concepts rather than the formation of theory.

My journalistic background has given me an innate predisposition to 'see a story' as a unified totality with a beginning and an end though not necessarily recounted in a strictly chronological manner rather than an a-humanistic abstract account related with little feeling for the significance of the event; so I freely admit to preferring Bendix's sociological "use of history" to Smelser's.


And even ignoring my own personal preferences for a particular type of historical sociology; my study of the political sociology of the Irish in Britain during the 1916-1926 period does not frankly lend itself to theory formation, for it is too specific and hence unfortunately cannot be compared in any scientific manner to other similar studies, as those simply do not exist in this particular field of research at the present time of writing. I will subsequently delineate the outlines of the fundamental differences between the socio-political life of the Irish in Britain and the Irish in America, so here I only wish to point to the vastly different levels of research undertaken into both communities with particular reference to my own research period. In the United States one publishing company alone, the Arno Press, lists no fewer than forty two books covering the entire range of Irish-American life; from biographies of political leaders\textsuperscript{1}, studies of the ethnic press\textsuperscript{2}, relations with the Catholic Church\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} Marie Veronica Tarpey, \textit{The Role of Joseph McGarrity in the Struggle for Irish Independence}, (New York, 1976).


to the detailed local studies\(^1\) that are such a vital
source of material for compiling an overall account of
an ethnic community at a particular period. And having
compiled several excellent works; synthesising these local
political studies into an overall historical account
of the impact of the 1916-22 events in Ireland on the
Irish Americans\(^2\); scholars in the United States are now
engaged in analyzing the manner in which the different
local expressions of Irish nationalism\(^3\) can be related
to specific places of origin in Ireland\(^4\) and explained
in terms of their respective socio-economic appeal to
different social classes\(^5\).

1 John Patrick Buckley, *The New York Irish: Their View
Michael F. Funchion, *Chicago's Irish Nationalists,
The above titles have been listed simply to show the
range of this one company's publications, twenty-one
of which appeared in one year (1976) alone.

2 Charles C. Tansill, *America and the Fight for Irish
F.M. Carrol, *American Opinion and the Irish Question,
Alan J. Ward, *Ireland and Anglo-American Relations,

3 See Thomas N. Brown, 'The Origins and Character of
Irish-American Nationalism", *Review of Politics*,
27(1965), 327-58.
Margaret Sullivan, 'The Irish in St. Louis: the Role
of Nationalism in an Irish-American Community, 1880-
1922", *Papers of the American Committee for Irish
Studies*, (1976).

4 Victor A. Walsh, 'A Fanatic Heart: The Cause of Irish-
American Nationalism in Pittsburgh during the Guilded
shows how the Fenians gained few recruits from the Irish
speaking Gaeltacht part of Ireland.

5 Eric Foner, 'Class, Ethnicity and Radicalism in the
Gilded Age: The Land League and Irish-America ',
*Marxist Perspectives*, 1(1978), 6-43, suggests Irish
American Nationalism was a by-product of working
class radicalism.
In comparison the paucity of research on the Irish in Britain during the first quarter of the 20th century clearly shows the impossibility of attempting anything other than the testing of a few concepts relating broadly to the integration/assimilation issue and the manner in which political organizations function. The two very generalized accounts of the Irish in Britain offer little but a few pointers for this period with O'Connor\(^1\) contributing far less than Jackson\(^2\). There is even less specialized material available for this period, for O'Day's\(^3\) comprehensive work on Irish Nationalism in Britain stops in 1886 and while Wollaston\(^4\) continues his account of the United Irish League into the first decade of this century, it is almost totally devoid of empirical evidence relating to that organization's socio-economic composition. O'Connell's study of Irish Nationalism in Liverpool between 1873-1923 fails to live up to the promise embodied in its title\(^5\) as the bulk of his research relates to the earlier years and he completely confuses the relationship between the Irish Self Determination League and the Irish Republican


Brotherhood\textsuperscript{1}. Waller's magnificently detailed work on the political history of Liverpool is unfortunately rather uninformative about Irish Republicanism in the city though the Nationalist movement is comprehensively covered\textsuperscript{2}. And North's thesis which should; to judge from its research focus on the Catholic Press in Britain, have been quite informative on the attitudes of the Irish in Britain is unfortunately not; because of his decision not to deal with such a controversial subject\textsuperscript{3}.

My own study of the Irish Self Determination League using a wide range of empirical evidence shows that the organization's rank and file membership was predominantly working class but its leadership contained a disproportionately large middle class element. Unfortunately there are no other empirical studies of the Irish in Britain, I can compare my own findings with. Burchell suggests that the Irish in San Francisco accommodated to indigenous society much quicker there, than in the Eastern Coast.

\textsuperscript{1} "A second militaristic organization was the Irish Republican Brotherhood. It was the military wing of the Self-Determinationist League of Great Britain" O'Connell, op. cit., 35. The IRB in fact predated the Irish Self Determination League (not Self Determinationist League) by over half a century and played a prominent part in the formation of the league.

\textsuperscript{2} P.J. Waller, Democracy and Sectarianism - A Political and Social History of Liverpool, (1868-1939), (Liverpool, 1981).

\textsuperscript{3} M. North, Catholic Opinion on Selected Social Problems for 1900-33: As Expressed in the Catholic Press, (London University, MA Thesis, 1951). He says of post 1916 Ireland - "The confusion of motives and the lack of evidence other than hearsay and personal opinion makes the study of this Irish interlude interesting and at the same time unprofitable to study".
cities owing to rapid urbanization outstripping the pace of ghetto building⁴. My own study shows that the United Irish League survived much longer in Liverpool, the centre of the first major Irish settlement in Britain, than in London, where the immigrants were of a more recent vintage and that its replacement the Irish Democratic League failed totally to establish itself in London while managing to make a localized impact on the Lancashire and Yorkshire Irish communities. But once again, unlike Burchell, there are no local studies to provide me with the essential comparative data to test this observation.

I will conclude this chapter by again observing that sociologists can only benefit from a closer relationship with historians: both disciplines can contribute much to each other. My own thesis would certainly not have been possible without the employment of a very wide range of historical data. But the availability of source material, the manner in which it was originally compiled and the contemporary problems encountered in analyzing and interpreting such a variety of source material posed many methodological problems, which I will now examine in chapter two.

Methodological Problems in Finding Sources for the Political Sociology of the Irish in Britain, 1916-1926

Interpreting historical events is a process beset by many problems not least when the investigator is compelled, as I was, to spend a large proportion of research project time in discovering Primary source material owing to the virtual absence of secondary works of analysis relating to the central focus of my research; namely the Irish Self Determination League, Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Army and the Irish Republican Brotherhood in Britain. I have probably used Primary source material to a far greater extent than most other sociologists working in Britain or Ireland and have certainly used a far greater range of this type of material than is customary in historical sociology. By Primary sources I mean British Government records and in particular the Intelligence records of the Home and War Offices, Irish Government records, especially the Dail Eireann departmental papers and Free State Army Intelligence records. Irish Republican Army records are listed as government records or organizational records dependent on whether they are pre or post-Treaty. Other organizational records I have used in my research relate to the Irish Self Determination League, Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Brotherhood, though strictly speaking these are usually located in the

1 For a review of these problem see Paul Rock, 'Some Problems of Interpretation Historiography', British Journal of Sociology, 27(1976), 353-69.
private papers of people who played a prominent role in these organizations. Memoirs and autobiographies have provided useful background material to flesh out the material already listed and I have been fortunate enough to interview a few survivors who played an active organizational role during the period of my research interest. And last, but not least, newspapers, both general and specialized (i.e.) political organizational publications, have proved to be very informative. Some of these sources by their very nature have presented particular problems which I will now examine.

Lloyd George with his typical forthrightness once declared; "I am not writing history as an historian but as a solicitor in possession of the documents\(^1\) and his political successors aided by civil servants, unwilling to expose their power in the political decision making process, have sought to ensure that many of the most revealing documents do not get into the possession of historians who might use them to challenge the sanitized memoirs of the 'solicitors'. Sir James Craig is not the only politician who hoped his negotiations on a sensitive issue would never be published\(^2\). British Government records are rigidly protected by a very


\(^{2}\) See his comments on the Irish Boundary negotiations, Cabinet 57(25), 3/12/1925, CAB 23/51, (Public Records Office).
stringent Official Secrets Act\textsuperscript{1}, until the Lord Chancellor, as the relevant authority under the Public Record Acts of 1958 and 1967, decides to release them for consultation in the Public Records Office\textsuperscript{2}. He often exercises this power in a highly authoritarian manner; that permits virtually no effective appeal, as the '30 year release procedure' implicitly recognizes his powers under Section 5(1) of the 1958 Act to withhold, without giving any reason, any record or paper. Cabinet Minutes paradoxically often the least useful section of the Cabinet Papers, have been released in their entirety under the 30 year rule but a comparison of the sketchy nature of the 1919-23 Cabinet Minutes; often no more than a bare outline of decisions taken with no indication of why or whether they were the subject of an acrimonious discussion or approved unanimously, with the accounts of Cabinet Meetings given by Thomas Jones\textsuperscript{3}, the Cabinet Secretary, and Francis Stevenson\textsuperscript{4}, Lloyd George's mistress and confidante, 

\textsuperscript{1} "all Government bureaucracies are doomed by an iron law of history to attach a grossly inflated importance to the secrecy of their past as well as present business - as witness the disreputable history of the Official Secrets Act, whose reform is repeatedly promised and repeatedly postponed" - Christopher Andrews 'Official Secrecy', International Affairs, (July, 1977). For the legal side of the Official Secrets Act see William Birtles, 'Big Brother Knows Best: The Franks Report on Section Two of the Official Secrets Act', Public Law, (1973), 100-22 and Donald Thompson, 'The Committee of One Hundred and the Official Secrets Act 1911', Public Law, (1963), 201-26. And for an account of one who fell foul of the Act see Jonathan Aiken, Officially Secret, (1971).


\textsuperscript{3} Keith Middlemas (edt.), Thomas Jones Whitehall Diary, (1971), Vol. 3.

\textsuperscript{4} A.J.P. Taylor, Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George: A contd.,
reveal just how much the official minutes fail to record. And as Crossman has shown the problem is not just confined to what the Cabinet Minutes do not record¹ but just as importantly centres on the manner in which the Minutes are written to facilitate a particular Cabinet Secretarial interpretation². Post 1922 Irish Cabinet Minutes are patterned on the British example but are if anything even less revealing³. Memorandums and Papers presented to the British Cabinet as information and discussion documents are usually a much more interesting means of assessing the importance of an issue than the actual Cabinet Minutes but some of these, especially those relating to intelligence matters have not been released. Departmental papers, often the most useful of all government sources, are even more likely to fall victim to the official censor. While one can perhaps appreciate the reasons behind the official decision to withhold all files referring to the ultra sensitive 'Philby, Burgess and MacLean affair'⁴ or the 'Albanian sabotage debacle of 1951'⁵, it is rather more difficult to comprehend why the 1882 Irish-Welsh riots in Tredegar or the 1884 Cleaton Moor

² Reveals how the Chancellor's speech "was so terrifying that it was not revealed in Cabinet Minutes". Ibid, Vol. 1 (1975), 103.
³ There is no procedure in Ireland for the regular release of Cabinet Minutes and those available for the 1920's and 30's were simply given to the State Paper Office on the personal authority of the Taoiseach in 1976.
⁴ See the Observer, 3 Jan. 1981.
⁵ Times, 28 July 1981.
Catholic Protestant riots are still considered such sensitive matters as to require their inclusion in the Home Office HO 144 Class which is closed to researchers for a hundred years.

The Home Office does occasionally permit vetted researchers access to their closed class files as Short explains in his study of the 1880's Fenian Bombing Campaign in Britain, which also benefited considerably from his equally privileged access to the 'closed MEPO3' Metropolitan Police files. But the process of gaining permission is long and by no means an automatic procedure.

I decided for several reasons not to approach the Home Office and Scotland Yard for access to their closed files on Irish politics in Britain; firstly because as my research period was focussed on events, considered still to be comparatively recent and hence probably subject to a greater reluctance to grant access. Secondly I believed that my own political background in Irish politics and in particular my successful legal action in 1971 for damages against the British Government, Army and RUC was likely to produce an unfavourable decision. Lastly but not without importance, a successful applicant is required to sign the Official Secrets Act and is


2 See Peter and Leni Gillman, *Collar The Lot, How Britain Interned and Expelled its Wartime Refugees*, (1980), XII, for an account of the problems they encountered in obtaining permission to see only a portion of the files they originally requested.
obliged to submit in advance of publication any research utilizing these 'closed' files. As a journalist specializing in the often sensitive defence/intelligence field, I prefer not to sign the all encompassing Official Secrets Act. Such problems with departmental records are not encountered in the Irish Republic for the simple reason that no post 1922 departmental records have ever been released for public inspection. This climate of total secrecy has led to approaches from senior Irish civil servants to their British counterparts in an effort to ensure that no documents containing references to previous inter civil service discussions should be released.\(^1\) These appeals seem to have met with considerable success.\(^2\)

Scotland due to its own legal system is not covered by the 1958 and 1967 Public Record Acts and here the Scottish Office maxim seems to be; if a file in anyway refers to a 'Law and Order' issue, close it; with the result that all the Irish records of any interest for my research period are closed files. An even more rigid system applies in the Northern Ireland Public Records Office where I was

1 For accounts of these negotiations see the Sunday Press, 7 Jan, 1979 and 22 July, 1979.

2 While studying the Anti-Partition issue I found that at least 14 Foreign Office 'W' Class files on Anglo-Irish relations had not been included in the '1949' releases, and according to Frederick Boland, the Secretary in 1949 of the Department of External Affairs, his impression of reading the released papers was that "an effort had been made not to embarrass me or other Irish officials involved" Irish Times, 23 Aug, 1979.
permitted to consult the Reports made by Richard Dawson, the Irish Unionist Agent in London, on the growth of the Irish Self Determination League in Britain: because his papers are a 'private collection', but was denied access to the PM 7/1/2 papers which are their official equivalent. Indeed the situation at the Northern Ireland Public Records Office is even worse than that prevailing in Edinburgh for there have been claims, backed by considerable evidence, that many files originally opened have now been closed and that other 'closed' files have been opened to researchers sympathetic to the Government while firmly denied to reputable researchers who have opposed Government policy. Evidently the Belfast staff believe in the Phillips tradition of research. Dublin Governments have avoided the unpalatable prospects of future researchers ploughing through their records by leaving few hostages to history. It seems from discussions with sympathetic officials in the State Paper Office in Dublin Castle that it has been customary for Governments to engage in wholesale file destruction after losing

1 D 9895/16 (PRONI).

2 According to Michael Farrell, several hundred files dealing with the early history of Northern Ireland state and opened to access in 1976 have now been closed, Irish Times, 22 Aug, 1979.

3 See the Guardian, 6 Nov, 1979. Hibernia, 15 Nov. 1979, (by a former Stormont Minister) and also see Paddy Devlin's review of Patrick Buckland, The Factory of Grievances, in which he makes this claim in Hibernia, 24 Oct, 1979.

4 Alison Phillips, The Revolution in Ireland, 1906-1923, (1924) a unionist historian was allowed free access by the British to Dublin Castle records before many of them were destroyed on the handover of power.

5 The Dublin State Paper Office may have the least number of files available for research but their staff is certainly the friendliest and most helpful of all the Records Office staff I have encountered.
elections. Yet paradoxically many Irish departmental files have not only survived but are now open to researchers as the result of the foresight of former Irish Government Ministers who removed files from their departments and subsequently deposited them in university archives. This practice of withdrawing files from official depositories is not of course unique to Ireland—it occurred in Britain also. Whatever the ethics of such practices I must admit to being extremely grateful for the opportunity to consult the papers of General Richard Mulcahy, the IRA leader and Free State Army Commander in Chief and those of Hugh Kennedy, the first Attorney General of the Irish Free State, in the University College Dublin Archives. Much of Michael Collins' communications with IRA units in Britain has probably only survived because it was 'borrowed' by earlier authors and held by them for a long period.

1 As one Dublin official told me, "sure didn't that crowd burn all their papers". Colonel Nelligan, the head of Dublin Special Detective Unit, (Irish equivalent of the Special Branch) admitted destroying 18,000 police files in 1932 before he was forced to retire by the new Fianna Fail administration; see J. Bowyer Bell, The Secret Army, The IRA, 1916-1979, (Dublin, 1979), 452.

2 See A.J.P. Taylor, English History 1914-1945, (1981), 130, for an account of how the Cabinet Office staff made retaliatory raids on the private papers of Lloyd George and Lansbury. K.R.M. Short, op. cit. has made extensive use of Sir William Harcourt's private papers which are really his Home Office files.

3 The Dail Eireann Class 2/530 file dealing with the arms supply network in Britain contains a note that "these files were out of Government hands for 30 odd years and may have been used by Frank O'Connor for a book on Michael Collins".
Collins' papers passed into the possession of Mulcahy as did Ernie O'Malley's important correspondence, with the British IRA units during the Civil War; following his capture and after Fianna Fail took office O'Malley was permitted to 'borrow' Free State Army records, including intelligence reports on the Irish in Britain, which are now preserved in the University College Dublin Archives.

Much of my thesis uses these various intelligence sources to a considerably greater extent than any other historical sociological work I have read. Elkins has shown how the use of British and American Intelligence reports substantially change our understanding of the evolution of nationalist movements in the Caribbean. While in the last few years, a veritable Kuhnian revolution has transformed the historical interpretation and analysis of the Second World War as a result of the ever growing revelation relating to the Allies success in reading

1. The Collins Papers in this collection are catalogued as P7/A (UCD) to distinguish them from Mulcahy's own papers which are P7/B (UCD).


the German 'Enigma' and Japanese 'Magic' signals traffic\(^1\). Yet even in the historical field there are still very few British academics studying intelligence material and the agencies which produced them, as research subjects in their own right\(^2\). Sociologists have found the study of organizations and their associated bureaucracies a very rewarding research field save apparently in one particular sector, 'the Sociology of Intelligence'. This simply does not exist as a research topic in British Sociology (I could not find a single reference to this issue in the *British Journal of Sociology*) and even in the United States there have been very few exploratory studies in this field, since Shils\(^3\) first investigated the


Dr Christopher Andrews is doing some very interesting research at Cambridge into the evolution of British Intelligence judging from his recent series of BBC radio programmes and will hopefully later publish his work. M.E. Occleshaw is also at present doing postgraduate research on British Military Intelligence in the First World War at Keele.

operation of intelligence agencies over thirty-five years. Coser\(^1\) has briefly examined the counterproductive nature of the intelligence community's preoccupation with secrecy and Lowry has made a very thought-provoking, if rather brief, contribution 'Toward a Sociology of Secrecy and Security Systems'\(^2\). It is possible that this lack of sociological interest in the activities of intelligence agencies is a product of the alienation between the two professions stemming from the academics unfortunate experience with the United States Army's Project Camelot\(^3\).

Yet intelligence reports, evaluations and assessments play a major role in the formation of most government's foreign and defence policies while in some countries surveillance of opponents is an important component of internal or domestic politics. Intelligence collection and evaluation is the organizational activity, par excellence, as the CIA's own definition of its functions


\(^3\) Project Camelot was an attempt by the United States Army's Special Operations Research Office (SERO) to utilize; without their knowledge the research of social scientists interested in South American society, for the purpose of devising counter insurgency programmes, see Irving Horowitz (ed.), 'The Rise and Fall of Project Camelot: Studies in the Relationship between the Social Sciences and Practical Politics, (Cambridge, Mass., 1967) ; Gideon Sjoberg, Ethics, Politics and Social Research, (Cambridge, Mass., (1967), preface.
clearly reveals,

"Intelligence has less to do with cloaks and daggers than with the painstaking, generally tedious collection of facts, analysis of facts, exercise of judgement and quick, clear evaluation".\(^1\)

Organizational sociology could benefit greatly from a study of intelligence agencies and their methodology\(^2\).

Sociologists interested in 'interorganizational fields' could with profit investigate the multiplicity of intelligence agencies, examining why in most of the democracies there exists an organizational separation of the foreign and internal intelligence functions; so that in Britain there are separate Secret Intelligence and Security Services, the Bundes nachrichtendienst and Bundesamt fur Verfussungsschutz in West Germany, the Service de Documentation Exterieure et de Contre-Espionage and the Direction de la Surveillance Territoire in France, Mossad and the Sherutei Habeon (Shin Beth) in Israel.

This separation of functions is usually attributed to the democracies desire to prevent the emergence of an all powerful single service that might fail to distinguish between the different operational methodological requirements of foreign intelligence and internal security. And this is supposedly further safeguarded by the existence of

\(^1\) CIA Recruiting Brochure: Intelligence, the Acme of Skill, (Washington, 1982).

\(^2\) Carl Axel Gemzell, Organization, Conflict and Innovation: A Study of German Naval Strategic Planning 1888-1940, (Stockholm, 1973) is a masterly analysis of the different organizational, political, and economic constraints that influenced German Naval planning and offers a treasury of insights for organizational sociologists.
separate civilian and military agencies in the foreign intelligence sector, yet both the Central Intelligence Agency and American Naval Intelligence have been discovered operating internally in the United States in recent years contrary to their organizational charters. In fact the existence of separate civilian and military intelligence agencies is almost universal, as shown by the existence in the Soviet Union of the Komit Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnost, (civilian) and Glavnoye Razvedyvatelnoye (military) intelligence agencies, a division paralleled throughout most of the communist world.

Some of this multiplicity of intelligence agencies is the product of the increasingly specialized nature of intelligence collection, the growth of signals monitoring (Sigint), electronics surveillance (Elint), aerial and space photography (Photo-int) requiring the establishment of new technical agencies like the Government Communications Headquarters in Britain and its American equivalent, the National Security Agency. Yet many of the agencies duplicate the work of others, and many seem to have been simply created as the result of organizational 'empire building', a tendency particularly strong during periods of conflict, as in Northern Ireland where I counted no fewer than fourteen separate intelligence agencies financed by the British Government when researching an article¹. One inevitable result of this multiplicity

of intelligence organizations, according to one former CIA officer, is that much of their activities are highly wasteful, merely duplicating work done elsewhere and another is inter-organizational conflict. Competition leading to conflict between intelligence organizations in the same country seems to be an inevitable consequence of such multiplicity of agencies as shown in studies of the tense relationships between the German Abwehr and Sicherheitsdienst and the British Secret Intelligence Service and the Special Operations Executive. Organizational sociology could profitably benefit from merely reviewing the published literature concerning the various intelligence agencies.

Examining the methodology of intelligence work could also prove fruitful to sociologists. Intelligence agencies produce a product, 'information' used by those who pay for their large, very expensive, establishments. Yet while intelligence is crucial in warfare, and indeed many military reversals can be traced to poor intelligence as in the case of the 1916 Rising, when the senior British army intelligence officer reported only a few days before


2 L.L. Russell is at present researching 'Intelligence Failures and Surprise in War', at Reading University.
the fighting commenced,

"The general state of Ireland, apart from recruiting and apart from the activities of the pro-German Sinn Fein minority is thoroughly satisfactory".

or a failure to act on the basis of intelligence reports, as when the American First Army ignored information relating to a German build up in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge). There is often a reluctance to accept the advice of intelligence officers, which sometimes speaks volumes about the relevant organizations, their structures and the status of the personnel. Thus the American Secretary of State Stimson's oft quoted declaration that "Gentlemen do not read each other's mail" reveals much about the ethical code of the US Foreign Service and State Department which was still in 1944 insisting on stamping 'OSS' on the passports of OSS officers sent to Stockholm. While much of the field intelligence collected in France during 1917 was wasted, owing to Brigadier General Charteris dislike of giving 'bad news' to Haig. Sometimes personal antagonism between influential people results in intelligence sources not being properly exploited as in the case of Admirals Jackson and Hall during the First World War. Admiral Jackson, the Royal

1 Quoted in D. Williams (edt.), The Irish Struggle 1916-26, (1966), 3.

2 Joseph Persico, Piercing the Reich, (1980), 397.

3 According to one of Charteris subordinates, his superior's reluctance to worry Haig cost the British 6,000 soldiers at Cambrai; see Guardian, 3 Oct. 1980.
Navy Director of Operations, so disliked Admiral Hall, the Director of Naval Intelligence, his response to the German use of a new cypher that Hall's officers were unable to break was,

"Thank God, I won't have any more reports to read."

He also refused to transmit to the Fleet vital information that could well have affected the outcome of Jutland\(^1\). These incidents reveal how a fatal combination of personal factors and the rigid hierarchical organization of information processing resulted in a failure to utilize the intelligence evaluated by subordinates.

In this respect, Freeman and Hannan's\(^2\) work on the communication process within organizations is particularly relevant to the 'sociology of intelligence' for they have shown that it is not a 'neutral process' but one highly influenced by the hierarchical structure of the organization, with an inbuilt tendency to over condense raw information at the expense of important details and even a propensity for subordinates to modify their report to please superiors. Intelligence reports which fail to alter the preconceived views of political leaders; though they are often specifically tailored to fit in

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\(^1\) Quoted by Christopher Andrews in his radio broadcast *The Profession of Intelligence* on the BBC World Service, 5 Aug. 1982. 12:00 hrs.

with the received opinion, are simply ignored, as happened repeatedly to CIA reports on the Vietnam War. If Churchill was prepared to sack Admiral Godfrey, his Director of Naval Intelligence, for refusing to inflate his estimate of U boats sunk for propaganda purposes, then no doubt many junior intelligence officers concluded they should only produce the intelligence their political masters desired. Hence if some of the Home Office Special Intelligence Directorate Reports, I have used in my thesis seem overconcerned about the extent of left wing activity in Britain, it is because their author, Sir Basil Thomson had learnt to provide 'intelligence' tailored to his political masters' views. Thomson records in his memoirs how he displeased the Cabinet with one of his early reports on Pacifism during the First World War,

"I handed in my report on the activities of the pacifist revolutionaries' societies to the War Cabinet, who were not disposed to take doses of


2 Whatever the Vietnam war was, it certainly was not a US Intelligence defeat as American Intelligence warned as early as 1948 that the Vietnamese Liberation Front was a popular and indigenous anti-colonial expression and repeatedly predicted that neither the French nor the subsequent Saigon regime could defeat it. Daniel Ellsberg, The Pentagon Papers, (New York, 1977), and David Halberstam, The Best and the Brightest, (New York, 1972). For useful, wider ranging accounts of 'intelligence failures' see Harold Wilensky, Organizational Intelligence: Knowledge and Policy in Government and Industry, (New York, 1967) and Anatol Rapaport, 'Chicken a la Kahn', The Virginia Quarterly Review, 41(1965), 370-89.

soothing syrup in these matters. Being persuaded that German money is supporting these societies, they want to be assured that the police are doing something. I feel certain there is no German money, their expenditure, being covered by the subscriptions they receive from cranks. Intelligence agencies in general exhibit a pronounced tendency to both please their political masters and to hedge their bets by playing safe with reports that often fail to reach a definite conclusion. In this respect their work is closely related to the supposedly more academic 'Think Tanks' who as Smith has shown, invariably fail to submit the definitive final report, either out of fear that they will work themselves out of the research project, or alienate the consumer. Gross' observations concerning many organizations' fascination with 'number magic' is particularly relevant to the methodology of the intelligence community. They are largely preoccupied with quantification, so much of their resources are devoted to the collection of intelligence. But intelligence collection is only part of the task of the intelligence officer; raw information has to be collated and then assessed for its accuracy and usefulness. The 'number magic' fetish can be clearly seen at work in the Sigint and Elint operations of the British GCHQ and the American NASA which have accumulated vast numbers of taped communications intercepts which, given the present state of the art of deciphering, are never likely to be evaluated.

1 Basil Thomson, The Scene Changes, (1939), 359.
3 Bertram Gross, Organizations and Their Managing, (New York, 1968), 293.
This particular problem of course did not affect the intelligence community during the period I have been able to consult their intelligence files. The emphasis then was almost totally on 'humint', (human intelligence), with agencies largely dependent on their direct staff employees and their informers for the necessary raw intelligence but the same type of evaluation problem was still present particularly as Thomson frequently illustrated his Cabinet Reports with quotes from his informers.

Informers or 'touts', as a result of their historical role in exposing successive Irish revolutionary movements, occupy a particularly low position in any Irish popular ranking of socially prestigious occupations. Yet as a Dublin magistrate once said:

"I have repeatedly heard it asserted that all informers should be shot. I can truly and deliberately declare it to be my own firm conviction that if all the informers of 1848 were so disposed of Dublin would have been decimated. There were in one great commercial establishment, forty confederates of whom ten were in communication with the police".1

Informers have played major roles in many other countries, notably in Tsarist Russia were Malinovski, the leader of the Bolsheviks in the Duma, and Azef, the director of the Social Revolutionaries terror programme, were Okhrana informers as was Father Gabon, the agent provocateur who led his worker's organization into the bloody 1905 Petrograd massacre. Thomson's reports reveal that he had

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1 F.T. Porter, Twenty Years Recollections of an Irish Police Magistrate, (Dublin, 1880), 182.
informants at the highest level of the Communist and Labour Parties hierarchies. Yet despite the key role played by informers and agent provocateurs, the subject seems to have been almost totally ignored by social scientists. I have been able to trace very few works dealing specifically with this issue; Gary Marx has written a pioneering sociological study of informers and agent provocateurs¹ while Zuckermann², Dediger³, and Chandler⁴ have contributed useful historical studies in this field. Many informers contribute their information purely for monetary gain but others inform for much more complex and varied reasons. Some inform simply to revenge themselves on an organization they believe has failed to sufficiently recognize their own contribution. Organizational leaders have been known to inform on rival organizations or on potential threats within their own organization to their continued leadership. In short while informers are influenced by many motivations the underlying reason is of a nature that must inevitably seriously question the reliability of their information.


⁴ F.W. Chandler, Political Spies and Provocative Agents, (Sheffield, 1933).
The same caution must also apply to intelligence collected by the professionals or direct agency employees. Frolik is surely not the only senior intelligence officer to discover that his underlings were enrolling 'ghost' agents and submitting fictionalized reports to boost their income. Falsehood is integral to the intelligence community, agencies submit false reports to justify unauthorized, or conceal, covert activities, their employees 'manufacture' ghost agents and reports to increase their salaries and inflate their perceived organizational value, while their informers sell false information, when they can discover nothing of interest. Spreading 'disinformation' and 'black propaganda' is often as important an activity as collecting and evaluating intelligence. Heydrich's small team of forgers feeding Stalin's paranoia, did more damage to the Soviet military than an Panzer army when they manufactured documents purporting to reveal negotiations between Marshal

1 See Josef Frolik, The Frolik Defection: The Memoirs of an Intelligence Agent, (1976), 104-5. Frolik, a Czech STB officer, served in London for several years.

2 Other British Government records were deliberately falsified during the 1931 Navy Mutinies; see Alan Greira, The Invergordon Mutiny, (1981). Robert N. Kharasch, The Institutional Imperative: How to Understand the United States Government and Other Bulky Objects, (New York, 1973) shows how non-intelligence government agencies 'invent' reports in order to avoid penalization for non-submission.

Tukachevsky and the Nazis which sparked off the 'Great Purge'. A black propaganda operation seems to have been behind one of Thomson's reports to the Cabinet on leaflets distributed outside Catholic churches, in which Charles Diamond the editor of the Catholic Herald is alleged to have said,

"Bolshevik Russia today is the hope of the suppressed peoples of the world. It has risen like a star in the East to inspire and guide all those who fight for freedom"\(^1\).

Diamond indignantly denied he had ever written this\(^2\) and it certainly would seem to be the strange product of a pen, repeatedly wielded to attack left wing influence in the Labour Party, for whom Diamond stood for Parliament as a 'non socialist' candidate. But Diamond, as we will subsequently observe, had frequently annoyed the Irish, India and War Offices by his articles attacking colonialism.

If this leaflet was a fictional work by a section of British Intelligence then it was not the first time they had made use of fiction for their own purposes. Indeed it could well be argued that the British Security Service really owes much of its early evolution to a fictional work. In 1906 the Military Operations Counter Intelligence Section, MO 5 - from which the present day Security Service (DI 5) - traces its lineal descent, scarcely existed as a meaningful intelligence organization: with a staff of

\(^1\) ROR 93. 17 Feb. 1921. CP 2620. CAB 24/120.
\(^2\) Catholic Herald, 22 Feb. 1921.
three working on an expense budget of £1,200 a year\(^1\) it could hardly be said to have posed much of a deterrent to the internal foes of the British state. While a recognizable Military Intelligence Branch had existed in the British Army since the 1880's\(^2\), MO 5 appears to have owed its origins to the 1903 Hardwicke Report on the Reorganization of Military Intelligence\(^3\). The fortunes of MO 5 were substantially boosted by the appearance of a novel, _The Invasion of 1910_ dealing with a future German conquest of Britain, considerably facilitated by a large espionage network. Le Queux wrote his novel with the aid and active encouragement of Field Marshal Roberts who was looking for a way to mobilize public opinion in favour of a very much expanded army\(^4\). But it was the Intelligence

\(^1\) See David French, 'Spy Fever in Britain 1900-1915', _Historical Journal_, 21(1978), 355-70.

\(^2\) See Jock Hasswell, _British Military Intelligence_, (1975).

\(^3\) See WO32/6922; The Hardwicke Report seems to have been motivated more by a desire to save money than to create an efficient Intelligence system. For example, having decided the defence problems facing the British Empire were extremely complex, it simply recommended a cessation of further strategical planning. An establishment of three officers was considered sufficient to monitor, Germany, Holland, most of Western Europe and the United States, while the librarian was given charge of 'the cypher'.

\(^4\) It is not impossible that Le Queux's 'research' for his novel, may have been aided by a recent (1907-8) War Office study of a 'hypothetical German invasion of the United Kingdom', see WO 106/47B; certainly Field Marshal Roberts would have had access to this file.
service that really benefited from Le Queux's fiction which reached a very large audience when the Daily Mail serialized it; with certain modifications, as Lord Northcliffe decided the original 'German Invasion Route' took them through too many small villages, so it was altered to take in as many large towns as possible. The resultant public clamour for improved security led to the Haldane Committee on the Intelligence service. With his small staff, Lt Col Edmonds the chief of MO 5, had been unable to discover much evidence of actual German espionage in Britain but many of Le Queux readers had sent the author information about 'German spies'; waiters were a particularly favoured 'cover occupation', and so Edmonds simply 'wrote up' these names as the basis of his submission on the 'German Intelligence Operation in Britain' for the Haldane Committee. The result was a considerably expanded MO 5 and the passing of an Official Secrets Act, which the War Office had repeatedly failed to persuade the Government to enact.

This episode should serve as a salutary caution to all researchers studying official documents as it demonstrates the necessity to analyze and evaluate official papers stamped 'secret' just as rigidly as when investigating

1 This episode in which Daily Mail sellers were dressed in German uniforms and special local invasion issues published for the larger town was satirized in P.G. Wodehouse, Swoop, (1911).

2 Filed by the War Office as WO 106/45/525.
newspaper reports. On the outbreak of war in 1914, MO 5, greatly expanded, became the Directorate of Special Intelligence and extended its organizational tentacles into many spheres of British society, including the detailed monitoring of the Catholic press by a subsection known as MI 7\(^1\). MO 5 before the war had not however been the sole agency to counter subversion in Britain. Unlike the Secret Intelligence Service which can trace its lineage directly back to Walsingham's Elizabethan espionage network, it is impossible to accurately determine when an organized internal security service first evolved in Britain. Henry VIII laid the foundations of a quite efficient counter espionage system and certainly by the time of Cromwell this was taking a sizeable share of the budget. But after the Restoration, Charles II, distrustful of the entire state machinery he had inherited, broke down the Cromwellian centralized intelligence system into a number of agencies who while spying on each other as well as everybody else, did this so covertly; that Pepys at the Admiralty believed Charles II was only spending "one percent" of what Cromwell had spent on his intelligence service\(^2\). One of these agencies carried on the work started by James I when he established the

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1 See The History of MI 7: WO 32/9304 and Retention of MI 7 After the War, WO32/9297. The entire War Office Press Monitoring Service had reached a strength of 135 by the end of the war.

2 Charles aided by his secret French subsidy was actually spending more on intelligence than his predecessors, see Richard Deacon, The British Secret Service, (1980 ).
Royal Mail for the purpose of monitoring communications after the Gunpowder Plot. The existence of a postal monitoring service first became known to the general public in 1844 following a Parliamentary row over the interception of Mazzini's mail, the contents of which had been communicated to the Austrians¹. Metropolitan Police records reveal that their officers gradually took over much of this postal investigation work with eighteen officers seconded to the General Post Office Investigation Branch in 1912². This Investigation Branch played an important part in foiling the planned 1923 IRA offensive in Britain and their communication intercepts helped to convict the leaders of the Irish Self Determination League at a trial which effectively ended this organization's existence. This Investigation Branch's activities were evidently not confined to passive monitoring of the mail as Thomson informed the Cabinet that a large number of Irish Self Determination League letters to Branches from the Head Office "have been held up in the post"³.


² See MEPOL2/1505. According to a letter in MEPOL2/1500 the seconded officers "should not be of conspicuous height, nor of such appearance to render them likely when in plain clothes to be taken for police officers. The constable must be a smart intelligent man, capable of making confidential enquiries and preference will be given to one who is well educated or can speak French or German and who, from his general appearance is not likely to be readily recognized as a police officer".

In the period before the evolution of a proper police system in Britain the Home Office and the Army regional commands maintained an ad hoc intelligence system whose strength fluctuated according to the nature of the perceived threat to the Government. One of these main threats was Irish opposition to colonial rule; the Irish Administration in Dublin Castle controlled a large network of agents and RIC police officers were stationed in Britain, to watch the immigrant Irish in their principal centres of settlement. In the 1860s the Fenians penetrated the British Army so extensively that a special twenty strong counter intelligence department had to be established to combat this threat. The killing of a Manchester police officer and the death of six people in the abortive Clerkenwell Jail break explosion by the Fenians in 1867 greatly alarmed the public and the Prime Minister personally requested Lt Col Feilding, the chief of the anti-Fenian counter intelligence department to establish a new Secret Service Department. Feilding initially refused, arguing that the post of a 'spy' was incompatible with his status as an "officer and gentleman" and only reluctantly accepted his new assignment as a "seconded army officer". The new agency soon lapsed when it became apparent there was not going to be any organized Fenian


2 166,000 British Special Constables were enrolled to combat the Fenians in 1867; see Patrick Quinlivan and Paul Rose, The Fenians in England, 1865-1872, (1982), 96.

3 O'Brien, op. cit. 212.
campaign in Britain. And when the American Clan Na Gael section of the Fenian movement, started a sporadic bombing campaign in Britain in 1881, the Government this time, instead of turning again to the Army, relied on the Criminal Investigation Department at Scotland Yard, which had come into existence in the interim period since the earlier Fenian attacks. In 1883, the CID officers countering the Irish American bombers were formed into the Special Irish Branch and despite having their office bombed and much of their files destroyed\(^1\); they succeeded in capturing so many of the bombers, that the campaign was called off in 1885. Bunyan claims all of the first twelve officers in this new Branch were Irish born\(^2\) and this tradition may well have continued as the Special Branch roster in 1918 listed 13 members with Irish surnames including the two senior operational officers\(^3\).

With the ending of the Irish bombing campaign the 'Irish' part of its name was dropped in 1888 and the Special Branch devoted itself to combating anarchists, Indian nationalists and socialists etc. The appointment of Sir Basil Thomson as Head of the Special Branch signified

1 K. Short, op. cit. 184.

2 Tony Bunyan, The Political Police in Britain, (1976), 104.

3 The names of the entire Scotland Yard Special Branch (or at least the 99 permanent staff) were listed in a letter from Col Kell of the War Office thanking them for their help in countering German espionage in the First World War; see HO45/10892/35729.
its growing importance. A man of many talents, including prolific author¹, Sir Basil had been in turn a colonial civil servant, the Prime Minister of Tonga and Dartmoor Prison Governor before coming to Scotland Yard in 1913. He seems to have owed his new appointment to his self proclaimed expertise on anarchism. Dilnot in his history of Scotland Yard claims that Thomson was appointed to "save England from 'Red Machinations'"². Thomson himself believed he could distinguish revolutionaries by merely looking at their "eyes (which) were dilated and shone as if from a dull fire within"³. This was the man who for almost a decade was to be the Government's main source of information on discontent within Britain.

It might seem, judging from the not very different levels of the Special Branch establishments in 1914 and 1920⁴ that Thomson and his organization had played a relatively

¹ Sir Basil Thomson wrote novels, plays and the following works based on his police career experiences; Queer People, (1927), My Experiences and Scotland Yard, (New York, 1923), Story of Scotland Yard, (1935), The Scene Changes, (1933).

² George Dilnot, Scotland Yard, (1929), 264.

³ Times, 2 Dec. 1921.

⁴ In December 1914, the Special Branch had an authorized establishment of 114 and applied to the Home Office for permission to increase this figure by 25 officers, (see MEPO2/1643) but in June 1920 its authorized establishment was still only 137 officers and it again sought permission to recruit more officers to cope with its increased duties; see Reorganization and Augmentation of CID and SB, HO45/11000/223532.
unimportant role during the First World War and had failed to expand in a manner similar to MO 5. Some of the Special Branch's most experienced officers were however sent to build up the new Field Security Police in France¹ and as we have already observed war invariably brings a proliferation of new intelligence agencies. Even the new Ministry of Labour created its own Intelligence section to report weekly on "stoppages, disputes, settlements and labour propaganda" though its personnel were forbidden to do anything "which might savour of espionage" and so Scotland Yard, the Military Intelligence section of the War Office and General Headquarters Home Forces Intelligence were instructed to "furnish them with all reports bearing on Labour Intelligence received from their agents"². This last named military organization was not the Directorate of Special Intelligence, the successor to MO 5, but a totally new agency; one of the many that sprouted during the War. The primary function of the GHQ Intelligence Organization was monitoring industrial unrest and revolutionary activity in Britain and its officers were instructed to "obtain information from Chief Constables, employers of labour, branches of the Labour Ministry, conversation with private acquaintances and from the study of newspapers"³. Senior officers disliked this Internal Security role fearing that

¹ Times, 12 Nov. 1921.
² Memorandum by Minister of Labour on Intelligence, 10 Oct. 1917. GT2274. CAB 24/28.
³ Memorandum from the Chief Imperial General Staff, 18 Nov. 1919. WO 32/5553.
'espionage' at home would alienate the public and so the Army Council disbanded the GHQ Intelligence Organization, replacing it with a much smaller section of the Military Operations Directorate, MO 4, which was to liaise with Sir Basil Thomson's Special Intelligence Directorate. Once again despite the similarity of names this organization was not the successor to the pre-war MO 5 nor was it a new title for the Special Branch whose chief remained Sir Basil. Lloyd George at the Ministry of Munitions had operated his own intelligence service there to monitor industrial unrest and counter sabotage so he asked Thomson, when he became Prime Minister, to provide him personally with frequent Special Branch reports to compensate for the loss of his own intelligence agency. Thomson, ever alert for an opportunity to extend his influence, started submitting reports on Pacifism to the War Cabinet, a subject which, as we have already observed, greatly troubled Ministers. Thomson's reports were initially circulated to the War Cabinet by the Intelligence Bureau of the Department of Information but soon Thomson was reporting on his own behalf and broadening his field far beyond the pacifists with his

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1 The Army still wanted information in case it might find itself summoned to aid the Civil Power but disliked the idea of its 'espionage' becoming known so in general MO 4 was merely to use information supplied by Thomson. Provision was however made for MO 4 officers to recruit their own agents in "centres of possible aggravated disturbances"; see MO 4 Memorandum, 16 Dec. 1919, WO 32/5553.

2 Army Council instruction, 18 Nov. 1919, WO 32/5553.

3 As recounted by Thompson in his *Queer People*, (1922), 264.
Fortnightly Reports on Pacifism and Revolutionary Organizations in the United Kingdom and Abroad. The ending of the War increased Thomson's work rather than lessened it, for as he later recalled:

"February 1919 was the high water mark of revolutionary danger in Great Britain. Everything was in favour of the Revolutionaries. Many of the soldiers were impatient at the delay in demobilization. The discharged soldiers could not get housing accommodation. Russia had shown how apparently easy it was, for a determined minority with a body of discontented soldiers behind them to seize the reins of power."

Thomson's reports appeared to be invaluable but there was a problem; as Head of the Special Branch, he held the rank of Assistant Commissioner Metropolitan Police and as such was technically subordinate to General Horwood, the Commissioner with whom Thomson had frequent disputes. Lloyd George solved this problem by putting Thompson in charge of a new Special Directorate of Intelligence, which in effect was mostly composed of Special Branch members augmented by reluctant Military Intelligence personnel and directly responsible to the Home Secretary, thereby circumventing Horwood. On 30 April, 1919, Thomson submitted to the Home Secretary, for circulation to the Cabinet, Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the United Kingdom, Number 1. Its opening paragraph set the tone of the following 237 reports:

"The present state of quietude will come to an end as soon as unemployment benefit ceases and..."


2 Times, 2 Dec. 1921.
the inflated wages give way before the laws of supply and demand".

He went on to predict trouble over beer shortages and the licensing hours, informed Ministers that two named MP s were out to secure revolution while advocating the deportation of Russian immigrants whom he suspected of being agitators. And in the first of an almost continuous separate section on Sinn Fein in Britain, observed that the;

"Merthyr Liberty League founded for the self determination of the smaller nations and the abolition of the Monarchy by Irish miners has now become a Sinn Fein Club".

Thomson's pronounced xenophobia was clearly and frequently visible in his reports; he was gratified that most of the 8,000 audience who attended an Albert Hall commemoration of the Bolshevik Revolution was, "composed principally of aliens, Jews, Sinn Feiners and degenerates".

Like most of his class, he was strongly anti-semitic, confidently declaring, "there is now definite evidence that Bolshevism is an international movement controlled by the Jews".

Thomson like virtually all in the British establishment was obsessed by Bolshevism, though ironically one of his

1 Report on Revolutionary Organizations in the UK, No. 1, 30 April 1919. GT 7195 CAB 24/78 — hereafter cited as ROR.

2 A Survey of Revolutionary Movements in Great Britain, 1920, CP 2455. 24/118.

most senior aides was recently accused of being a long serving Soviet agent who warned the Soviets in advance of the 1927 Arcos Raid\(^1\) and later transferred to MI 5 where he used his very high rank, to infiltrate other Soviet agents into that organization\(^2\). No one could ever make the same allegation about Thomson; he constantly harried revolutionaries, proudly informing the Cabinet, "as a result of information given to the Press by this department, the Secretary of the International Socialist Club, the Headquarters of the

\(^1\) On the 12 May, 1927, the police raided the Soviet Trade Delegation premises at Arcos House, London, claiming they had evidence it was an espionage centre, but apparently the Soviets had been tipped off about the raid and destroyed much of the incriminating evidence, see, Harriette Flory, 'The Arcos Raid and the Rupture of Anglo-Soviet Relations, 1927', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 12(1977), 707-23.

\(^2\) Richard Deacon, the author of the British Secret Service, (1980), and several other works on Intelligence services, who himself is a former Naval Intelligence officer (real name Donald McCormack) claims that Guy Liddell who joined Scotland Yard in 1919 was a Soviet agent who transferred to MI 5 in 1931, 'vetted' Anthony Blunt and Kim Philby and recruited Guy Burgess into MI 5. Liddell eventually became Deputy Director of MI 5 and is alleged by Deacon to have constantly impeded investigations of these three spies; see his article in the News of the World, 29 March, 1981. Chapman Pincher however strongly defends Liddell and names another person as Burgess' recruiter into MI 5; see his *Their Trade is Treachery*, (1982), 27-29, 120, 130-32. Whether one accepts Deacon's or Pincher's version, depends on one's acceptance or rejection of Pincher's claim that the top Soviet agent inside MI 5 was Sir Roger Hollis, the Director General, or Deacon's counter claim it was Liddell the Deputy Director. The entire recent 'spies' saga would seem to be a classic example of the Secret Intelligence Service and the Security Service using the media to discredit each other as part of their long running, internecine feud and should serve as a cautionary warning when researching Intelligence organizations never to take their reports for granted.
unemployables, has been asked by the landlord's solicitor to vacate the premises. He sought whenever possible to infer revolutionaries were common criminals, explaining that one left wing bookshop was open only for two hours daily as its owners "spent the rest of their time stealing valuable books from better class shops". Like many Intelligence chiefs, Thomson frequently suggested new laws should be introduced against 'seditious' literature and no doubt he endeavoured to exploit the Cabinet's concern about the growth of the subversion he constantly referred to, for the purpose of obtaining more resources and funds for his organization. But as his earlier experience with his Pacifism Reports reveals, he was only feeding the Cabinet the intelligence diet that suited their appetites. Unlike most of the establishment Thomson himself was convinced the British working class was basically 'sound' and that it was only a relatively small number of agitators, mostly of foreign origin, who were inciting them. Consequently, he explained the

1 ROR 91. 3 Feb. 1921. CP 2541. CAB 24/114.
2 ROR 29. 13 Nov. 1919. CP 125. CAB 24/93.
3 A not uncommon practice according to former American Intelligence Officer William R. Corson, The Armies of Ignorance, the Rise of the Intelligence Empire, (New York, 1977).
Daily Herald's increased circulation not in terms of an upsurge of interest in socialism but simply because,

"unfortunately the sporting correspondent had the good fortune to spot several winners lately".¹

He believed the British workers were generally more interested in sport than revolution,

"unfortunately no football match is advertised for the Chelsea ground on May 1st. If an attractive match could be arranged it would blow away a great many people from Hyde Park".²

Thomson shrewdly realized that whatever some of the more militant Trade Union leaders thought about the British reprisals in Ireland, very few of their members were prepared to strike on this issue; "though by a majority 1,124,000 votes, the special Trades Union Congress passed a resolution advocating direct action on the Irish question, this does not represent the general view of individual workers".³ And only the previous month he had observed,

"the annoyance of the average Englishman with Irish extremists, was in evidence at the Military Tournament, where the Leninster Regiment, usually very popular, evoked neither applause nor sympathy".⁴

Much of the information Thomson supplied to the Cabinet on the Irish in Britain was highly impressionistic, being little more than the almost verbatim publication

1 ROR 12. 17 July 1919. GT 7742. CAB 24/84.
2 ROR 46. 18 March 1920. CP 902. CAB 24/101. and in ROR 47. 25 March 1920. CP 960. CAB 24/101, the author observed "it is hoped to arrange a football match at Chelsea ground as a counter attraction" - (to May Day).
4 ROR 58. 10 June 1920. CP 1444. CAB 24/107.
of what he called his 'correspondents' reports as when he wrote,

"I am informed that at Barrow-in-Furness where half the population is either Irish or of Irish descent, in certain public houses frequented by the Irish the toasts of 'Success to the Sinn Feiners' and 'Success to the coming revolution' is drunk nightly".

And what significance one wonders did Cabinet Ministers attach to a Special Branch report giving full details of a church ceremony at which,

"a Communist Minister at Hurst Church baptized a child, Lenin de Valera Mackay".

Did Ministers see in this Irish mother's choice of name for her child a sinister indication of the influence of revolutionaries on the Irish in Britain?

Sometimes the professional Intelligence officer in Thomson thrust its way through the fantasies of his informers, as when he commented on a claim that,

"about 120 delegates are reported to have attended the second conference of the Irish volunteers at Coatbridge on February 26 (1920), there are said to be 2,000 volunteers armed"

he observed underneath this report,

"this statement is probably quite at variance with the facts".

Yet two months later, Thomson's organization was reporting without comment, there are "90,000 Irish extremists in Glasgow...1,233 armed on April 20th" and later on in the year the IRA strength in Scotland was further...

1 ROR 32. 4 Dec. 1919. CP 256. CAB 24/94.
2 ROR 213. 5 July 1923. CP291(23). CAB 24/160.
3 ROR 44. 4 March 1920. CP 791. CAB 24/99.
4 ROR 53. 6 May 1920. CP 1239. CAB 24/105.
grossly inflated:

"it is reported that the Volunteers in Glasgow and in the West of Scotland number 30,000 and that 20,000 have revolvers and 2,000 rifles"\(^1\).

This was simply ludicrous, if only because as the entire IRA armoury in Ireland at this time (October 1920) contained far fewer weapons; it is highly unlikely that units in Scotland would have been permitted to retain so many weapons, particularly as the subsequent IRA offensive in Britain centred around the use of incendiaries for all stolen explosives were sent to Ireland.

Do such totally fantastic reports automatically invalidate all the information contained in the Reports On Revolutionary Organizations? I would strongly argue no. Reading these reports is like panning for gold, sifting through the dross for the nuggets of hard reliable information. Much of the information in these reports was rubbish; the product of unscrupulous informers who made up the information, when they had nothing factual to sell or the creative writings of Intelligence officers, reluctant to admit they had failed to penetrate the assigned target organization. Yet gems sparkle through this unevaluated intelligence bedrock for it is clearly evident the Special Branch had some very highly placed informers. I do not know enough about the detailed internal history of the Communist or Labour parties

during this period to vouch for the accuracy of the intelligence material relating to these but I suspect the information, particularly that relating to high level disputes in the Communist Party and Soviet financing, could only have come from the top of the leadership hierarchy. I can certainly vouch for much of the intelligence concerning the Irish Self Determination League's membership at specific times, and internal disputes as I have fortunately been able to countercheck this with the heavily documented ISDL files contained in the papers of Art O'Brien, the organization's leader. The 16 large steel boxes that contain the Art O'Brien collection in the National Library of Ireland are a veritable treasure trove, without parallel in the history of the Irish in Britain. Ranging far beyond the ISDL, encompassing a mass of detail on Sinn Fein, the Gaelic League and the everyday life of the Irish in Britain, they have been invaluable in researching this thesis. I have also been able to cross check the information in the Reports on Revolutionary Organizations with the IRA files in the Collins, Mulcahy and O'Malley papers, whose existence and location has already been noticed. It is noticeable that the Special Branch reports on the IRA in Britain improved substantially as their campaign evolved and they became normally very accurate during the Civil War, when it would appear they were receiving much reliable information from former IRA and IRB intelligence agents who were now working for the Free State Army. But no Intelligence officer no matter how professional their
approach, can ever be right all the time; so all intelligence material should be carefully considered in the light of already known evidence and if it does not fit, should be rejected by researchers. Thus I have disregarded a Free State Army Intelligence Report that claimed Michael Carolan, the IRA Director of Intelligence, P.J. Ruttledge, the acting Republican President of Ireland and, Jim Larkin the Irish revolutionary socialist, had held a meeting in Liverpool with Ramsay MacDonald, the British Labour Party leader. The timing of this alleged meeting, seems itself highly suspicious, 21 December, 1923. I cannot discover if the two Republican leaders were in England at this time but it is highly unlikely that MacDonald would meet the leaders of a defeated movement, only weeks before he became Prime Minister and if he had; then why did not the Free State Army 'leak' this to the British media which would have surely turned this incident into a major political row.

My earlier observations on the methodology of Intelligence collection and presentation shows why so much information is often unreliable. Thomson's frequent references to his correspondents' and frequent unevaluated quotations from their reports was designed to convey the impression of a large scale network of agents covering all of Britain. Government leaders appear to have a distinct preference for easily understandable intelligence, hence the huge budget given to the Office of Reconnaissance; the most

1 See P7a/87a, Mulcahy.
secret agency in the American Intelligence Community, to provide satellite photographs whose real value has been grossly inflated. Thomson was working in the non technical age of intelligence; telephone tapping was obviously less valuable when few people owned phones and the intercept technology was still very rudimentary. Virtually the only source of quantitative intelligence, Thomson possessed was his agents reports usually written in a language the Cabinet understood and often conveying information that buttressed their own preconceived opinions of what was happening in British society. Many of the reports signed B.H.T were not personally written, at least in their entirety, by Thomson himself. They bear the hallmarks of different writing styles for Thomson was a very busy man indeed, submitting reports covering the entire intelligence spectrum at home and abroad. His first Weekly Review of the Progress of Revolutionary Organizations Abroad carried reports concerning the situation in France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Austria, Holland, Hungary, Italy, Bulgaria, Russia, Norway, Spain, Portugal, India, Egypt, China and the United States. Thomson had established his own liaison with many foreign intelligence services. He is unique in British Intelligence history for his Directorate of Intelligence succeeded, if only temporarily, in doing what Sir Maurice Oldfield failed to do in the mid 1970 s; combining foreign and domestic intelligence 1 1 May 1919. GT7196. CAB 24/78.
into one agency. By spreading his wings so widely, Thomson ensured he made many influential enemies in the other agencies, violating their organizational parameters. The Secret Intelligence Service and the Naval Intelligence Division, with its traditional wide ranging interests, even in the European land locked countries, actively disliked Thomson's poaching on their territory. Military Intelligence, particularly the Special Intelligence Directorate reorganized again as MO 5, was so determined to replace the Directorate of Special Intelligence and in particular its Director, that Col Kell was prepared to 'civilianize' his security service. General Horwood had never liked the effective transfer of his entire Special Branch and intrigued with Kell to get rid of Thomson. (This objective was achieved in November 1921 and is examined in detail later in this thesis).

Sir Wyndham Childs then replaced Thomson as Assistant Commissioner and head of the Special Branch which was returned to Scotland Yard when the Directorate of Intelligence Home Office was wound up following Thomson's dismissal. But the Reports on Revolutionary Organizations continued to be sent\(^1\) to the Cabinet until Labour took power in 1924. MacDonald who was refused permission to see his own war time file\(^2\) apparently accepted the

\(1\) ROR 134. 8 Dec. 1921. CP 3538. CAB 24/131, the first to appear after Thomson's dismissal was titled Special Branch, whereas all previous ones, bore the legend Directorate of Intelligence (Home Office).

\(2\) See A.J.P. Taylor. op. cit. 255.
Special Branch advice that his new Cabinet should not receive reports, whose sources some of the new Ministers might identify. As a Minority Government Prime Minister, MacDonald was obviously reluctant to tangle with the Intelligence agencies and it has even been suggested that, at least a section of British Intelligence, passed totally out of the Governmental orbit and was financed by the Conservative Party during 1924\(^1\).

So ended the unique seven year period when internal security flies are accessible to researchers\(^2\), unique because none of the files of the other agencies mentioned in this chapter have, or are ever likely to be released to the public. Intelligence agencies instinctively dislike the probing of their activities even by Ministers as Lord Beaverbrook, the Minister of Information, discovered when he requested access to some Intelligence reports; he was told jointly by the War Office and Admiralty,

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\(^1\) I was told this by a journalist colleague who has close contacts with the intelligence community. Sir Joseph Ball, the former MI 5 officer, who founded the Conservative Research Department about this time appears to have established extremely close links between the Conservative Party and British Intelligence before returning to reorganize MI 5 in 1940. See Chapman Pincher, op. cit. 117 and Arnold Belchman, 'Hugger-Mugger in Old Queen Street: The Origins of the Conservative Research Department', Journal of Contemporary History, 13(1978), 671-82.

\(^2\) The Reports on Revolutionary Organizations would seem to owe their accessibility to researchers due to their classification as Cabinet Papers, rather than departmental papers and hence were routinely bound in chronological order into the very lengthy CAB 24 bound volume series.
'It is hoped that Lord Beaverbrook's knowledge of the activities and results of our Secret Service is very limited and that consequently he is not in possession of sufficient data on which to base any criticism. Otherwise a serious leakage must have occurred. The essence of the Secret Service is that it should be secret and no one not vitally concerned in it, should be aware of its organization and production.'

Lowry has described how when working for SORO, he discovered a Project Camelot bibliography with a very low level security classification but following his request for its declassification the US Army actually raised its classification level. Lowry believes bureaucrats use classification as a symbol of their power, often against the real interests of the organization, by preventing the circulation of knowledge. The lengthy process involved in declassifying British War Office papers, that have only the most minimal connection with the Intelligence community graphically illustrates this point. Michael Howard has recently been refused permission to publish his work on British deception operations.

1 WO 32/5755; a note included in this file (dated 12 Oct. 1959) requests that the Cabinet Papers relating to this issue should be withdrawn and disposed of. This may explain why some volumes in the CAB 24 series have had papers cut out of them.


3 WO 32/11084 file, which is basically about the repatriation of prisoners of war, has a tag on it stating "this file has been referred to MI 6 and JIC (also to DII6 and CSDIC) and has been cleared for release to the PRO by them all."
during World War II\textsuperscript{1} even though Cave Brown has already revealed much about these operations using the British material in the Pentagon\textsuperscript{2}. Alas it is not possible in Britain to follow Persico's example in simply requesting, under the American Freedom of Information Act, the OSS files he used for his illuminating work\textsuperscript{3}. True, official histories of several British Intelligence agencies have been published but Mr D. Foot, the author of one of these, has freely admitted the limitations of official history\textsuperscript{4}. Unfortunately Anthony Simkins' official history of MI 5, 1 As a former Intelligence Officer, Howard is still subject to the Official Secrets Act preventing publication based on his wartime experiences; see Hugh Trevor-Roper's comment on this affair, "the boneheads of our security services are back in power" quoted in the Sunday Telegraph, 20 Dec. 1981. 2 Anthony Cave Brown, Bodyguard of Lies, (1977); see 823-28 for an illuminating insight into the difficulties faced by those researching British Intelligence. 3 Persico, op. cit. 4 "Naturally I have tried to produce as complete, as accurate and as fairly balanced an account as time permitted. No one will be less surprised than myself if inaccuracies remain; for the whole published literature on the subject is pitted with them, and the unpublished archives are often contradictory as well as confusing and confused" - M.R.D. Foot, SOE in France: An Account of the work of the British Special Operations Executive in France 1940-44, (1968) Preface. Foot and J.M. Langley were more recently permitted to use the IS9(d) files denied to Airey Neave, op. cit. in their MI 9: Escape and Evasion 1939-1945, (1979) and the ongoing Official History of British Intelligence in the Second World War, (two vols. so far) being authored by F.H. Hinsley, E.E. Thomas, C.F.C. Ransom and R.C. Knight, has proved to be somewhat more illuminating than it was first thought when the project was announced.
particularly important as most of its pre-1940 files were destroyed by the Luftwaffe\(^1\) remains firmly under lock and key in number four Curzon Street, accessible only to senior Security Service officers. And even the foreword by a former employee, Lt Col T. A. Robertson, was officially removed from West's recent work on MI 5\(^2\).

With the exception of the Special Branch authored Reports on Revolutionary Organizations, none of their files are accessible to researchers except for the small number of files relating to their establishment, which were classified as Home Office and Metropolitan Police Commissioner's Office\(^3\) records. Thus it has not been possible to examine important IRA files seized by the police\(^4\). A few Special Branch reports on Irish suspects

\(^1\) According to Ladislas Farago, *The Game of Foxes*, (1971), 194, the MI 5 Central Registry temporarily transferred to Wormwood Scrubs Prison was destroyed by an incendiary bomb and it was subsequently discovered that most of the duplicate collection had been incorrectly micro-filmed.


\(^3\) A search through the index volume, listing the PRO's collection of Metropolitan Police Files revealed only twenty out of over 6,000 that appeared from their title to relate to the Special Branch. These twenty files, mostly concerning the establishment size of the Special Branch, were classified as part of the administration records in the Commissioners Office, (CO).

\(^4\) For example, it was reported that the Metropolitan Police seized in 1926, much of the London IRA 1914-23 operation files which had been left in a deposit box and never reclaimed; see Catholic Herald, 16 Oct. 1926. It could also be inferred from Commander Bob Huntley's reminiscenses about his experience in the present Anti-Terrorist Squad that his discovery; Scotland Yard had not retained any records of the IRA 1939/40 bombing campaign, indicates Special Branch files are withheld from other police departments - *Bomb Squad*, (1977), 103.
submitted to the 1923 Advisory Committee on the Deportations are preserved in the Treasury Solicitor's Papers. Farago has frankly admitted he literally stumbled over the Abwehr files which form the centrepiece of his work, and I must also confess to a similar, almost accidental discovery of the Treasury Solicitor's Papers, but what a discovery! They include an invaluable breakdown of the occupations and incomes of the deported Irish Self Determination League national and local leadership, submitted as part of the deportees compensation procedure together with the only known surviving minute book of the Roger Casement Sinn Fein cumann London. As Pyne has shown, it is often only possible to reconstruct defunct political organizations through the court cases they were involved in, which have ensured their records survived by becoming legal exhibits.

Using newspapers as a research source

Many researchers have used newspapers as a principal research source; some like Boyce and Roediger have

1 Farago, op. cit. XI.
2 TS 27/181.
focused their research on public opinion on specific aspects, around a close detailed scrutiny of contemporary newspapers while others like Kantowitz\(^1\) and North\(^2\) have evaluated the influence of the more specialized press appealing to sectional interests. The methodological process involved in the collection of news, the manner in which it is transformed, often through a 'subbing' or filtering procedure, into the final copy read by the purchaser is similar in many respects to the methodological process of Intelligence collection, collation and evaluation which we have already discussed. Many researchers have commented on the problems involved in verifying the accuracy or reliability of newspaper articles and as a journalist myself, perhaps, I have a heightened appreciation of these problems. The old maxim never believe all you read or even, most of what you read, in the newspapers is, unfortunately, very good advice as is the dictum one should read as many and as varied newspapers as feasible to gain a proper understanding of events. I freely confess that I personally have been faced on too many occasions with the highly undesirable combination of a tight lunch time deadline and a total inability to find any high level spokesperson available in Whitehall on a Saturday morning. In these circumstances

\(^1\) Edward R. Kantowitz, *Polish-American Politics in Chicago*, (Chicago, 1975). The author, never quite lives up to the promise of his title for while he makes extensive use of the Polish ethnic press, he fails to properly analyze their internal politics.

\(^2\) North, op. cit.
the journalist has no alternative but to resort to creative writing of the 'a source close to the Prime Minister disclosed last night' type. A recent journalistic experience of mine should serve as a cautionary warning never to take newspaper 'exclusive' revelations for granted. Earlier this year the Standard, Britain's biggest selling evening newspaper, devoted the entire front page and a further two inside pages to an account, purporting to be the disclosures of an 'IRA defector' who claimed to have been actively involved, at a senior level, in the IRA bombing campaign in Britain1. If the revelations were accurate, then the story did indeed merit its 'exclusive' tag, the first insider's account of the IRA in Britain and as such precisely the type of information a future researcher would find invaluable. This story was widely picked up and republished in British and Irish newspapers as well as featuring on the radio news, but my Sunday newspaper news editor doubted its validity. In journalistic parlance it did not 'ring true', few names were mentioned; an almost essential characteristic of true exclusives of this type, and it read very badly, almost as if it seemed the disjointed paragraphs had been hurriedly pruned by an alert staff lawyer, as indeed it transpired they were. So he decided to authorize a full investigation, checking and cross checking the entire story. I spent most of a week checking on the London end, talking to many people

1 The Standard, 10 March, 1982.
who had known the supposed 'defector' and from their accounts I gradually built up a picture of a man who was not only, on the balance of all available evidence not what he claimed to be, but a firm impression that this person had in fact behaved in a classic agent provocateur role and had almost certainly given information to the Special Branch over a period of several years. This conclusion was subsequently supported by the evidence collected by correspondents in several Irish towns which revealed this person was wanted for petty thefts, embezzlement etc. In short his exclusive revelations were almost entirely fiction; the few accurate details had been extracted from a cuttings library by a sub-editor. But it took a major investigation of the type, a future researcher would be very unlikely to be in a position to undertake, to expose this masquerade.

Recognizing all its limitations and taking due notice of the observed problems, it must be readily admitted that the use of newspapers as a documentary source is almost essential for the research of a defunct political organization like the Irish Self Determination League. Reading through sixty year old newspapers with a much smaller type face, presented in a much denser manner than is customary today is both physically very demanding and

1 Our investigation was removed from the galleys just before the paper went to press not because the lawyers objected to its claims but as a result of the killing of a person exposed in another investigation and so the editor decided not to publish a similar exposure.
highly time consuming. Indexes can of course be used to spotlight the more potentially useful reports. In Britain only two daily newspapers, the *Times* and the *Glasgow Herald* are indexed; the former in a much more reliable manner than the latter, which I soon discovered omitted many reports, given quite sizeable coverage. Variations in and lack of access to all the different editions of the *Times* can be extremely annoying but certainly using it with the *Glasgow Herald* as a supplementary guide enabled the construction of an overview impression of the Irish in Britain during my initial research. Having established the potentially interesting events and their location it was then possible to turn to the regional publications, notably the *Glasgow Herald*, *Manchester Evening News*, *Liverpool Daily Post* and *Mercury* for a more detailed coverage. The *Freeman's Journal* was not only very helpful, concerning general developments in Ireland but I found its London correspondent to have presented a much more detailed account of Irish affairs in Britain than the rival *Irish Independent*.

The periodical press, usually of a specialized nature, appealing to more sectional interests, is by its very nature of publication ie its much less frequent appearance, much easier to cover in greater detail than the dailies. It was thus possible to read every issue of the weekly *Catholic Herald*, effectively the Irish Catholic newspaper in Britain, for the period between 1916-1930, supplemented by dipping into the much smaller circulation
Catholic Times. A basic problem however in using newspapers for researching defunct political organizations is that their coverage of the organization's history is by no means uniform. The general yardstick is that coverage is quite extensive for the period of an organization's rapid growth, which of course makes it newsworthy, but unfortunately much more limited when the organization is declining; yet that is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the organization's life history to sociologists. So the Times is very informative for the Irish Self Determination League between 1919-1922, but after 1923 the League is virtually referred to only in the context of legal proceedings and while the decline in coverage in the regional press is not so noticeably as steep, they too, by mid 1924 had lost all interest in the fast fading League. The League so extensively, if very critically, covered in the Catholic Herald up to 1924 vanished from its pages after a successful libel action against the paper by one of the League leaders.

The political press is even more susceptible to organizational ebb and flow; the short history of the Irish Exile published by the Irish Self Determination League will subsequently be explored in greater detail. The other various Republican papers, Sinn Fein, The Daily Sheet, Eire, Poblacht na h Eireann and An Poblacht were very useful for the later stages of the Irish Self Determination League but once again most of these had a short life, either being banned as subversive
publications or unable to finance their continued existence. The Irish Freedom which commenced monthly publication in 1939 and changed its name to the Irish Democrat in 1945, is the organizational voice of the Connolly Association. This organization claims, without very much real justification, (its origins are examined in a subsequent section of this thesis) to be a successor to the Irish Self Determination League. At the start of my research I read every issue of these two papers between 1939 and 1974, intending to do a detailed study of the Connolly Association, which proved impossible to carry out for a number of reasons. This reading period was not however wasted as the papers occasionally published material pertaining to the Irish in Britain during the first third of this century and in particular published accounts of the League by former members which were quite informative. The Irish Post which began weekly publication in 1970 is a general publication aimed at covering the entire spectrum of interest within the Irish community in Britain and has a readership of almost half a million, making it an extremely influential publication in the community. It has also published very useful historical pieces and has played an important part in my research.

Many researchers have sought information from newspaper readers by writing letters appealing for help with their research to editors. This can be an extremely productive means of research if two problems can be overcome. The researcher, first has to persuade an editor that the
nature of the research is sufficiently likely to appeal to readers as to justify space in the letters column and usually as there are far more letters than space, this will be at the expense of other letters often dealing with contemporary events. Even when this hurdle is surmounted, there is still the problem of the actual readers themselves and their reading content preference. In the course of my journalistic career I have learnt that whether one's article is read in its entirety by readers is usually dependent on the opening paragraph which either seizes their attention or looses it; hence eye catching headlines and snappy introductions. Even more chasteningly, I have seen internal readership surveys which reveal that many readers do not even scan all the editorial content, so some never even get as far as that crucial opening paragraph. Many readers so not seem even to turn to the letters column and few appear to read those placed, with much smaller captions beneath the more prominently displayed letters; so unfortunately the researcher's letter may not be read by those who could provide the necessary information\(^1\). I was substantially more fortunate in my own research; discovering that the British Library did not have file copies of the *Irish Post* for the early years, I approached the editor for permission to consult his office file copies. Not only did he very helpfully provide a desk in his office to consult the

\(^1\) If the majority of readers do not even look at the letters column, then why have such a feature? Editors regard letter columns as a 'service facility' and a cheap means of market research.
early issues but suggested I should write articles based on my research for the *Irish Post*. The first of these was luckily awarded a feature writing prize and the subsequent publicity brought my research and information requirements to the attention of many of the Irish in Britain. With my articles always given a full tabloid size page and sometimes the entire double centrefold spread, I had a much better chance of attracting the readers attention than tucked away in the letters column. I always concluded my articles with an appeal for further information on the particular subject and the response was always very good. Some of my articles, notably on the Irish in Britain and their military service in the First World War, the Irish in Britain and the 1916 Rising and the Paris Irish Race Congress of 1922, with all its implications for the position of the overseas Irish communities, generated a very informative on-going debate within the letters column that continued for weeks. Other readers wrote personally to me about their own personal memories or related their parents' experiences, and much valuable information was obtained in this manner. Even those who wrote intending to criticize my articles; and that old maxim 'you can't please all the people all the time' is particularly applicable to journalism, often kindly included the necessary information to correct my mistakes, committed as a result of the earlier non-availability of this
information. As a result of these articles I was able to personally interview a small but highly important number of old Irish Self Determination League, IRA and Sinn Fein members.

Interview Methodology

Thompson has commented on the problems inherent in conducting historical research through personal interviews with participants involved in the events so I will only briefly comment on the particular problems I encountered. These centred around the advanced age of the interviewees; the youngest was seventy three, the oldest eighty six and unfortunately recollection of events that occurred over sixty years ago cannot be expected to be perfect or unaffected by subsequent events which altered earlier perceptions. I found that the production of a tape recorder or even a note book often affected the earlier spontaneity of the recollections so in these cases I dispensed with such tools, relying on my memory to write up the interview immediately after it was completed. In later interviews I was able to use a micro-cassette recorder hidden in my pocket, connected to a very discreet tiny external microphone. Most of the interviewees had contacted me after reading my Irish Post articles and the others I had approached, furnished with recommendations from contemporaries of theirs. I formed the distinct impression that the way I had written those

1 P. Thompson, 'Memory and History', SSRC Newsletter, 6 (June 1969), 16-18.
articles was a distinct factor in the decision to contact me. Most talked freely of their experiences, even the IRA but it was noticeable that those who had been members of the Irish Republican Brotherhood were less inclined to discuss that particular organization; such is the power of that oath sworn at least sixty years ago. My youngest interviewee more than compensated for his lack of detailed personal knowledge of the pre-1922 period with his own personal manuscript. I discontinued one interview with the widow of an IRA officer when I realized she had not known of his military activities and that to tell an old woman facing death herself, that her husband had been personally responsible for a number of deaths would only have caused her unnecessary worry.

1 General Sean MacEoin, one of the most senior IRB leaders, refused to publish his typescript autobiography on the grounds to do so would violate the IRB oath of silence, see Padraic O'Farrell, The Sean MacEoin Story, (Cork, 1981), 16.

John Feehan, Who Killed Michael Collins, (Cork, 1982), in his Preface claims that he encountered much opposition when he tried to prove the IRB's involvement in Field Marshal Wilson's assassination.

2 The "here's a few words I wrote about my early life" turned out to be a hand written 14,000 word manuscript which I had typed up for him and retained with his permission a copy for my own use. This manuscript hereafter cited as the Harry O'Brien MS, may lack, due to the author's relative youth, the type of organizational detail an older person would have known but it makes up for this with its portrait of everyday life in the Irish community in London between the First and Second World Wars.
The problems presented by secondary sources

"No historian can feel perfectly safe in adopting the results of another's work, as may be done in the established sciences, for he does not know whether these results have been obtained by trustworthy methods."

Unfortunately while Langlois and Sernobos' observation serves as a warning to carefully evaluate all secondary source material, it clearly shows its 19th century origins when in many fields it was still feasible for researchers to personally check all the documents and sources used by others. Modern researchers just cannot do this, especially within the prescribed time limits established for completing a PhD thesis. After the time consuming process of searching through the archives; how one wishes for a guide to material in British and Irish Government records of use for a study of the Irish in Britain like Calkin's guide to the American archives, or MacGiolla's guide to the Dublin Archives; reading the newspapers and ploughing through the memoirs and supplementary works of the period in the effort to reconstruct the history of the defunct organization. It is simply not possible to follow the same procedure for


other organizations; one might wish to use as a comparison. So the existing published studies of these have to be resorted to even though organizational studies seem to be particularly prone to highly subjective analysis and even occasionally outright bias. This problem is particularly acute when the author is either totally opposed to or totally enchanted with the particular organization and the ideological position it represents.

Lane in her very revealing examination of the various studies of the 'Molly Maguires' (the Irish American radical miners organization) has revealed both significant differences and an over reliance on the mineowners and Pinkertons' records at the expense of Molly sources¹. Bernstein² also comments on this problem, which was particularly noticeable in the heavily value laden studies of American Communism and Socialism during the 'cold war'³. While at the opposite end of this spectrum few histories of the Communist parties written by members, approach Gramsci's 'iconographic' requirement⁴, being

either simply Stalinist hagiography\textsuperscript{1} or at best factual but turgid, uncritical accounts like Klugman's\textsuperscript{2}. These problems have largely been avoided in Ireland as there are virtually no organizational histories for the 1916-26 decade. Thus there are no proper studies of the IRA, Sinn Fein and the Free State Army for this crucial period in Irish history; an omission that owes much to Rose's observation,

"Ireland is almost a land without history because the troubles of the past are relived as contemporary events\textsuperscript{3}.

The violence of the last decade in the North of Ireland has not only spilled across the border onto the streets of Southern Irish towns; it has substantially influenced contemporary Irish historical research itself. Until a decade ago the term Civil War as used by Irish historians in their journal, \textit{Irish Historical Studies}, invariably meant not the fratricidal conflict of sixty years ago but the 17th century extension of the Civil War in

\textsuperscript{1} See Franco Andreucci and Malcolm Sylvers, 'The Italian Communists Write Their History', \textit{Science and Society}, 40(1976), 28-56, for an illuminating account of traditional Communist party histories.


\textsuperscript{3} Richard Rose quoted in Frank Burton, 'Ideological and Social Relations in Northern Ireland', \textit{British Journal of Sociology}, 30(1979), 61-80.
England. This virtual exclusion of the War of Independence period from the subject field of Irish historical research could perhaps be justified by accepting an extremely narrow definition of what constitutes historical interest. Historians could to some extent justify their avoidance of this critical period not by frankly admitting their reluctance to investigate the state's 'official mythology' but by arguing researchers should wait until the official archives were opened to inspection. Though this argument should not have precluded the systematic collection, collation, evaluation and analysis of the potentially extremely valuable personal reminiscences of participants.

But when the archives were opened, first the British and then the Irish, the political environment had greatly changed. Interpretations of the 1916 Rising; an episode in which a small group with no popular mandate; indeed their activities were in clear defiance of majority opinion, attempted a coup with the result that many more innocent civilians became casualties than the participants, are bound to be affected by the contemporary ongoing political violence in Ireland today. The furore caused by Robert Kee's television series on Irish history clearly illustrates this point. "It is the sort of nationalistic history we academicians thought we were educating people out of" said Professor Donald McCartney denouncing the series. He accused Kee of adopting "a typically English liberal approach to Irish history in attributing British Governmental reform to Irish violence" which he claimed supported the "caricature of Irish history promoted by the
Provisional IRA\(^1\).

Yet there is much evidence to justify Kee's historical interpretation of the evolution of Anglo-Irish relations; if McCartney wishes to formulate a different hypothesis then he and other like minded researchers will have to conduct an exhaustive search for evidence that will substantiate a reinterpretation of the manner by which Southern Ireland achieved statehood. Otherwise the process of historical reeducation will merely replace one 'official mythology' with another\(^2\). In a situation where historians seem increasingly pressurized by official and media opinion makers to interpret their research primarily in the light of contemporary events, then it is perhaps not surprizing that most of the recent works dealing with the crucial but topically sensitive 1919-23 period have come from the pens of non Irish born writers, like Curran's\(^3\) and Calton Younger's\(^4\) detailed studies of the Civil War, a particularly sensitive period, resolutely ignored by many Irish historians. The work of Hatchey\(^5\)

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2. This concern has been publicly expressed by two leading Irish historians; Liam de Paor; see the *Irish Press*, 20 April, 1976, and Gearoid O. Tuaithaigh, Ibid, 2 Sept. 1976.


and Dangerfield\textsuperscript{1} is essential for those wishing to really understand the Anglo-Irish War of Independence while the English historian Townsend's\textsuperscript{2} seminal study of British military policies during this period provides an invaluable account of an episode previously only told from the Irish point of view. Rumpf's\textsuperscript{3} pioneering study of the social and economic influences behind this struggle stands on a pinnacle of its own, towering over the barren wasteland that is twentieth century Irish social history. And even the most stimulating biographies of the principal participants are the works of outsiders\textsuperscript{4}. Conor Cruise O'Brien, a leading proponent of the new revisionist school of Irish historiography, has suggested that Irish history is "tribal history"\textsuperscript{5}; more accurately it has essentially been a conflict between rival nationalisms and internal disagreements over the manner in which these two nationalisms should be politically expressed. Yet while Irish nationalism was the official creed of the new Irish state, the ideology of this nationalism remained unexplored

\textsuperscript{1} George Dangerfield, The Damnable Question: A Study in Anglo-Irish Relations, (Boston, 1976).
\textsuperscript{3} Erhard Rumpf and A.C. Heburn (trans.), Nationalism and Socialism in Twentieth Century Ireland, (Liverpool, 1977).
\textsuperscript{5} Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, (1972).
until very recent years when the appearance of works by Cronin¹, Boyce² and Garvin³ indicated a growing academic interest in this crucial topic. The interpretation of these rival nationalisms has particularly divided Irish Marxist historians; in a manner not seen in most other countries, with their ongoing debate focussing around the legitimacy of the Northern Ireland separate political development⁴.

With the notable exception of the above scholarly works, most of the published Irish works on the 1916-23 period that I have consulted belong to what I call the 'bang, bang' school of Irish historiography, comprising the memoirs, both in book and newspaper article format⁵ of


2 D.G. Boyce, *Nationalism in Ireland*, (Dublin, 1982).


4 The different Marxian interpretations of Northern Irish loyalism and the subsequent creation of a separate state can be seen from a comparison of Michael Farrell, *Northern Ireland: The Orange State* (1980); its title firmly places this work in the Irish Republican Socialist camp, and the work of Paul Bew, Peter Gibbons and Henry Patterson,*The State in Northern Ireland, 1921-1972*, (Manchester, 1980) and Peter Gibbons,*The Origin of Ulster Unionism*, who accept the legitimacy of the loyalist's demand for their separate state.

5 Newspaper serializations of participants memoirs were particularly common in Ireland during the early 1950's, a period of renewed official agitation on the Partition issue, but these accounts appeared much less frequently after 1956 when the IRA once again started to pursue its own anti-Partition policy with a Border Campaign.
the participants. Heggoy in his study of the Algerian War of Independence, a conflict with many parallels to Ireland's, has commented on the problem of finding non-committed source material. In Ireland there are additional problems relating to the circumstances in which the war was fought and its tragic aftermath of Civil War. The Irish struggle was largely fought in a highly decentralized manner and while most of the participants are too modest to inflate their own personal contributions, parochial pride has led them to emphasize local unit activities at the expense of the broader picture. Few participants, with the notable exception of Ernie O'Malley, have embodied any tactical analysis into their memoirs, but their greatest failing is often their selectivity; usually expressed not so much as the deliberate omission of events than of entire periods. The break up of the IRA in 1922; the brutal severing of friendships in the fratricidal strife that followed left many participants unwilling to include this period in their memoirs. Even almost sixty years later, when the bitterness engendered by the conflict has substantially mellowed into a recognition by the surviving participants

1 A. Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counter Insurgency in Algeria*, (1972) XI-XII.


that their opponents had honour on their side too. Comerford who supported the Treaty and Deasy who actively led the struggle against it, still felt themselves unable to include their Civil War experiences in their recent memoirs. Desmond Fitzgerald, whose position as the first Free State Minister for External Affairs afforded him much knowledge on the break up of the Irish Self Determination League, unfortunately decided to stop his memoirs in 1916 so as not to "set down anything which might lay bare old wounds".

Henri Michel, the doyen of European Second World War resistance researchers has scathingly referred to the problem of the 'camphorated', those who joined the resistance in the final days of the German Occupation. In Ireland this type of person was known as a 'trucileer'; who joined the IRA in such numbers that 40,000 of the 55,000 applications for Independence War Pensions were summarily rejected as their 'service' had occurred after the July 1921 Truce. Comerford has referred to the

Uinseann MacEoin, Survivors, (Dublin, 1981), spoilt an otherwise good book by deciding not to interview those who supported the Treaty.


4 See Wolfe Tone Weekly, 5 March, 1938.
problem facing authors who have been beset by people falsely claiming IRA active service but the small size of the country and the paradoxical openness of the 'secret' IRA has with one exception saved Irish readers from home spun 'Penkovskies'. However the following three titles, *Was John Keogh an Informer*, *Was John Keogh an Informer - a reply to Fr Finnegan* and *The Reality of the Anglo-Irish War 1920-21 in West Cork, Refutations, Corrections And Comments on Liam Deasy's Towards Ireland Free*, indicate the nature of the problems involved in sorting out the disputed claims and counter claims honestly advanced by participants and researchers alike. These works contain only a few scattered references to the Irish in Britain during the 1916-26 period and there

1 Comerford, op. cit. 929.
2 Sean O'Callaghan's *The Easter Lily. The Story of the IRA*, (1956) seemed to include much more material than most other works on the IRA in Britain, but the veracity of this information is overshadowed by one reviewer who called it 'a worthless book that cannot be recommended on any grounds', *(Irish Independent, 6 April, 1957)* while Bowyer Bell, op. cit. 461 suggests this reviewer "was being kind".
3 As all the popular newspapers in Ireland devote an amount of space found only in the British 'quality' press to book reviews, approximate knowledge of a books contents reach a far greater audience than the actual book sales might indicate.
4 The Penkovsky Papers, (1965) purporting to be the diary of Colonel Oleg Penkovsky, a British agent in Russia, were a CIA concoction, see Chapman Pincher, op. cit. 189.
7 Tom Barry, *(Tralee, 1974).*
is virtually no published literature with the exception of a few articles in the Capuchin Annual and An T-Oglach (the old IRA paper) specifically dealing with this issue. Padraic O'Farrell's recent *Who's Who in the War of Independence* only includes 13 British names in his several hundred long list. Brady is the only participant to have published in book form his experiences in the IRA in Britain but unfortunately the veracity of his book has been seriously questioned by his former commanding officer. 'IRA Pension' applications from the British based volunteers which would surely provide much valuable information have never been released, but Ernie O'Malley who was asked by some British applicants to substantiate their service records did personally interview these IRA members and thus preserved their valuable recollections for posterity.

Few researchers have studied the other Diaspora Irish in Australia, S. Africa and Canada during this period. There is of course a very comprehensive body of literature


3 See Hugh Early's review of Brady's book in which he refutes Brady's involvement in many of the Liverpool IRA actions he describes, "his tenure of office as Acting OC lasted one week and then a solitary detective called and thus ended Mr Brady's career of glory as a Sinn Fein gunman". *An Poblacht*, 3 March, 1928.

4 P17/b/100.
on the Irish American response to events in Ireland during 1916-26, but their position in America was substantially different to the situation of the Irish communities living in the British Empire Dominions. For comparative purposes the Diaspora Irish community whose situation embodied the closest parallels to the Irish in Britain were the Canadian Irish. They too also lived in a country where the majority of the population supported the link with Britain and like the Irish in Britain they too had experienced considerable hostility as a result of the military activities of their compatriots; for Canada was three times in the late 1860's invaded by Fenian expeditions from across the border. This episode because of its military significance and its effect on the development of the Confederation of the Canadian Provinces has been well documented by Canadian historians. Unfortunately researchers have not shown the same interest in studying the Irish Canadian response to the Anglo-Irish War of Independence, an unfortunate omission as the Canadian Self Determination League encountered considerable hostility from British supporters. Davis' study of the New Zealand Irish, while providing useful

1 Much of this literature is directly cited where relevant in this thesis.

2 I have personally read over twenty works on this topic, and some of the more useful ones are listed in a subsequent chapter.

3 A systematic search through Canadian journals revealed only one article on this period, John W. Boyle, 'A Fenian Protestant in Canada: Robert Lindsay Crawford 1919-22', Canadian Historical Review, 52(1971), 165-76.
insights, is largely devoted to the pre-1900 period. and while the 1916-22 period is somewhat better documented across the Tasman Sea, it is difficult to effectively distinguish the influence of events from the growing strength of Australian Nationalism on such key issues as the 1916 Anti-Conscription movement.

The problem in trying to compare the Irish in Britain to the rest of the Diaspora Irish is that one is effectively forced to use the work of others who may often have conducted their research with rather different objectives than my own. This problem also materialized when I was investigating the influence of the 1916-22 events in Ireland and Britain on the position of Irish Catholics in Britain. This was such a sensitive period in the history of British Catholicism that North deliberately excluded it from his research on the Catholic Press; and with even such a distinguished Catholic historian as Denis Gwynn vastly exaggerating the influence of the appointment of a Catholic as Irish Viceroy in bringing about the 1921 Anglo-Irish settlement. I found it necessary to conduct my own lengthy investigation into the Irish influence on Catholicism in Britain.

3 North, op. cit.
4 Denis Gwynn, A Hundred Years of Catholic Emancipation 1829-1929, (1929), 262, says of the appointment of Viscount Fitzalan as the first Catholic Viceroy in Ireland,
The relatively recent emergence of a real Irish Sociology; for many years Sociology in Ireland was no more than the academic wing of Catholic Social Action\(^1\) has effectively minimized the appearance of sociological interpretations of Irish history. Studies of the socio-economic composition of Irish political movements have largely been confined to Rumpf's already noted pioneering work, Clark's study of the Land League\(^2\), Gibbon's analysis of the origins of Ulster Unionism, Fitzpatrick's seminal research of the National Struggle in one Irish county\(^3\), and Larsen and Snoddy's valuable occupational analysis of the 1916 Rising participants\(^4\). Unfortunately Padraic O'Farrell, whose service in the Irish Army appears to have given him access to records not available to other researchers, has omitted the occupational details of the participants listed in his already noted *Who's Who*.

"within a few months of his arrival in Ireland, the situation improved remarkably and the policy of conciliation succeeded in producing a settlement which had never been even sought in the preceding years". This interpretation of the ending of the War of Independence is not supported by most other historians. Cardinal Logue who opposed the IRA, declared, "we would as soon have a Catholic hangman" than a Catholic Viceroy (Comerford, op. cit. 602), while the London IRA tried to hang the new Viceroy, see P17/B/100.

1 Social Studies, the Irish Sociological Journal was for many years called Christus Rex.


3 Gibbons, op. cit.


So my own socio-economic occupational analysis of both the leadership and rank and file members of the Irish Self Determination League may hopefully make a useful contribution to the development of a sociological interpretation of Irish history. The foregoing discussion of my wide range of research sources and account of the methodological problems involved in using the different types of sources has I believe established that I have left no stone unturned in my attempt to reconstruct the political activity of the Irish in Britain during the 1916-26 decade.
CHAPTER 3

The Political Sociology of the Irish in Britain
1916-1923: Some Theoretical Considerations

The three principal theoretical areas of interest in my research are (1) Nationalism, (2) Ethnicity and Assimilation and (3) Organizational Sociology. This third sphere will be treated in substantially more detail than the other two as my research is constructed around a study of an Irish political organization, the Irish Self Determination League.

Anthony Smith, a very prolific writer on the theme of nationalism, has observed, "sociologists from Comte and Marx to Parsons and Dahrendorf have neglected nationalism".1 His criticism is particularly applicable to Ireland, where as we have earlier observed in our consideration of methodological problems, the sphere of nationalism and its associated ideology has remained almost totally unexplored until the recent works of Cronin,2 Boyce3 and Garvin4. The historian, E.H. Carr specifically located the concept of the nation and its associated, ideological concept of nationalism to "certain periods of history and to certain parts of the world".5

1 Anthony, D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism, (1971), 3.
2 Sean Cronin, op. cit.
3 D.G. Boyce, op. cit.
4 Tom Garvin, op. cit.
Smith believes that historians have an overall better track record in researching nationalism than sociologists though they have been equally unable to explain the phenomenon. Smith complains that traditionally sociologists have simply interpreted nationalism as a reaction or response to societal tensions, particularly during modernization. He identifies three broad usages of nationalism by sociologists:

(1) As a nation building factor.

(2) Equated with national sentiment.

(3) Specifically perceived as an ideology.

Smith himself defines nationalism as an "ideological movement, for the attainment and maintenance of self government and independence on behalf of a group, some of whose members conceive it to constitute an actual or potential nation like others."

Smith unlike other writers like Kedourie sees nationalism


3 Anthony D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism, op. cit. 171.

as an important socially integrative force. Marxists also tended to disapprove of nationalism and as Davis has observed perhaps Engel's greatest contribution towards the evolution of Marxism was to steer Marx himself away from his pronounced "leanings towards racialism", though the rise of the anti colonial national liberation movements has generated anew Marxist interest in Nationalism. In Ireland as Rumpf has eloquently demonstrated, the socio-economic and cultural environment was generally antagonistic towards the emergence of a dominant socialist revolutionary tradition. Some socialists did play a leading role in the Irish anti colonial struggles: Davis regards James Connolly's, the executed 1916 Rising leader, fusion of socialism with democratic nationalism as establishing the pattern pursued by many later Third World National Liberation Movements but generally speaking the socialists were


3 Rumpf, op. cit.

4 See Horace B. Davis, Nationalism and Socialism, op. cit., 126.
subsumed into the nationalist movement rather than controlling it. According to Gross the long history of Poland's struggle for national self determination has generated an 'Insurrectionist' ethos which has evolved into a cultural complex reflected in the country's value attitudes, personality and general political life, glorifying insurrectionism in its art, literature, architecture and music etc. A similar all embracing nationalist ethos has emerged in Ireland and the Polish and Irish revolutionary traditions converge in other directions also. In Poland the original leaders of the Nationalist movement were the aristocracy but their leading role and participation sharply declined following the 1864 emancipation of the serfs and the growing convergence of Russian and Polish commerce and industrial development. In Ireland the original proponents of Republicanism, the most progressive aspect of the Irish nationalist tradition were the predominantly Ulster based Protestant Dissenters of the United Irishmen whose

1 See Michael Gallagher, 'Socialism and the Nationalist Tradition in Ireland, 1798-1918', Eire-Ireland, 12 (1977), 63-102, for a concise account of the socialist contribution in the Irish national revolutionary movement.


3 Interestingly the current 'revisionist' movement in Ireland seeking to 'demilitarize' Irish history and culture has close parallels with the similar Polish 'Positivist' movement of the late 19th century, ibid, 126-7.

4 See Anthony D. Smith, Theories of Nationalism, op. cit. 127.
Rising in 1798 was greatly influenced by the ideology of the French Revolution. But the uneven Irish industrialization process subsequently created the very close interlocking relationship between Northern Irish and British capitalism that generated the economic base for a separatist state.

While economic factors underpinned the emergence of the rival and deeply antagonistic nationalisms in Ireland their primary ideological expressions centred around religious identification, Protestantism in the case of the Ulster pro-British element and Catholicism for Irish Nationalism. Dr O'Donnell, the Australian leader of the constitutional and non-violent United Irish League, expressed this symbiotic relationship between Irish Nationalism and Catholicism in his wish,

"I want my descendants to know and feel though Australians by birth and fealty, they are Irish in blood. I wish them also to be unflinching in their fidelity to the Catholic faith. It ought to be part of their nature like their

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2 See Frank Wright, 'Protestant Ideology and Politics in Ulster', *Archives Europeenes De Sociologie*, 14 (1973), 213-80, for an interesting discussion of the role of Protestantism in forming the ideological foundations of the Northern Irish state, and also see John Darby, *Conflict in Northern Ireland: The Development of a Polarised Community*, (Dublin, 1976).
nationality. Because they are Irish, they ought to be proud to be Catholic and they ought to be truly Catholic because they are Irish.  

Herberg's dictum, "to be a Catholic was to be a true Irishman, to be an Irishman was to be a true Catholic" is strikingly similar to the old Hungarian proverb, "To be a Magyar was to be a Calvinist". In both cases religion and nationality were juxtaposed on a 'Millet' type basis. Patrick O'Farrell goes so far as to claim that Catholicism has been a more important influence on Irish history than nationalism and O'Day, while arguing that in the late 19th century the immigrant Irish community in Britain formed a sub-culture within British society, claims it was "religion rather than nationality (that) proved the greatest informal hurdle. The Protestant Irish had always been assimilated without difficulty and the way was also clear for those Irish Catholics who eschewed their religion."

1 Quoted in Niall Brennan, Dr Mannix, (Adelaide, 1964), 66.


4 The Turkish or Ottoman Empire abscribed citizenship on a 'Millet' basis, with full citizenship only given to those practising the state religion, Islam, see W. Cahnmann, Sociology and History, (New York; 1964), 272, also see his 'Religion and Nationality', American Journal of Sociology, 49(1943/4), 524-9.


I am not entirely convinced that the Protestant Irish in Scotland and Lancashire were so easily assimilated but certainly O'Day correctly observes that the Catholic religion was a barrier towards assimilation in a Protestant country.

Long before the Reformation there existed deep religious tensions between Ireland and England stemming from their structurally different modes of religious organizations, with Ireland having a monastic system closely paralleling its clan based socio-economic system and following a pattern of worship based more on the Eastern Orthodox rite\(^1\) than the Roman system adopted—after the defeat of the Irish missionaries—in England\(^2\). The ostensible reason for the first English invasion of Ireland was the issuing of the Bull Laudabiltur in 1155 by the English Pope Adrian IV empowering Henry II to 'Romanize' the Irish Catholic Church\(^3\). Kennedy suggests the result of this English Catholic intervention in

\(^1\) For early Irish Catholicism see K. Hughes, Early Christian Ireland: An Introduction to the Sources (1972), and the more concise, less specialized, account by Maire and Liam de Paor, Early Christian Ireland, (1964).

\(^2\) Northern England was converted by Irish missionaries but Southern England was a Roman province and in 633 AD the Irish influence was defeated at the Synod of Whitby, see Joseph F. Kelly, 'Irish Influence in England After The Synod of Whitby', Eire-Ireland, 10 (1975), 35-47.

\(^3\) For the early Norman invasions of Ireland see G. Orpen, Ireland Under The Normans, 3 vols., (1968).
Ireland generate such bitter resentment that "if England had remained Catholic, the Irish would have become Protestant". One result of the Reformation was a considerable legitimization of the periodic Irish struggles to regain their freedom from England with Ireland becoming part of the European anti-Protestant coalition against England. Irish Catholicism thus became identified as an implacable threat to the English Protestant state, and the employment of Irish Catholic troops by the pro-Catholic James II was a key factor in launching the 'Glorious Protestant Revolution of 1688'. Even in the pre-mass immigration period the Irish Catholics living in England were periodically subjected to large scale attacks by Protestants and if these occurrences were not so prevalent during the mass Irish immigration of the 19th century, it was the result more of improved policing methods, than any fundamental lessening of anti-Irish feeling.


2 Hugh Shepe, the London agent of William of Orange, skillfully played on the English xenophobia with his 'stories' of whole towns laid waste by the 'child eating Irish' see the Irish Post, 3 June, 1972.


4 Dorothy George, London Life in the 18th Century, (1925), 133, claims the Irish in London were regarded as a police problem, a sanitary problem, a poor law problem and an industrial problem. Sheridan Gilley, 'English Attitudes to the Irish in England, 1790-1900' in C. Holmes (edt) Immigrants and Minorites in British...contd.
Heiberg has postulated a theory of Nationalism for the Basques, a nationality with many parallels with the Irish, and Smith has constructed an elaborate theoretical framework of the diverse types of nationalism, but several of his non-theoretically formulated observations are I believe much more relevant to my research than any theoretical critique, "It is impossible to tie nationalism to the aspirations of any social groups in a consistent manner" and his views that the "emigrant is the man (so) lightly touched by nationalism" that "emigrants do not generally make good nationalists" will be empirically investigated in my concluding chapter. Smith's observation that "the emigrant exchanges one potential nationalism for another, but usually over generations, and without a clear perception of the process" is extremely relevant to any consideration of the assimilation process.

Very few sociologists, if any, today would agree with

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1 Marianne Heiberg 'Insiders, Outsiders: Basque Nationalism'. Archives Europeenes de Sociologie, 16 (1975),169-93.
2 Anthony D. Smith, 'Theories and Types of Nationalism'. Archives Europeenes De Sociologie, 10 (1969), 119-32.
3 Ibid. Theories of Nationalism op. cit., 132.
4 Ibid, 139
6 Ibid, 140.
Zangwill view of the "inevitability" of assimilation\(^1\); the flood of works investigating the position of long-established ethnic groups in America from Glazer and Moynihan's 'discovery', twenty years ago, that the United States was still a multi-ethnic society\(^2\) to Novak's rather strident proclamation of a 'new ethnicity' among the 4th generation descendents of the 19th century immigrants\(^3\) bears eloquent witness to the non-inevitability of the assimilation process. There are numerous definitions of assimilation but Sauvy's view that, "assimilation is achieved when a former immigrant or his descendants can no longer be distinguished from other nationals and are no longer conscious of their original characteristics"\(^4\) and Gordon's concept of assimilation as the "development of a sense of Peoplehood based exclusively on the Host Society"\(^5\) indicate that assimilation is a long term process; very unlikely as Patterson has observed to be completed in one generation\(^6\). Gordon breaks down the assimilation

process into seven sub processes which can be subsumed into two primary categories, behavioural assimilation or acculturation and structural assimilation, the ethnic distribution in the societal socio-economic system, and argues that once these two processes occur all others follow automatically\(^1\). Parreti\(^2\) and Gallo\(^3\) argue that assimilation is virtually synomous with structural assimilation but Bierstedt regards assimilation instead as being synomous with acculturation\(^4\), while Jones bluntly rejected the entire concept of structural assimilation in his argument that the only difference between the Irish in Britain and the indigenous inhabitants is their lower socio-economic status\(^5\). Richmond\(^6\) has suggested that the concept of structural assimilation has outlived its usefulness and certainly an additional factor is necessary when considering groups like the Irish in America who have above median income, educational attainment and occupational distribution levels\(^7\).

1 Gordon, ibid, 71-83.


5 Philip Jones, The Segregation of Immigrant Communities in the City of Birmingham, (Hull University Department of Geography, 1961).


Castles and Kosack in their monumental study of immigrant workers in Europe totally refute the use of concepts like 'host society', 'adaptation', 'integration', 'assimilation', arguing instead that, immigrants do not adapt to, but are 'assigned' to socio-economic positions in a non-equalitarian society. They have very usefully positioned the immigrant within the total social order, unlike most American researchers who have traditionally been over-preoccupied with 'culturalism'. Lieberson however postulated that cultural distinctions were explicable in terms of environmental differences while Yancey, Ericksen and Julian regard American ethnic groups as the structural products of industrialization and urbanization. Gallo's view that "the Ethnic sub-society is created by the inter-section of the vertical stratifications of Ethnicity with the horizontal stratifications of social class that we call Ethni-Class" is a very valuable linking of ethnicity to the wider social system but it does require some definition of what we mean by the terms ethnicity and ethnic.

1 Castles and Kosack, op. cit. 1-6.


5 Gallo. op. cit. 22.
Ethnicity as Horowitz has salutarily reminded Glazer and Moynihan is not a "new word". Pareto may have brusquely dismissed the term "ethnic as one of the vaguest known to sociology" but Weber devoted considerable attention to ethnic groups:

"we shall call ethnic groups those human groups that entertain a subjective belief in their common descent because of similarities of physical type or of customs or both, or because of memories of colonization and migration; this belief must be important whether or not an objective blood relationship exists. Ethnic membership "Gemeinsarkeit" differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social actions like the latter."

Weber's concept of group consciousness generating social circles, or as he called them, "Soziale Verkehrsgemeinschaft" has influenced Barth's concept of 'ethnic boundaries' which also resembles some of Marx's earlier work on nationalism. Molohon, Paton and Lambert have elaborated on Barth's work in their focus on ethnic persistence rather than acculturation and assimilation.

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4 See Frederik Barth, Ethnic Groups and Boundaries, (Boston, 1969).

5 For example, see Karl Marx's 'Essays on the Jewish Question' in T.B. Bottomore (edt), Karl Marx: Early Writings, (New York, 1964), 3-40.

Yancey, Eriksen and Julian have complained that American research on ethnicity has been dominated by the ongoing assimilationsist versus pluralism debate, with both arguments essentially resting on cultural foundations. Pluralists have virtually monopolized the ethnicity field of research though more recently Marxists like Saul have recognized the important role ethnicity plays in many societies particularly in the post-colonial era.  


2 Pluralism as a sociological school owes much of its origins to J.S. Furnivall, Colonial Policy and Practice, (Cambridge, 1948); its colonial ethos, (Furnivall was a colonial administrator) have been repeatedly attacked. John Rex, 'The Plural Society in Sociological Theory', British Journal of Sociology, 10(1954), 114-24, has strongly argued against its a-historical functionalist ignorance of socio-economic inequality and uneven power relationships, while Malcolm Cross has complained "Pluralism (is) used so widely as to be almost indefinable", see his introduction to the 'Special Issue on Pluralism', New Community, 1(1972) and his subsequent denunciation of its theoretical 'pretensions' and his claim that Pluralism is a typology not a theory; The Paradoxes of Pluralism: Theoretical and Empirical Explorations, Paper Presented at the World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, 18 August, 1978. Also see Martin Brennan, 'Race Relations and Underdevelopment in Malaysia', University of Surrey, Seminar Paper (November, 1980) for a stimulating critique of Pluralism.

3 See Orlando Patterson, 'Ethnicity and the Pluralist Fallacy', Change, 7(1975), 10-11, 4-7, and 70-72.

Hechter argues that ethnicity is not necessarily cultural linked and usefully classifies ethnicity research into two main categories.\(^1\)

1. 'Functionalist theory', as exemplified in Shils conceptualization of ethnicity as a "primordial sentiment"\(^2\) which declines in intensity as industrialization progresses.

2. 'Reactive theory', regarding ethnicity as the product of the saliency of cultural distinctiveness as exemplified in Barth's work\(^3\). Hechter in a very interesting example of the manner in which historical data can be used to test sociological hypotheses and concepts has examined these different interpretations by comparing the Celtic peripheral regions, Wales, Scotland and Ireland with England, to see whether industrialization did lead to a diminution of ethnicity in these peripheral regions. He concluded that the persistence of ethnic solidarity was not a 'primordial sentiment' but the manifestation of a 'high political consciousness'. Hechter postulates an 'internal colonialism' model in which industrialization actually increases the original exploitation of the peripheral ethnic groups, creating political cleavage lines based on ethnic divisions\(^4\).


\(^2\) Edward Shils 'Primordial, Personal, Sacred, and Civil Ties', British Journal of Sociology, 8 (1957), 130-45.

\(^3\) Barth, op. cit..

His methodology has been criticized by Page\(^1\) while Sloan has argued, with some justification, that Hechter's model does not provide a satisfactory explanation for the particularistic development of Ireland\(^2\) but nevertheless the internal colonialism\(^3\) model combined with Gallo's concept of the ethnic class does provide a useful working theoretical framework for my research of the Irish in Britain.

Thirty-five years ago, Francis employed the term ethnic group simply as the English equivalent of the corresponding German, Russian and Greek terms, Volksgruppe, Narod and Ethnos\(^4\) but since then researchers like Isajiw have defined ethnicity in a much more rigid and conceptually


\(^2\) See William N. Sloan, 'Ethnicity or Imperialism? A Review Article' Comparative Studies in Society and History, 21 (1979), 113-25, and also see Hechter's 'Response' to Sloan, ibid, 126-29.


\(^4\) See, E.K. Francis, 'The Nature of the Ethnic Group', American Journal of Sociology, 52 (1946/47), 393
tighter manner\(^1\). Etizoni has postulated the existence of different types of ethnicity from the 'totalistic' ghetto community to the much less encompassing 'situational' ethnicity\(^2\). Fitzpatrick, Kasard and Jannowitz have shown the importance of the community in the persistence of ethnic solidarity\(^3\) and while with the exception

\(^1\) W. Isajiw, 'Definitions of Ethnicity', Ethnicity 1 (1974), 111-24. Defines ethnicity as "an involuntary group of people who share the same culture or the descendents of such people who identify themselves and or are identified by others as belonging to the same involuntary group".


of some of the isolated mining villages of Lancashire, Fifeshire and South Wales, no 'totalistic' Irish ghetto communities can be said to have been in existence in Britain in the early 20th century; there were well established and defined Irish sub communities in many parts of Britain. Participation in St. Patrick's Day celebrations, Irish National Forrester and Ancient Order of Hibernian Church parades and an interest in Irish Home Rule and or Independence were all manifestations of 'situational ethnicity'. Smith's observation that it is quite possible to have a nationalism different than the nation of residence; and the concept of 'patria', or the sense of 'belonging' to the country of non-residence, which is an expression of a high level of ethnic consciousness, stem from Meinecke's dichotomy of the 'Staatsnation' (political identity and national citizenship) and the 'Kulturnation' (psychological nationalism). Together they help to explain the persistence of situational ethnicity beyond the first


3 Fredrich Meinecke Weldburgertum und Nationalstaat, (Berlin, 1919).
generation and as assimilation is a long terms social-psychological process, rarely completed in one generation, I expect to find in my research a high level of situational ethnicity manifestations among the Irish in Britain during the 1916-23 period.
Chapter 4
Towards a Sociology of Irish Political Organizations in Britain

Larsen and Snoddy, in one of the few attempts to analyze the socio-economic background of Irish revolutionary participants: suggest that social scientists have approached the study of revolutionary movements from three main directions\(^1\). Their first and second categories which they call the "socio economic or ecological approach"\(^2\) and the "historical-cultural approach"\(^3\) can be generally subsumed under a broader sociological category. But their third category, the "psychological or psychiatric approach"\(^4\) is a mode of investigation favoured by few sociologists, as most of the profession have rigidly, perhaps too rigidly, followed Durkheim's advice that, "the psychological factor is too general to predetermine the course of social phenomena. Since it does not call for one social form rather than another, it cannot explain any of them".\(^5\)

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1 Larsen and Snoddy, op. cit..
2 As exemplified they claim by, Ted Gurr Why Men Rebel (Princeton, 1970) and Peter Culvert, A Study of Revolution.
This Durkheimean inspired sociological rejection of the psychological contribution towards understanding social movements has inevitably generated a counter reaction on the part of psychologists as exemplified in Argyris' wholesale rejection of sociological interpretations of organizational activity in favour of a behaviourist social psychology. Yet as Archibald has observed:

"it is perhaps a reflection of the intellectual insecurity of social scientists that they spend an inordinate amount of time and energy defining the 'boundaries' of their respective fields, as if these were holy lands which have to be defended against expansive, barbaric and heathen invaders, .......

In Sociology this tendency expresses itself in the attempt to analyse social phenomena with a method which strictly excludes psychological theory and data."

Langer has made a similar plea to fellow historians, with perhaps more positive results than Archibald's call; if the pioneering work of Besancon, Mazlish, and Buckman can be considered, not merely as seminal studies,

3 William Langer called on historians to deepen their historical understanding by utilizing psychoanalytical interpretations, see 'The Next Assignment', The American Historical Review, LXIII (1958), 283-304.
4 Alain Besancon, 'Psychoanalysis: Auxilliary Science or Historical Method', Journal of Contemporary History, 3(1968), 149-62.
5 Bruce Mazlish, 'Group Psychology and Problems of Contemporary History', Journal of Contemporary History, 3(1968), 163-77.
but marking the formation of a new historical school. While Dixon's fascinating study of military disasters, hopefully indicates a new willingness by psychologists and psychiatrists to apply their expertise to new fields of exploration. My own experience in Irish political organizations has convinced me, that much of the internal disputes, petty bickering and internecine conflict, sometimes to the extent of bloody feuds, can often be understood in a more satisfactory and insightful manner from a psychological perspective rather than a mono sociological mode of interpretation and analysis. Social psychologists like Davies, and Toch have usefully examined the original impetus towards participation in revolutionary movements and the structures of these organizations while Urry in his work on 'Reference Groups' has combined psychological interpretations within an overall sociological framework. Armistead examined the applicability of social psychological studies to sociological research and certainly there is much to


2 "it is the dissatisfied state of mind rather than the tangible provision of 'adequate' or 'inadequate' supplies of food, equality or liberty which produces revolution" - James C. Davies, "Towards a Theory of Revolution", American Sociological Review, (1962), 6-19.


be said for the old London University Sociology degree course, that I did, which ensured that undergraduates had at least some knowledge of elementary social psychology through the enforced reading of Hollander and Hunt\textsuperscript{1}, and Glen\textsuperscript{2}. The work of social psychologists is perhaps most useful when it is used by sociologists as an aid to studying organizations and indeed the study of organizations by social psychologists like Harshburger\textsuperscript{3}, and Katz and Kahn\textsuperscript{4}, has become an important subdiscipline. While recognizing the validity of Blackler and Brown's\textsuperscript{5} criticisms, I tend to agree with Kunkel's argument that a behavioral approach to analysing social organizations does not necessarily lead to mere psychological reduct\textsuperscript{ionism}\textsuperscript{6}.

The valuable social psychological contribution to

\textsuperscript{1} Hollander and Hunt, Current Perspectives in Social Psychology, (New York, 1971).


organizational studies as exemplified by Pugh\textsuperscript{1} and Schein\textsuperscript{2} is particularly important for the study of radical political movements: a sphere, sadly neglected by most British sociologists. Benjamin Heinsman in his study of the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, observes that while many might categorize CARD as a traditional pressure group, he personally believes that the organization can hardly fit into the normal pressure group typology\textsuperscript{3} and certainly this observation is particularly applicable to organizations like the Irish Self Determination League, Sinn Fein, Irish Republican Army and the Irish Republican Brotherhood which hardly can be said to have operated according to Dillon's classical definition of pressure groups as "non partisan organizations of the people formed to exert influence upon the legislature, the Executive or other governmental agency through public opinion for the enactment or the rejection of certain legislation or for the adoption, modification or discontinuance of a public policy\textsuperscript{4}. The ISDL and Sinn Fein which resolutely refused all involvement in the British political system or the IRA and the IRB who actively endeavoured to overthrow that system can

\textsuperscript{1} D.S. Pugh, "Organizational Behaviour: An Approach from Psychology", Human Relations, 22(1969), 345-54.

\textsuperscript{2} E.H. Schein, Organizational Psychology, (New Jersey, 1965).

\textsuperscript{3} Benjamin Heinsman The Politics of the Powerless, the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination, (1972). XIV.

\textsuperscript{4} Mary Dillon, 'American Government and Political Pressure Groups' American Political Science Review, XXXVI(1942).
hardly be said to have much in common with Mackenzie's view of pressure groups as, "organized groups possessing both formal structure and real common interests, in so far as they influence the decisions of public bodies".

So unfortunately the rich vein of material on pressure groups offers few nuggets of value for my particular research.

British researchers have paid only the minimum of attention to political organizations which have either refused to become involved in the normative electoral system or do not fit into the traditional pressure group typology. With the exception of Thayer and more recently Fielding little academic interest has been shown in the reemergence of the extreme right, Fascist movement in Britain; while despite the substantial volume of research in the late 1960's and early 1970's into the position of ethnic groups in Britain, De Witt's study of the Indian Workers


Association remains one of the few published works on internal ethnic political organizational politics. I have searched, with no avail the entire series of the British Journal of Sociology in an effort to discover whether British sociologists expressed any interest in the prolonged decolonization process with its ensuing conflicts in Kenya, Cyprus, Aden, and even the longest of all the conflicts, Ireland, has only attracted a minimal research interest if publication in the Journal is any reliable indicator. It could perhaps be argued that Kenya and Aden were not sufficiently 'valid' problems to merit British sociological interest, though the presence of large immigrant Cypriot and Irish communities living in Britain at a time when some of their compatriots were waging a military struggle against the British Armed Forces, with all that implies for assimilation and indigenous societal reaction, might have been thought to have constituted an interesting sociological problem. British sociologists could with some justification argue that their non-familiarity with the countries background and lack of personal access to the Kenyan and Cyprus


2 David A. Roberts, 'The Orange Order in Ireland: A Religious Institution', *British Journal of Sociology*, 22(1971), 269, and Frank Burton, 'Ideological and Social Relations in Northern Ireland', *British Journal of Sociology*, 30(1979), 61-80, are the only two articles in the British Journal of Sociology dealing with Ireland while its less established rival has so far produced one article on Ireland, see Gary Easthop, 'Religious War in Northern Ireland', *Sociology*, 10(1976), 427-50.
conflicts precluded research. The same could not be said of British anthropologists, whose research was often encouraged by the colonial administrators yet as Berman\(^1\) and Krushner\(^2\) have shown, the few British anthropologists who did investigate the Kenyan conflict, simply agreed with the accepted opinion that the Mau Mau were merely a savage cult without a political ideology or even socio-economic objectives\(^3\).

This lack of British sociological interest in radical political organizations may possibly be a 'cold war' hangover and a rejection of the total instrumental type approach, particularly exhibited in the work of Americans like Almond who studied the "neurotic susceptibility to Communism"\(^4\) for the purpose of encouraging defection\(^5\).


3 For a revealing account of this episode in which the deaths of 11,503 Mau Mau, 95 Europeans, 1,920 'loyal Africans' and 29 Asians was largely ignored by British academics, see C.G. Rosberg, The Myth of Mau Mau: Nationalism in Kenya, (New York, 1966).


5 "If we can discover those aspects of the Communist experience which create dissatisfaction among party members and contribute to defection, we may be in a position to suggest the kinds of weaknesses and vulnerability which are to be found within the Communist movement". Ibid, IX.
At the other extreme of the research spectrum, Castles and Kosack frankly expressed their concern, for the manner in which their research might be used by governments and others as a justification for omitting all reference to immigrant organizational politics. In Britain, with the possible exception of the Pacifist/Nuclear Disarmament field of research interest, the study of radical or non-normative organizations has largely been confined to religious sects like the Watch Tower Movement, the Rastafarians or cults like Scientology and the Aetherius Society. Some of these

1 Castles and Kosack, op. cit., 9.
studies of course contribute knowledge¹ which is of use in analyzing radical political organizations but it would be preferable to have a specific body of British sociological research on these organizations rather than being forced to use other, often not strictly relevant information. Recently there have been some encouraging signs of an interest in radical political organization displayed by postgraduate researchers who have used their personal experience in the 'student protest' movement of the last 14 years as the basis for their higher degree work.² Lack of personal experience in, or access to radical political organization may possibly account for the earlier lack of British sociological research in this field. Many radical organizations either bluntly refuse to permit researchers access to their membership or else only make this available under tightly controlled conditions. Bouchier's comparative study of the International Marxist Group in Britain and the American Students for a Democratic Society was dependent on a scrutiny of the IMG's publications and an interview with one leader authorized to speak on

¹ For example, there is a useful review of organisational sociology in Britain in Robert Kenneth Jones, 'Sectarian Characteristics of Alcoholics Anonymous', Sociology, 4 (1970), 181-95.

behalf of the organization. I certainly do not disagree with his theoretical conclusions relating to the concepts of delegitimation, dis-alienation and commutation but would challenge his observation, based on his minimal personal knowledge of the organization, that the IMG is "more rational" than most other left organizations\(^1\): a conclusion not supported by the large quantity of their 'politbureau' (circulated only to their top leadership) documents that I obtained during a journalistic investigation of this organization.

In contrast to this relative paucity of British radical political organization investigations there is a wide and extensive volume of basic organizational studies which have generated useful material. Unfortunately, as both Schein's social psychological definition of an organization as the "rational co-ordination of the activities of a number of people for the achievement of some common explicit purpose or goal through division of labour and functions through a hierarchy of authority and responsibility"\(^2\) and Salaman's opinion that "a sociological approach to organizations addresses the question of the relationship between the design of work and control within employing organization and the


nature of the society within which they occur\textsuperscript{1} indicate
organizational studies have almost become synomous
with work studies\textsuperscript{2} and industrial sociology and psychology
as exemplified in the title of Silverman's seminal review\textsuperscript{3}
of the various school of organization theorists.\textsuperscript{4} Huber

\textsuperscript{1} Graeme Salaman, 'Towards a Sociology of Organizational
Yet in the first paragraph of his article Salaman
says, "this article is concerned to describe and
advocate a genuine sociology of organization structure,
to trace its major elements in the work of Weber and
Marx".

\textsuperscript{2} For an indication of the diversity of work studies
see, C. Perrow, 'Departmental Power and Perspective
In Industrial Firms' in M.N. Zald (edt) Power in
Organizations, (Vanderbilt, 1970), R. Likert,
The Human Organization, its Management and Values,
(New York, 1967), A. Chandler, Strategy and Structure,
Chapters in the History of the Industrial Enterprise,
(Massachusetts, 1961), M. Crozier, The Bureaucratic
Phenomena,(1964) and Denis Pym (edt) Industrial
Society,(1968).

\textsuperscript{3} David Silverman 'Formal Organizations or Industrial
Sociology: Towards a Social Action Analysis of
Organizations', Sociology,2 (1968), 221-38, an
interesting review of the various schools of thought
and also see David F. Gillespie and Denis S. Milet,
'Sociology of Organization', Current Sociology,
22 (1974), 189-200 and John Child, 'Organizational
Structure, Environment and Performance: The Role of
Strategic Choice', Sociology, 6 (1972), 1-22, For
critiques of the industrial dominance in this field.

\textsuperscript{4} For the various organizational theories see, D.S.
Pugh, 'Modern Organization Theory: A Psychological
and Sociological Study', Psychological Bulletin,
(1966), 235-51.
P.M. Blau 'Theories of Organizations' in The Interna­
tional Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,Vol. 2
(New York, 1968), 297-304.
V. Subramanram, 'The Classical Organization Theory
and its Critics', Public Administration,44 (1966),
435-46.
and W.L. Zwerman New Perspectives on Organization
Theory: An Empirical Reconstruction of the Classical
and Marxian Analyses, (Cann, 1970 ).
has ingenuously applied socio technological theory to analyzing the development of political consciousness among American women workers but in general the sociologist forced to use industrial orientated organizational studies as a theoretical base for an investigation of radical political organizations is faced with a task; resembling gold panning, a large mass of dross has to be painstakingly sifted through to reveal a few valuable theoretical and conceptual nuggets. J.E.T. Eldridge and A.D. Crombie's A Sociology of Organizations is one of the very few works in this field that actually lives up to the promise embodied in its title.

Most of these organizational studies centre around the manner in which organizations achieve, or attempt to achieve, their objectives, commonly termed "goals", and much of the debate around the formation of goals,

1 Joan Huber, 'Towards a Socio Technological Theory of the Women's Movement', Social Problems, 23 (1975/6), 371-85, an extremely interesting multi-disciplinary, biological, sociological, historical and political analysis.


relates to their motivation factors, whether they are basically the sum factor product of individual goals, as suggested by Georgiou\(^1\) or impersonal organizational goals as counter argued by Price\(^2\). Yet much of this discussion is seemingly needless for organizations rarely attain their assigned goals, as these are rarely unaffected by extra-organizational factors, being essentially an interactional process with an ever changing political, social and economic environment\(^2\). Hence, Freeman and Hannan,\(^3\) and Price\(^4\) argue, with much justification, that organizational research should focus, not on organizational efficiency in accomplishing assigned tasks but on their "effectiveness".

Industrially orientated organization studies unfortunately pay little attention to the recruitment of the organizational personnel as this is primarily affected by such factors as the competitiveness of the salary offered, the choice or non-choice of alternative jobs and the overall

1 Petro Georgiou, 'The Goal Paradigm and Notes Towards a Counter Paradigm', Administrative Science Quarterly, 18 (1973), 291-310, argues that organizational goals are simply the goals of individuals and that organizational functioning can be understood through evaluating the incentives it offers its participating personnel.


3 John Freeman and Michael T. Hannan, op. cit..

4 Price, ibid.
work environment. These considerations do not apply to voluntary organizations and particularly as King¹ and Clark² have observed, to social movements with their primary goal of generating societal change rather than servicing membership requirements. Sociologists and political scientists have for many years paid much attention to the extent to which people become personally involved in societal political systems. Lipset³ and Jones⁴ investigated electoral turnout as an indicator of the 'democratic character of a society, though Dahrendorf⁵ suggests that in Germany, at least, voting is very much a mechanistic sign of political participation. But however the various researchers interpret the 'meaning' of the voting process it has long been accepted that only a minority of the population ever join a political party. Kornhauser has elaborated these observations into his 'theory of mass society'⁶ though

³ Seymour Martin Lipset, Political Man, (1960).
⁴ W.H. Morris Jones, 'In Defence of Apathy', Political Studies, 11 (1954), 25-37 argues that acceptance of political apathy or its formal denial by enforced participation in the electoral process (compulsory voting) indicates the fundamental acceptance or rejection of the democratic ethos.
⁵ Ralf Dahrendorf, Society and Democracy in Germany, (1968).
others, notably Pinard and Newton have disputed the practical implications of Kornhauser's theory. Etzioni has adopted a rather different perspective by refusing to consider low societal political participation as a "problem", arguing instead it is highly functional towards the maintenance of a pluralistic democratic system.

If so few people actually join political organizations then it is apparent that organizations have to devote a high proportion of their resources, particularly in their formative periods to recruiting members, a process known as 'mobilization'. Many British sociologists, as Weingrod has noted, pay very little attention to

1 Maurice Pinard, "Mass Society and Political Movements: A New Formulation", American Journal of Sociology, 73 (1967), 682-90 argues that paradoxically Kornhauser's theory is only really applicable to societies with few or no strains.

2 Kenneth Newton, op. cit., found that Kornhauser's theory could not be applied to understanding the British Communist Party.

3 See Amitai Etzioni, A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations, (New York, 1961), 24. He argues that without political apathy there would be no "floating voters" and hence political rigidity and stagnation.


5 Alex Weingrod, "Political Sociology, Social Anthropology and the Study of New Nations", British Journal of Sociology, 18 (1967),121-34. Weingrod complains that sociologists concentrate on national political structures while anthropologist focus their research on Politics Around the Village Pump, (Princeton, 1957), to cite the work of Barnes, whose example in concentrating on the micro political system, Weingrod believes, could be profitably followed by sociologists.
the mobilization process, especially at grass roots level, an omission identified by Weiner as a primary source of the "growing gap between anthropological and sociological studies of politics". Yet most organizations, as McKitterick has observed in his study of the Labour Party are primarily dependent on active recruitment as the source of new members.

"The gaining of sympathizers or members rarely occurs through a mere combination of a pre-established appeal or a pre-established individual psychological bent on which it is brought to bear. Instead, the prospective sympathizer or member has to be aroused, nurtured, and directed and the so called appeal has to be developed and adapted. This takes place through a process in which attention has to be gained, interests awakened, grievances exploited, ideas implanted, doubts dispelled, feelings aroused, new objectives created and new perspectives developed."

American social scientists, perhaps because of the much greater prevalence of political organizations and social movements there, have fortunately, for my research purposes, devoted a good deal of their attention to studying the 'mobilization' process. Zygmunt has very

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usefully categorized these studies, according to three primary methodological and theoretical perspectives:

1. 'Motivational analysis' - the identification of the psychological factors that render people initially susceptible to membership, as explored by Fromm for a specific movement or a generic type of movement as by Fever or Toch's overall account of social movements.

2. The 'Structural-functional' approach - seeking to identify the social conditions that are conducive to the development of movements as pioneered by Selznick.

3. The 'Interactional' approach - as adopted by Lofland with his primary focus on the movement's origins and its maintenance.

Weiss, a social psychologist, has focussed his research not so much on recruitment to an organization as 'defection' from an organization; which may or may not subsequently lead to recruitment into another organization. According to Weiss, defection can be interpreted by using four psychological factors, 'stimulus generalization', 'extinction', 'displacement' and 'counter conditioning'.

Stimulus generalization exists merely as a predisposition

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1 Erich Fromm *Escape from Freedom* (New York, 1941).


transformed by motivation\(^1\) into a decision to actually join an organization. If similar organizations are in existence, then defection may occur to these from the original organization. Extinction - the non-reward or non-recognition of contribution leading to decreased interest and involvement is linked with displacement but may not lead to recruitment into a similar organization particularly if there is a high level of punitive social sanction \(^2\), "when punitive sanctions are so severe that the gradient of avoidance is always higher than the gradient of participation and belief then there will be no displacement".\(^2\)

Weiss used this theoretical framework to suggest that the Mensheviks lost many defectors to the Bolsheviks, a relatively similar but more attractive organization, while explaining why the Chinese Communists failed to generate widespread opposition to the savage smashing of the 1927 Canton Commune, partly because of the scale of the repression and partly because people recalled their original support for the Kuomintang.

Ash\(^3\) regards most American social movements as the product of the inequalities of the Capitalist socio-economic

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\(^2\) Weiss, op. cit.

\(^3\) Roberta Ash, Social Movements in America,(Chicago, 1972).
system, and Gerlach and Hine\(^1\) have explained the attraction of such diverse movements as the Pentecostalists and Black Power, largely in these terms. Wallis specifically rejects the notion that any single or mono causal explanation, particularly the concept of 'relative deprivation' can be used to account for why people join organizations\(^2\) while Walsh goes even further and rejects the concept of 'discontent' as an ever present constant, strongly arguing instead that discontent should always be treated as a variable\(^3\). Discontent would seem to play a very minor role in mobilizing support for any exile political organizations for while a low socio-economic status might explain why a second generation Irish miner joined the Labour or even Communist Party in Lanarkshire, it can hardly be adequately employed to explain his subsequent membership of Sinn Fein or the IRA. Different types of movements require different mobilization processes and different levels of commitment. Smelser distinguishes two primary types of social movements; (1) norm orientated, seeking to reform social and political institutions in a manner that does not apparently seriously threaten the existing status quo and (2) value orientated movements, seeking revolutionary


changes that involve major societal and political values. The Irish Self Determination League, Sinn Fein, the Irish Republican Army and the Irish Republican Brotherhood clearly belong to the category of value orientated movements.

Smelser's theoretical construct is essentially externalized, that is the character of the organization is determined by societal attitudes. A more internalized concept of political organizational investigation has however come to dominate the work of younger American social scientists like Oberschull, Jenkins, and Turner, who basically focus their research around the perspective of 'resource mobilization'. McCarthy and Zald have established, what they tentatively call a 'Partial Theory' to conceptualize the work of their fellow researchers. Partial, is a highly appropriate title for they freely confess they have been forced to ignore such an important but highly


3 J. Craig, Jenkins, 'What is to be done: Movement or Organization'. Contemporary Sociology, 8(1979), 222-28, also see J. Craig, Jenkins and Charles Perrow, 'Insurgency of Powerless: Farm Workers Movements', American Sociological Review, 42(1977), 244-68.


variable issue as tactics and strategy in constructing their theoretical framework. This neglected sphere has however been separately investigated by Turner\(^1\) and Lipsky\(^2\) while Barkan has added their research findings to Zald and McCarthy's work to produce a very interesting conceptualized organizational resource model. According to Barkan an organization's effectiveness is determined by its success in appealing to four, often mutually antagonistic constituencies, its own membership, the media, the public, its target group or its opponents\(^3\). Barkan, perhaps because of the American environment, stressed the organization's appeal to the media as the most important factor of the four. This appeal to the media, was clearly not as important in the case of the Irish Self Determination League and Sinn Fein in Britain who faced a virtually totally unsympathetic reception of their propaganda by the mainstream British media. Indeed the IRA's main chance of publicizing its existence in Britain lay in committing the type of action that guaranteed widespread but unfavourable publicity. Barkan's observation that organizational appeals to the public and especially the


the target group of possible sympathizers or potential members may alienate members who believe principles are being compromised is however very relevant to my analysis of the influence of the hardline Republican, mainly Sinn Fein members, influence in the Irish Self Determination League and their determination to constitutionally prevent organizational participation in the British political system even if this alienated United Irish League members who supported their broader goals.

The Irish Self Determination League and indeed the other Irish Political and military organizations of the 1916-22 period essentially self destructed themselves in the internal turmoil and conflict that followed the signing of the 1921 Treaty and the ensuing Civil War, so internal conflict organizational studies are of particular utility to my research. Etzioni observes that an organization experiencing a sudden influx of new members may undergo a "goal displacement" process when the newer members use their strength to remodel the organization but Aldrich suggests that the influx of new members may be beneficial in an organization whose continued existence is threatened by a deep division of existing members into two antagonistic factions. Bittner acknowledges that new members

2 Howard Aldrich, 'Organizational Boundaries and Inter-Organizational Conflict', Human Relations, 24(1971), 239-93.
can sometimes "dilute" the original organizational goals and values but along with Useem\textsuperscript{1} argues that this is not an inevitable process and that the new members can become so radicalized by their involvement they accept the existing goals. Despite the fact that many political organizations and social movements are subject to highly damaging splits, Firey\textsuperscript{2} is one of the few sociologists who has even attempted the construction of a theoretical framework to analyze "schismogenesis and factionalization". A more recent attempt by Barrett to categorize 6000 African religious schismatic movements according to 18 variables has unfortunately been nullified to a considerable extent by his dismissal, of all "ungeneralizable" factors as superficial phenomena\textsuperscript{3}.

Power and its use inside an organization can be an important component of intra-organizational conflict. Perrow has examined the differential usage of power inside hierarchically structured organizations in


industry\(^1\) and Hickson et al, have attempted to formulate a relevant theoretical construct\(^2\). Abell\(^3\) and Scott\(^4\) have explored the use of power in a wider theoretical setting while Clegg has provided a very interesting Marxist theoretical critique of 'power studies'\(^5\). But it is Lukes' seminal work on 'Power'\(^6\) which is undoubtedly the most significant publication in this field. Lukes categorizes the existing perspectives on Power as the "one dimensional"\(^7\) or "two dimensional"\(^8\) before arguing against these 'liberal' and 'reformist' concepts of power in favour of his own 'radical' perspective which he terms the "three dimensional view"\(^9\).


7 According to Lukes, the 'one dimensional view of power' is effectively the 'pluralist' perspective though he explicitly rejects the use of this term, arguing that their empirical research can produce non-pluralist conclusions as well, ibid, 11.

8 The 'two dimensional view of power' as exemplified Lukes claims by Bachrach and Baratz, 'The Two Faces of Power', American Political Science Review, 56(1962, 947-52.

9 Lukes own 'three dimensional view of power' examines the non-actualization" of latent conflict issues and conceives that 'power' is conceptually and contd,
Organisation theorists have often linked power and 'charisma' in an almost interchangeable manner; too often in the view of Ake, Tucker, Theobald and Worsley who suggests that charisma has become a sponge word, too freely used to be useful as an analytical tool. Weber, himself, originally defined charisma in a very specific and limited manner as an individual's claim to possess "specific gifts of body and mind", but subsequently expanded this usage to the much wider term of "Charismatic authority" which he defined as the, "recognition on the part of those subject to authority which is decisive for the validity of charisma".

ineradically value dependent' with its location firmly positioned in an 'equalitarian socio-economic and political system, Lukes, op. cit., 21-36.


Weber personally believed that democratic leadership was a form of charismatic authority but Michels reinterpreted his original definition and usage to justify his support for Mussolini and his joining the Italian Fascists. Weber also postulated that the routinization of charisma increased the organizational tendency towards institutionalization and bureaucratization. Michels further elaborated Weber's original work in this field and combined the routinization of charisma, the institutionalization and bureaucratization concepts with Mosca's work on oligarchy and Pareto's concept of 'elite circulation' into a synthesis that formed the basis of his own formulation of the 'iron law of oligarchy' in his seminal work on Political Parties.

Whereas Weber focussed his research on internal organizational structures, Michels concentrated on organizational goals and in particular the concept of 'goal displacement' which he suggested explained the transformation of formerly radical movements into parliamentary social democratic parties that accepted the continued existence

3 See V. Pareto (edt. S.E. Finer), Sociological Writings, (1966).
of the capitalist system. Michels suggested the combination of oligarchization-bureaucratization, produced party officials anxious to preserve their vested interest and that this process is facilitated by the growth of the membership which leads to a switch from dispersed democratic decision making to an all powerful centralised leadership. Goal displacement, diffusion and transformation occurs with the organization opting for pragmatic policies that prioritize the continued existence and maintenance of the organization. Michel's work has been theoretically elaborated by contemporary sociologists like Chapin and Tsouderos\(^1\) and Zald and Denton\(^2\), while the concept of the 'Iron law of oligarchy' has served as the theoretical base for numerous studies of organizations as diverse as the Communist Party\(^3\) to the Cosa Nostra\(^4\).

Yet while Weber's and Michel's work offers a very useful body of theoretical perspectives, its essential weakness stems from its dictum of inevitability, as expressed in the rigidity; implied in the very concept of the 'iron


law. Organizations may often tend towards a conservative acceptance of the dominant societal consensus yet, as Zald and Ash have observed, this is not necessarily an inevitable tendency, for they argue this process may be reversed either by internal conflict generating a newer radical leadership, or other organizational transformation processes, involving coalitions with similar organizations, factional splits, or simply, its total disappearance. Adopting Selznick's methodology of 'institutional analysis', relating organizational transformation to environmental changes, Zald and Ash conceive social movements as operating in an organizational environment that consists of two major segments, the 'broader social movement environment' of similar organizations and with its membership who are potential recruits for the target organization and the general body of supporters and sympathizers of the particular cause espoused. The second major segment is the wider 'societal environment' and Ash & Zald see its influence on the organization in terms of an 'ebb and flow tide of sentiments' representing changing attitudes towards the organization either by bringing about the attitudinal change which makes possible the attainment of the

1 Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, 'Social Movement Organizations, Growth, Decay and Change', Social Forces, XLIV(1966), 327-41.

organization's goals so that it has no longer any raison d'etre or by generating such levels of hostility the organization finds it impossible to maintain its existence.

Zald and Ash categorize political organizations and social movements according to the two different types of 'membership commitment' they represent:

(1) 'Inclusive' organizations have relatively low levels of membership commitment, symbolized by their low dues and minimal activity involvement.

(2) 'Exclusive' require a much higher level of membership commitment and often restrict their membership's participation in other organizations. Sinn Fein and the Irish Self Determination League which formally 'excluded' in its constitution participation in the British political (electoral) system could be categorized as 'Exclusive' organizations yet many members, particularly in the League, did little else than pay their dues and they were certainly not compelled to attend meetings or sell the organizational publication, which we shall observe sold less than one copy of the Irish Exile per three members. Zald and Ash readily concede that both types of membership commitment can be found in the same organization, sometimes the 'exclusive' category is restricted to the higher level of the organization hierarchy. The Irish Republican Brotherhood is an organization that shows the difficulty in precisely classifying organizations according to specific categories,
as its members could be ordered to do anything from infiltrating another political organization to transporting arms. It clearly exhibited a high level of 'exclusive' membership commitment yet its members were normally not excluded from participation in other organizations and indeed were actively encouraged to do so. Zald and Ash suggest that the ebb and flow tide of societal sentiment tends to have a greater effect on 'inclusive' organizations rather than on the Exclusive ones but that while Inclusive organizations usually develop much quicker, they conversely also decline faster. They also suggest the ideal condition for organizational growth is a combination of a strong sentiment base and a low level of societal hostility towards the organization's cause; this was certainly not present in Britain during the Anglo-Irish War of Independence and thus the Irish Self Determination League was operating in a very unfavourable societal environment particularly after the IRA commenced active offensive operations in Britain itself.

Membership commitment is an extremely important factor in the development of a political organization especially those operating in a hostile societal environment. Studies by Blondel, Birch and Benney indicate that

3 Mark Bennney, How People Vote, (1956).
well under half of the membership of the main British political parties can be considered 'active' members in any meaningful sense of the word. Voluntary organizations are essentially dependent on the maintenance of their members enthusiasm; when this is present at a high level, members will often allow themselves to be influenced by peer group pressure as shown in a very interesting study of group pressure on the individual's perception of a physical event. Nurturing and maintaining the membership's enthusiasm particularly during adverse periods is an important leadership task and unlike the situation in formal organizations, the leaders of voluntary political organizations have few effective sanctions available to them. Tannebaum has demonstrated the difficulties inherent in controlling voluntary organizations' membership while Houghland and Wood have indicated in their study of religious organizations a positive correlation between the level of control and the membership's commitment levels. Millham, Bullock and Cherett have shown the non-applicability

1 Lazaber Sherif, 'Group Influences Upon the Formation of Norms and Attitudes' in Maccoby, Newcomb and Hartley (edt) Readings in Social Psychology, (1961), 219-32. Sherif demonstrated that while an individual will initially specify a certain distance for the 'movement' of a stationary light in a dark room, once they are placed in a group context, a 'norm' distance quickly emerges as a consensus product.


of most organizational theoretical perspectives on control to voluntary organizations as these have mostly been derived from formal organizational studies\(^1\).

Attempts to create a general theoretical framework to analyze radical organizations have not been very successful. Dawson and Gettys propounded almost 35 years ago, a 'natural history model' of the 'life' of movements, commencing in a state of unrest, passing through a popular state of collective excitement into a third stage of formal organization before finally becoming institutionalized\(^2\), yet what about those organizations that never survive to the third and fourth stages? Banks in his very informative review of social movements rejects the inevitability of the 'bureaucratization and routinization of charisma'\(^3\) concepts but Levitas rejects both, what he calls, Bank's 'voluntaristic model' - man as the actor or creator of organizations, and Smelser's 'deterministic' functional model, in favour of his own 'dialectical model' postulating man as both product and creator\(^4\). Jessop not only doubts the value of such theoretical models but questions if studies of social movements can,


Zald and Ash have not yet formulated their own theory of organizational growth and decline; they regard their conceptual framework as merely a number of tentative propositions but I have found their work most useful in analyzing my own research target organizations. I have reduced and modified their 'seventeen propositions' to eight, some of which combine several of Zald and Ash's original concepts.

(1) Proposition One - The size of the potential organizational support base considered in the light of a favourable or unfavourable societal environment, combined with whether the organization is primarily 'Inclusive or Exclusive', determines the organization's chances of survival and growth.

(2) Proposition Two - Organizational goal and tactical transformation are positively related to the ebb and flow tide of sentiment.

(3) Proposition Three - Organizations created by other organizations are more likely to cease to exist following 'success' than those with their own membership base.

(4) Proposition Four - Organizations with relatively specific goals are more likely to disappear than those


2 Zald and Ash, op. cit.
with broader goals.

(5) Proposition Five - Inclusive organizations are more likely to decline at a faster rate than the Exclusive which are more likely to adopt new goals.

(6) Proposition Six - Inclusive organizations with their looser affiliation criteria and lower doctrinal orthodoxy are more split-resistant than the Exclusive organizations and tend to retain their factions instead of splitting.

(7) Proposition Seven - The more heterogeneous the organizational membership, the greater the tendency to factionalism but 'splits' often produce higher internal consistency and consensus which enable radical goal transformation.

(8) Proposition Eight - "If a leadership cadre are committed to radical goals to a greater extent than the membership at large, member apathy and oligarchical tendencies lead to greater rather than less radicalism".  

In my concluding chapter, I will consider to what extent these eight propositions are applicable to my study of the Irish Self Determination League. I will also consider whether the ISDL went through the bureaucratization, institutionalization and routinization of charisma stages as postulated in the classical organizational theory of Weber and Michels.

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1 See Zald and Ash, op. cit., 339, where my Proposition Eight is their Proposition Seventeen.
Part II The Growth of Irish Republicanism in Britain

In Part I we considered the methodological and theoretical problems posed by historical sociological research. In particular, in Chapters 1 and 2, I commented on the paucity of research on the Irish in Britain in general and Irish political organizations in particular. I shall now endeavour to remedy this deficiency with a detailed investigation of the Irish in Britain during 1916-23. We have already briefly observed and investigated the origins of the historical tensions that have existed between Ireland and Britain. In Part II we shall observe these tensions intensifying to new levels of hostility and examine their effects on the Irish in Britain during 1916-21. I commented in Chapter 4 on the paucity of British sociological research on extra parliamentary organizations while examining the, mainly American, theoretical work on political organizational sociology. And now in Chapter 6 we shall observe in some detail the mobilization process of the Irish Self Determination League and the structural mechanisms whereby diffuse interests and groupings were welded together into a mass membership organization. In Chapter 3 we commented on the 'millet' type juxtaposition of Irish Catholicism and Nationalism, this phenomenon will be further observed in Chapter 5; but this issue is of sufficient importance to merit a chapter of its own and so most of Chapter 7 centres around the tensions generated among Catholics in England by the Irish conflict. Finally in Chapters 8 and 9 we will observe the Irish Self Determination League, despite the IRA campaign in Britain and consequent police repression, continue to expand until it peaked with the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in December 1921.
Chapter 5
The Irish In Britain 1914-1918: Fighting Overseas for Irish Freedom

In 1914 the United Irish League of Great Britain attained its highest membership since its formation in 1873 as the Home Rule Confederation.\(^1\) With 46,000 members\(^2\) it dominated the Irish political scene in Britain, yet less than ten years later the British Cabinet was informed that:

"In Liverpool and the North there are still a few active branches of the old UIL, but in London it's practically defunct."\(^3\)

A detailed study of the history of the UIL up to 1914, in its various guises\(^4\) is beyond the time scope of this thesis, we will do no more than note several trends that contributed towards such a drastic reversal of fortunes. The UIL failed to evolve during its later years in a manner consistent with the changing nature of Irish

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\(^1\) In 1873 some twenty local Home Rule Associations mostly located in the North of England and Scotland, were unified into the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain. See the NATION, 30 Aug, 1873. By 1876 there were 95 branches, ibid, 29 Jan, 1876. In 1883 the Home Rule Confederation evolved into the Irish National League of Great Britain and increased substantially in size during the 1880's from 127 branches and 4,600 members in 1884 to 630 branches with a total of 40,985 members in 1890. See NATION, 18 Sept., 1890. In 1900 the INL became the United Irish League of Great Britain.


\(^3\) ROR 192, 6 Dec. 1923. CP 91(23), CAB 24/158.


contd,
settlement patterns in Britain. Yorkshire may well have been the "rallying ground of Irish nationalism in England" but the UIL was far too concerned with the already well organized North of England and West of Scotland to the detriment of the organization in the Midlands and the South of England.1

The tactic of forming electoral ad hoc alliances with the Liberal party, and after 1895 with the emerging Labour political movement resulted in a gradual but distinct weakening of organizational identity.

Internal democracy within the UIL at policy formation level was negligible. The organization was so dominated and effectively controlled by the Irish Parliamentary Party and in particular by T.P. O'Connor, the Liverpool MP, to the extent that when the 1918 General Election in Ireland swept the Parliamentary Party into oblivion, the UIL lacked the necessary internal dynamic leadership, particularly at branch level, to keep the organization together. The UIL was so closely linked with the

1 Speech made at the 1899 INL convention, quoted in Wollaston, 42.

2 Between 1873 and 1914 the HRC/INL/UIL held 34 conventions in Britain. Of these only eight were held in London and the Midlands. See Wollaston, op. cit., 239.
Nationalist organization in Ireland\(^1\) that it could not survive the demise of the latter, its fortunes being so intrinsically bound up with the progress of the constitutional movement for Self Government in Ireland, with the growth periods of the INL/UIL mirroring the enactment of the respective Home Rule Bills.\(^2\)

Yet with all its inherent imperfections, the UIL spoke unequivocally in 1914 for the nationalist orientated Irish community in Britain. The opposition of the tiny more extreme separatist section led by Sinn Fein with only some twenty branches in Britain\(^3\) amounted to little more than a pinprick. Most branches had the apparent patronage of the Catholic church in the shape of local clerical membership, though the periodic conflict between the sometimes conflicting party alliances for denominational education and the enactment of Home Rule prevented any formal hierarchical recognition of the UIL as the de facto political

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\(^2\) In 1884 the INL had 127 branches and 4,600 members; in 1886 after the introduction of the Home Rule Bill it had increased to 13,000 members organized in 423 branches. See C.C. O'Brien, op. cit., 274. 1914 and the highest ever membership of the UIL saw the passing of the, never enforced, Home Rule Act.

organization of the Church in England. Many branches had considerable influence in local governmental affairs through their councillor members, though outside Liverpool and Glasgow, where the UIL functioned as a separate political bloc, this influence by 1914 was generally exercised through the electoral machinery of the Liberal and to a lesser extent the Labour parties even though such political role playing often violated the UIL constitution.

The UIL leadership advocated the accommodation of the Irish community within British society: not its assimilation, which would have negated the influence of the organization, though the "sub-culture within British society" had been substantially weakened both by the passing of time and the change in Irish immigration patterns to Britain. This development was welcomed and encouraged by the assimilationist Catholic Herald chain of papers, which proclaimed that:

"The Irish and Catholic people in Great Britain are citizens of England or Scotland, they can join with their neighbours and fellow citizens as Tories, or Liberals or Labour men. No person whatever has a right to stand for Parliament or for a local body in England or Scotland as an Irish candidate or as a

1 The INL in 1885 sought such formal recognition but Bishop Bagshawe of Nottingham was its only supporter in the English and Welsh hierarchy; see Wollaston, op. cit. 128. In the event, with specific tactical exceptions as in 1885/86, the INL/UIL usually supported the Liberals who generally opposed denominational education but the hierarchy supported the Tories who supported the former and opposed the latter policies. Wollaston (171) argues that this division effectively prevented the formation of a nationwide Catholic lay organization in Britain.

2 UIL members were constitutionally forbidden to hold office in other political organizations but this was widely disregarded; see Wollaston, op. cit., 82.

3 O'Day, op. cit., 106.
The influence of this chain of 33 papers, with a common central editorial content and a localized news section with its basic circulation in Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, Sunderland and Dundee, on the Irish community is difficult to quantify for it essentially was the voice of one man: Charles Diamond, an embittered former Nationalist MP and UIL leader. Diamond simultaneously opposed the Nationalist leaders and the Catholic hierarchy; supported the Labour party, for which he stood several times as a parliamentary candidate, but often scourged its left wing and even the centre social democrats. An MO intelligence officer succinctly summed up the political line of the Catholic Herald chain when he reported that:

"Mr Diamond is up in arms against the Irish Nationalist leaders, the Sinn Feiners and the English Catholic section equally. It is difficult to give a name to his policy which is advanced radical labour, teetotal, anti-Lloyd George and anti-English Catholic about equally."

Such individual eccentricity is difficult to mobilize as

1 Catholic Herald, 27 Sept., 1919.
2 See the Home Office file. HO 45 11009/20126 on the Catholic Herald and in particular a memo by the Director of Public Prosecutions, (1 Feb., 1919), and a report by the Liverpool Special Branch 7 April, 1918. For the development of the Catholic Herald chain see Catholic Herald, 4 Oct., 1924.
3 Diamond was elected as the Parliamentary Party representative for Monaghan in 1892 but rejected by a party reselection conference in 1895.
4 The Military Intelligence department that carefully scrutinized the British Press during the First World War.
5 See Report 17 May, 1918 in HO 45, 110009/20126.
a coherent political force and even the entrepreneur in Diamond recognized the strength of the UIL's position and later that of the Irish Self Determination League, which he loathed even more, by giving very substantial coverage to their activities.

History however shows that Diamond was correct in arguing that no political movement in Britain should be controlled from Ireland. As the politically very different Connolly Association was later to argue, Diamond maintained that the socio-political environments were so distinct as to require different modes and types of organizations. In 1913 the Nationalist Movement in Ireland formed a military wing, the Irish Volunteers. This was intended to function only as a bargaining counter, and was a reaction to the Ulster Volunteer Force. But the UIL followed suit uncritically though the potential value of such a military section in Britain was very different from that of the organization in Ireland. It was an extremely counter productive move from the UIL perspective for it conferred considerable prestige on the numerically small and hitherto little known Irish Republican Brotherhood in Britain who furnished the Volunteer movement with many of its instructors.

The constitutional movement made overt militarism so respectable that the Volunteer movement in London soon had "numbers so large that instruction became a serious

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1 Leon O'Brien, *Revolutionary Underground. The Story of the IRB, 1858-1924*, (Dublin, 1976), 155, states that there were about 300 IRB members in Britain in 1912.
difficulty and, as we shall observe in a later chapter, some very respectable people in London involved themselves in the importation of a considerable quantity of arms for use in Ireland. And after the outbreak of the First World War, when the Volunteers split into two camps, with the larger Nationalist Volunteers actively preparing to aid the British war effort, the much smaller, anti-British, Irish Volunteers were still permitted to drill in the grounds of St. Georges Cathedral, Southwark.

Undoubtedly the vast majority of the Irish community in Britain, like their counterparts in Ireland welcomed the declaration of war on Germany. The image of "defenceless Catholic Belgium" was sufficiently evocative to generate many recruits. The UIL channelled its energies into enlisting men for the 'New Armies' and would appear to have had considerable success in the highly emotive early days of the War. At one Newcastle meeting addressed by T.P. O'Connor no fewer than 800 UIL supporters volunteered.

1 A. O'Brien, Ms 8417, also see Ernie Ó Munnan, 'The Irish Volunteers in London', An tÓglach Autumn, 1966.

2 See the depositions of two members, Martin Walsh and Tom McCormick, P17a/154, O'Malley.

3 A. O'Brien, Ms 8417.

4 T.P. O'Connor, "This War is a War for the liberation of the masses of the German people as well as the liberation of Europe generally", quoted in Waller, op. cit., 273.

5 The Standing Committee of the UIL declared its willingness to send UIL leaders to any town where the Irish Community wished to raise an Army unit. Times, 18 Sept., 1914.
for the British Army. Ultimately all the male Irish residents of Great Britain between the ages of 18 and 51 were declared liable for military service, so it is the pre-conscription period up to 1916 which is of interest in considering voluntary enlistment as a criterion of assimilation. Unfortunately no official figures for the enlistment of the Irish born in Britain were ever supplied. Statistics were of course frequently given but their very production should make us wary of them as during World War I. Irish recruitment statistics were used like verbal hand-grenades, flung across the floor of the House of Commons in the ongoing parliamentary battle between the Irish Nationalists and the Government. Consequently such selectively employed and indeed sometimes contradictory figures must be regarded with extreme caution.

Redmond stated that up to the end of 1915, "115,000 men of Irish birth in Great Britain" had enlisted in that country and "a large number had (from Britain) joined Regiments in Ireland." T.P. O'Connor spoke of the


2 A parliamentary question on this subject brought the reply that such information had not been collected. 110 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 3216.

3 In the course of a parliamentary debate, the Nationalist leader Redmond stated that 157,000 Irishmen had joined in Ireland, the military forces since the start of the War but the Prime Minister claimed that only 105,000 had done so, see LXXXVI H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 652.

4 LXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 544.
situation before conscription when "100,000 of my fellow countrymen left the great county of Lancashire for the Army and 30,000 from the city of Glasgow"\(^1\) though earlier that latter statistic had been given for the total Glasgow enlistment to date.\(^2\) Another Nationalist MP, J.O. O'Connor, in 1918 appeared to reduce his namesake's statistics while vouching for the accuracy of the figures that he now presented:

"No less than 115,000 Irish born men living in England, Scotland and Wales joined the colours. We kept a record of them. Our organizations were used for the purpose of following them and tracking them into the Army and we counted 115,000 men in Great Britain alone who were serving with the colours, not to speak of the large numbers forming the various divisions that were recruited in Ireland."\(^3\)

Yet as Redmond, quoted the same figure in 1915 the implication must be that between 1915 and 1918 not a single Irish born man in Britain joined the Armed Forces, which considering that conscription, with ever decreasing grades of medical liability had been in force since 1916 is obviously inaccurate. Perhaps aware of this glaring error, yet another Nationalist MP claimed later in the year of 1918 that "upwards of 200,000 Irishmen have joined in Great Britain".\(^4\)

\(^1\) LXXXVI H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 61.

\(^2\) The Glasgow MP Barnes stated that "30,000 as has been said went from Glasgow including as I know many Irishmen". LXXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1550.

\(^3\) 101 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 574.

\(^4\) See Dillon's speech, 110 H.C. Debs. 5, Col 710.
If the rather atypical casualty ratio for those enlisted in Ireland throws some doubt on the accuracy of the official statistics\(^1\); then a comparison of these unofficial figures for the recruitment of the Irish born in Britain and the Census population of the Irish born residents of Britain indicates that these Irish recruiting statistics in Britain must be treated as very suspect.

In 1911 there were 550,040 Irish born people living in Britain, 375,325\(^2\) in England and Wales and 174,715 in Scotland.\(^3\) There were 60,313\(^4\) emigrants from Ireland in 1912 and 1913 but as this was the total emigration figure from Ireland to all destinations only a proportion of those came to Britain. The proportional division of the emigrants bound for Britain and elsewhere is a matter of some argument. Jackson states that between 1820 and 1910, 84% of Irish emigrants went to the United States\(^5\)

\(^1\) According to the War Cabinet Report, CAB 24/86, 134,202 Irishmen enlisted in Ireland between 1914 and 1918. At the start of the War, there were 20,780 serving in the Regular Army, 8,000 in the Royal Navy and 3,098 Naval Reservists who were immediately called up - figures given in LXXXVII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1554. Yet the Times 24 July, 1924 gave the official Irish War dead as 49,434. This suggests a fatality ratio of over 30%, or more than double the fatal casualties of the rest of the British forces. Interestingly LXXXVII H.C Col. 1554 stated that up to then 130,241 Irishmen had enlisted, this would mean that during 1917 and 1918 only some 4,000 Irishmen enlisted but the 104 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 142 recruitment in Ireland figure for 1917 alone, is 14,023. Harris op. cit , 32, who has made a substantial study of this field states that an RIC census in 1919 showed 248,000 men returned to Ireland after demobilization.

\(^2\) 1911 Census - Summary Tables - Table 75. Cd. 7929, (1915).

\(^3\) 1911 Census - Scotland - Table XXXVIII. Cd. 6896, (1913).

\(^4\) Registrar General (Ireland) Reports, Cd. 6917, (1912), Cd. 7528, (1913).

\(^5\) J.A. Jackson, *The Irish in Britain*, (1963), 5.
but he gives only a figure of some 3,016 emigrants to Britain for the 1912-13 period\(^1\) which would appear to be a rather low figure, particularly as some of his other figures are open to question.\(^2\) Redmond's figures were clearly inflated for his figure of 115,000 Irish born men in Britain voluntarily enlisted in the Armed forces between 1914-15 represented some 39% of the Irish male population in Britain at the time of the 1911 census, or about 21% of the total Irish born population in Britain as compared to the under 3% of the total British population\(^3\) who had voluntarily enlisted by the end of 1914. Recruitment in the voluntary phase was confined to the 19-35 year age group and quite high medical standards were prescribed thus further reducing the number of eligible Irish born males who would have been accepted into the army. Considering that in the British population as a whole only some 46% of males in the military age group had either volunteered or attested their willingness to do so by the end of 1915\(^4\), Redmond's figures for recruitment in this period must therefore

\(^1\) Jackson, op. cit., Table VII, 91.

\(^2\) In Table VII Jackson gives a total of 5,233 emigrants from Ireland to Britain for the 1916-18 period yet between 1916 and June 1918 over 40,000 Irish came to work in the Government Munitions plants in Britain; see 106 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 2349. Jackson does not explain how Table VII was compiled.

\(^3\) By the end of 1914, 1,186,337 volunteers had joined the British Army see Correlli Barnett, Britain and Her Army 1509-1970, (1974), 377.

be regarded as highly suspect. O'Connor's references to 100,000 Irish born recruits from Lancashire hardly equates with the 1911 Census figure of 129,587 Irish born residents of both sexes in Lancashire and Cheshire. 1 Similarly Glasgow with a 1911 Census population of 28,968 Irish born males 2 could hardly have furnished 30,000 Irish born recruits in the period before the introduction of conscription. 30,000 Irish born recruits would have been a more than respectable proportion for the whole of the Irish born male population of Scotland as a whole.

Even after a period of ever increasing conscription limits only some 12.4% of the British population were in the armed forces by the time the war ended. 3 As we have already observed, Redmond's pre-conscription figure represented 21% of the Irish born population resident in Britain. The claim, we have already encountered, by Dillon of "upwards of 200,000" Irish recruits in Britain by 1918 represents an almost incredible 68% of the Irish born males resident in Britain or 36% of the total Irish born population of Britain. Dillon must evidently have included the second and third generation etc., Irish, and despite their comments Redmond and


2 1911 Census of Scotland, Table XXXVIII. Cd. 6896, (1913).

O'Connor must have done the same. The problem is how far back, generationally speaking, can one go to define a person born in Britain as 'Irish'. Even taking the size of the first, second and third generation Irish in Britain as about 1.5 million, these recruitment figures were proportionally much higher than those for the rest of the population.

The UIL following its parent organization's efforts in Ireland, sought, but failed to keep its recruits together in specific Irish units, its objective being a 'UIL in uniform'. This policy was thwarted by the War Office through a variety of stratagems, all of which seemed to indicate that; the officers in control of the War Office did not wish to see the creation of Irish Nationalist units in Britain. While no new infantry regiments were formed during the War, many of the volunteers of 1914 and 1915 were permitted and indeed often encouraged to join affinity units popularly known as 'Pals Battalions' which were then attached to existing regiments.

1 General Parsons, CO 16th Division, rejected an offer by Crilly, the Secretary of the UIL Central Council, to open recruiting offices for his Division as he said this "would mean filling us with Liverpool, Glasgow and Cardiff Irish who are slumbirds that we don't want", quoted in Denis Gwynn, The Life of John Redmond, (New York, 1971), 400.

2 The standard Infantry Regiment of 1914 consisted only of two Regular Battalions, a third Reserve unit of ex-soldiers and a few Territorial Battalions. The New Armies were organized in Service, Reserve or Garrison Battalions - depending on personnel's degree of medical fitness - which were then incorporated into the existing Regiments. Hence by 1918 the active service personnel of a Regiment was often greater than the strength of a Division. With up to 52 Battalions, as in the case of the Northumberland Fusileers, such a Regiment would have in pre-war days constituted an entire Army Corps if all its units had been permitted to serve as a single entity.
The absorption of well over a million volunteers in five months at a time when the bulk of the Regular Army was already overseas was only possible because these recruits effectively organized themselves on a town, occupational, etc., basis. If public school graduates, bankers, sportsmen, post office workers, Scottish and Welsh men, living in England could organize such Pals Battalions then why not the UIL? It tried to; but was prevented by the War Office and the only new Irish formation raised in Britain during the War, the 'Tyneside Irish Brigade' was created only as the result of a local recruitment competition between the Irish and Scots residents of Tyneside. This also encountered strong War Office resistance, and was only overcome by a combined local political initiative. Even so the 'Irish' title was not officially recognized in casualty lists.

1 By the end of 1914, 1,186,337 volunteers had enlisted; see Correlli Barnett, op. cit., 377.

2 The Monthly Army Lists for the month of January in 1914 and 1916 were carefully examined and the catalogue the British Library consulted to establish this.

3 Officially the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th 'Tyneside Irish' were known as the 24th, 25th, 26th and 27th Service Battalions of the Northumberland Fusileers with Tyneside Irish in brackets. There was also a 30th (Reserve) Battalion of the Tyneside Irish; there were about 5,500 men originally in these units.

4 See Gwynn Redmond, op. cit., 453. Redmond also complained that in the official reports of the Gallipoli landings, where the Dublin and Munster regiments in the first wave suffered extremely high casualties, there was no mention of these units though many other units were named - LXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 545. T.P. O'Connor also complained of the lack of official recognition of the exploits of Irish units - LXXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 2566. It was a source of much bitterness in Ireland among the nationalists that while the unit recruited largely from the Ulster Volunteer Force bore the title the 36th (Ulster) Division, the 10th and 16th Divisions recruited in the South of Ireland were not granted the official
There were two established Irish units of the Territorial Force in Britain located in Liverpool and London. The 8th (Irish) Battalion the Kings (Liverpool) Regiment was expanded to three units but again there were complaints that the 'Irish' title, though in this case officially recognized, was omitted from the published casualty lists. The London unit, the 18th Battalion, The London Regiment (London Irish Rifles) recruited a second battalion within a few days of the declaration of War. But this old established rather socially elite unit founded in the 'Volunteer' period of 1859 by its very constitution (that it was) open to "men connected with Ireland by birth, marriage or property" suggest that it was not

'Irish' title and denied their own flags and emblems as permitted to the former. It was also alleged, with considerable evidence, that while the 10th and 16th Divisions' rank and file were predominantly Catholic, their officers were mostly Protestants. See Gwynn Redmond, op. cit., 458.

1 The 1/8th and 2/8th for active service and the 3/8th for Home Defence duty.

2 LXXIII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1969.

3 In 1859 there was a 'French Invasion Scare'. Volunteer Corps essentially of Upper and Middle class composition were formed, including the 16th Middlesex (London Irish) with Lord Palmerston as one of its first recruits. These Middlesex volunteer units though they were later incorporated into the Territorial London Regiment retained much of their social exclusiveness. For example recruits paid for a very distinctive uniform and a relatively high contribution towards unit funds (they purchased much of their own arms) was expected.

exclusively composed of the Irish born in London, who indeed were probably a minority.

The mere designation 'Irish' should not be taken to denote that the unit was composed of Irish born or even second or third generation Irish. An examination of the casualty list of the 'Liverpool Irish' in the pre-conscription period reveals many non-Irish names, while in the competitive rush to see which unit would recruit the most men both the Tyneside Irish and Scots "had accepted men with no Scottish or Irish connections. Irishmen in Britain were often prevented from enlisting in the Irish Regiments of the Regular Army though as volunteers the recruiting officers were obliged to permit them to join the regiment of their choice. Many Irish nationalists in Britain and Ireland believed, not without reason, that in the War Office there were those with Ulster Loyalists sympathies, who were determined publicly to reduce the extent of the Irish nationalist contribution to the war effort to the minimum possible level. In particular, what appeared to be a deliberate policy of


2 See Martin Middlebrook, The First Day on the Somme, (1971), 267. Middlebrook further states that 75% of the Tyneside Scottish were 'Geordies', 12-13.

3 T.P. O'Connor complained of this widespread practice in Britain. The responsible Minister assured him this was contrary to policy, LXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 553., but Redmond later claimed that this policy of preventing the Irish in Britain from joining Irish Regiments was still occurring, LXXXVII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 592.
ignoring acts of Irish gallantry caused much bitterness among the nationalists. The Irish Units after suffering heavy casualties in the battles of 1915 and 1916 were either allowed to be run down as in the case of the 'London Irish'; severely diluted by non-Irish drafts as happened to the 'Tyneside Irish' and eventually disbanded before other ethnic units were. The few 'Irish' units in Britain, the repeated omission of their titles in casualty lists and their eventual reduction created the impression among many that the Irish in Britain were not playing their full role in this war while the omission of the exploits of Irish Regiments in the censored press considerably reinforced this feeling that the Irish contribution to the war effort was severely lacking. If the Minister responsible for the Army did not know that there was an old 'Irish' unit in

1 Parliament was informed that a London Irish Battalion had been reduced to 250 soldiers and it was not prepared to significantly reinforce it—LXXXIII HC Debts 5 Col. 354, (22 June, 1916) and it was eventually disbanded see The London Irish at War, (1949), 15.

2 Lloyd George, "Take the Northumberland Fusileers, there were Irish Battalions raised there. I am informed that not 5% of these Battalions are now Irish". LXXXVI H.C. Debts. 5, Cols. 649-50.

3 The 27th Service Battalion (4th Tyneside Irish) was disbanded in 1917 while the Tyneside Scots still retained their four battalions, The Monthly Army List, January, 1918.
London then the ordinary public could hardly be expected to be better informed. The difficulty experienced by the Irish units was also experienced by Jewish units in the next war.

So when the 1916 Rising occurred the atmosphere in Britain towards the Irish had already been prejudiced by the perceived poor Irish war contribution. One minority group in the Irish community in Britain was indeed determined not to play any part in the British war effort, the militant Republican section of the Irish Volunteers. Some sixty London Republicans, quite a few of whom "had never before been on Irish soil", accompanied by the entire Liverpool Company of Irish Volunteers with contingents from Manchester and Glasgow decided,

"Instead of occupying the less dangerous position of conscientious objectors in England to join their fellow volunteers in Ireland in armed

1 In response to complaints that the 'Irish' title of the 18th Battalion of the London Regiment had been omitted from the official casualty lists, Mr Tennent reading from his War Office prepared brief stated this was because as a unit which was part of a 'New Army' it was not permitted such a title. LXXI H.C. Deb Cols. 705-706. Following corrections by MPs who outlined the unit's history, the Minister apologised for misleading the House. Ibid, Col. 956.

2 In 1939 the War Office rejected an offer by 86,000 Jews who wanted to form British Army Units in Palestine, though several battalions of a Palestine Regiment were eventually raised for service in that country. Despite Churchill's personal support, the Cabinet's proposed 'Jewish Division' encountered such strong War and Foreign Office opposition that it took five years to implement the proposal and even then only a Brigade was actually formed. See Michael J. Cohen, Palestine, Retreat from the Mandate, (1978), 99-103, and 117-124.

They included a young post office clerk known then to few but whose name several years later would blaze from press headlines, Michael Collins. In Ireland the British Volunteers formed the first active service unit of the new IRA and engaged in its first military action. They fought bravely and suffered proportionately heavy casualties in the Easter Rising.

The Rising of 1916 occurred at a particularly crucial point of the war. At Verdun the bulk of the French Army was being so systematically processed through the German mincer that it was already apparent the still underequipped and often poorly trained British Army would have to undertake the major share of the future fighting. The battles of 1915 - in particular Loos - the "worst disaster which had ever befallen a British

1 Piaras Beasali, Michael Collins, (Dublin, 1926), 73.

2 They killed a 'G Squad detective,' (Political section of the Dublin Metropolitan Police) in a raid on their Killmore Camp. See an article by S.O. O'Connor in An Poblacht, 9 Feb., 1929, and John O'Connor's account, An t Oglach, Autumn, 1966.

3 Six were killed in action out of a total of 56 Republican fatal casualties. See Art O'Brien, 'Some Note's on the History of the Gaelic League in London', Capuchin Annual, (Dublin, 1936), 116-126, and James Ryan, 'The GPO 1916', Capuchin Annual, (Dublin, 1942), 312-18. Also see my article in the Irish Post, 27 Mar., 1982.

4 The 'Great Shell Scandal' of 1915, and the efforts to remedy this had not yet produced the required explosives and the British Army was still greatly deficient in the field of heavy artillery.

5 General Haig, the British commander in France, wrote in March, 1916: "I have not got an Army in France really, but a collection of divisions untrained for the field ". Robert Blake (edt), The Private Papers of Sir Douglas Haig, (1952), 137.
Army, had shown just how unprepared the British Army was for the style of combat on the Western Front. Attempts to seek an Eastern short cut, to end the war had proved even more disastrous. After losing over 50% of its expeditionary force the British had been forced to evacuate the Dardenelles. In the very week the Dublin Rising took place, an entire British Army Corps surrendered to the Turks, a supposedly inferior oriental enemy;

"Kut el Amorha was the most humiliating disaster to have befallen a British expeditionary force since the 1842 retreat from Kabul."

This chain of reverses had such an impact on recruitment in Britain that the flood of volunteers in 1914, had by the end of 1915 been so reduced that with less than 50% of those of military age voluntarily enlisting and with a dramatic 25% increase in the marriage rate caused by men hoping to avoid early enlistment, it had been necessary to introduce conscription.

The introduction of conscription had a considerable

2 Out of 410,000 British troops, 213,000 became casualties. Correlli Barnet, op. cit., 385.
5 Middlebrook, op. cit., 25. The Government had pledged not to conscript married men until all the single men of a particular age group had been enlisted.
6 The 'Military Service Bill' of 5 Jan., 1916.
impact on all spheres of British society, marking a definite watershed in the advancement of the State power at the expense of individual liberty. Only one area of the United Kingdom was immune from conscription, Ireland, and here in the last week of April, 1916 rebellion broke out. In itself compared to the casualties of the Western Front, the 450 dead and 2,600 wounded were relatively insignificant. What did matter was that at such a difficult time Irish rebels aided by a Knight of the realm had sought German aid. The very tone of the Easter Proclamation with references to "her exiled children in America" (an America still neutral and likely to remain so) and supported by "Gallant Allies in Europe" (which could only mean Germany and Austria), seemed to be a 'stab in the back' conjuring up all the old British fears of Ireland being the entry point for a foreign invasion of Britain.

The very fact that it took a week's hard street fighting supported by naval bombardment to regain control of Dublin from rebels with only small arms, that 132 soldiers were killed and 397 wounded - an extremely unfavourable ratio to the rebel casualties - did not


2 Casualties given in the White Paper, Documents Relative to the Sinn Fein Movement, CMD 1108, (1921), 14-15.

3 Sir Roger Casement.

4 CMD 1108, 14-15.
augur well for the success of the coming British offensive against the stronger enemy in France. To put down the Rising, required the dispatch of reinforcements diverted from France, men who as one MP told Parliament, "voluntarily enlisted in order to fight for their country against foreign enemies and have been cruelly and treasonably slain during street fighting by Irish rebels in the United Kingdom". These sentiments were shared by many in Britain where support for Ulster Loyalism grew as sympathy for Irish Nationalism declined. Among the many influences of the 'Rising' on British society was the feeling by the leaders of the Army; that Irish soldiers could never be fully trusted and a renewed determination to prevent the formation of any new Irish Nationalist units in the British Army.

Before considering the impact of 1916 on the Irish community in Britain, it is necessary to consider how it was received in Ireland. It is essential to separate fact from myth; to remember that the present public recognition of the 1916 leaders in naming railway stations etc., after them does not necessarily mean that this was the public attitude immediately after the Rising.


2 Events in Ireland in 1916 may have had an effect on Haig's assessment of Irish soldiers. Middlebrood, op. cit., 100.
The poetic vision of Yeats might have seen, "A terrible beauty is born" but the expression by Redmond of "feelings of desolation and horror"¹ was much more in tune with Irish thought. Certainly the ordinary Dubliner who tried to attack the surrendered insurgents did not welcome a 'Rising' in which, as is always the case, civilians had endured the heaviest casualties.²

It was symbolic of the conflicting loyalties of Catholic Irishmen in 1916 that the Republican flag "which was hoisted from the staff of the Post Office was shot down by an Irish soldier who has won the DCM in France".³ Elements of four regiments recruited from Catholic Nationalists had been employed to crush the Rising.⁴ Taking the police into account there were more Catholic Irishmen fighting for the British in Dublin than the 1,500 or so rebels. While the National Volunteers were locally mobilized in Limerick, Cork and Mayo to assist the British forces.⁵

¹ XCII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 2512.
² At least 250 civilians were killed, see CMC 1108, 14-15.
³ Times 4 May, 1916.
⁴ See the evidence of Col. Cowan, Assistant Adj. General Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland Report, Cd. 8311, (1916), 69. Also General Maxwell's 'Order of the Day' praising those Irish Regiments which have so largely helped to crush this rising, Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook, (Dublin, 1916), 99.
⁵ LXXII H.C. Debs. 5, Cols. 938-9.
If this was the immediate reaction in Ireland itself then it is not surprising that in England 400 Irishmen in Chesterfield were prepared to offer their services as a Volunteer army in Ireland on behalf of the Government without pay. The Central Executive of the UIL in Great Britain, at a special meeting, denounced the "wickedness and insanity of the recent Rising". A Lancashire UIL resolution spoke of the "treacherous outrage in Ireland", while the Liverpool UIL Central Council requested Mr Redmond, "to address a great public demonstration of his countrymen at the earliest possible moment in this the chief stronghold of Irish Nationalists in Great Britain".

However for a number of reasons it proved impossible to organize such a rally and instead the UIL convened a meeting of the Irish Societies in Liverpool which duly condemned the Rising but significantly protested against any further wholesale shooting of misguided men and called for a searching inquiry into the origins of the outbreak, especially the provocative causes arising out of the Carsonite illegalities. Here in this statement, we have the core of the dilemma that confronted the Nationalist movement in Britain and Ireland. Their condemnation of the Rising was essentially

1 Times, 1 May, 1916.
2 Ibid, 4 May, 1916.
pragmatic because it weakened support in Britain for Home Rule for Ireland. Yet it was now apparent that the British Government was going to partition Ireland and that no degree of resistance by the Nationalist movement was going to alter that policy. Nationalists who strongly disagreed with the Republicans nevertheless did not see why Republicans should be executed for armed resistance and seeking German aid when the Ulster Loyalists had a few years earlier pursued the same policy and now had their representatives in the British Cabinet.

The Royal Commission on the Rebellion succinctly summed up the duality of the traditional Irish ambivalence to the use of violence for the attainment of political objectives:

"Irishmen no doubt appreciate the maintenance of order but they appear to have an inveterate prejudice against the punishment of disorder;"¹ (that is when it was politically motivated).

The problem was that the vast majority of the British people at this critical juncture of the war did not appreciate such subtle distinctions between pragmatic condemnation and an emotional, traditional, dislike of punishing the rebels. When shell-shocked youths were being shot by firing squads in France, many could not see why armed rebels should be spared. By seeking clemency the Irish Nationalists in effect conferred a degree of respectability on the Republicans just as their formation

¹ Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, Cd. 8279, (1916), 7.
of the Volunteers in 1913 had given the IRB its opportunity. The heavy-handed policy of the British Army shown by its raiding of the London Gaelic League\(^1\) premises and that of the Glasgow police in their seizure of a hall to prevent a meeting on Ireland,\(^2\) only succeeded in alienating further many Irish Nationalists in Britain who in response to a wide spread ban on Irish songs in the music halls sang them defiantly at their own gatherings.\(^3\) The presence of nearly two thousand Irish prisoners and internees,\(^4\) many of them clearly innocent of any involvement in the Rising, in various prisons and internment camps in Britain was a powerful emotive symbol. Many Nationalists supported the Irish National Aid Fund, covertly founded by the IRB, which looked after those prisoners and internees and within a short period £820 had been raised in London alone.\(^5\) In London there emerged after the Rising, a UIL splinter group the Anti-Partition League of Ireland which was formed to prevent the exclusion of Ulster from any future Home Rule settlement. On the day that Roger Casement was hanged this

1 LXXII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1127. Also see Reynolds News, 8 May, 1916.

2 LXXXIII H.C. Debs. 5, Cols. 17-18. Also see INAD Reports Ms 24, 367, Ms 24, 369 and Ms 24, 387 (NLI) for accounts of various prisons.

3 LXXXII H.C. Debs 5, Col. 1808.

4 According to the figures given in CMD 1108, op. cit., 1,841 persons were sent from Ireland to Britain for internment and 145 imprisoned there after trial by court martial.

5 The INAD (it was also sometimes called the Irish National Relief Fund) accounts in the O'Brien Ms 8485 and 8427. Also see INAD Reports – London, Ms 24, 385, Ms 24, 324, Ms 24, 378, Ms 24, 338 (NLI).
organization changed its name to the Irish Nation League,1 and adopted the Sinn Fein policy that the elected Irish representatives should withdraw from Westminster. A defence campaign in aid of Casement2 was spearheaded by George Bernard Shaw with considerable Nationalist support in Britain which like Shaw believed that the very presence of "unprosecuted traitors"3 in the prosecution against Casement showed the duality of English justice when applied to Ireland. The unscrupulous use of Casement's diaries to prevent a reprieve4 further alienated many of the Irish in Britain.

As well as the Irish prisoners and internees in Britain

1 Times, 14 Aug., 1916.


4 The Attorney General F.E. Smith had played a prominent part in the formation of the Ulster Volunteer Force and sought aid from Germany to resist Home Rule just before the start of the war.

5 For an account of how Admiral Hall, the Director of Naval Intelligence, circulated copies of the diary in influential circles in Britain and America and in doing so, dissuaded some from supporting an appeal for a reprieve, see Colonel Allison, A History of Modern Espionage, (1965), 100-2. Few subjects in Irish history have given rise to so much controversy as the Casement Diaries, popularly held to be British Intelligence forgeries and several works have been written purporting to show the Diaries' falseness; Rene MacColl, Roger Casement: A New Judgement, contd,
there was another group of Irishmen very unpopular with many British people, Irishmen who had come over to Britain to replace workers called up for military service. Legally only those 'ordinarily resident in Great Britain'\(^1\) could be conscripted, but what constituted 'ordinarily resident', what period of residence was the determining qualification? That was decided by the local courts and in Motherwell they established a length of stay extending beyond 28 days as eligibility for conscription.\(^2\) Irish seasonal harvesters in Scotland living in small tightly knit communities, where most of the men had gone into the army, were particularly vulnerable to arbitrary local police action\(^3\) and forcible enlistment\(^4\); even to totally illegal direct military arrest and enlistment without the sanction of a court.\(^5\) Eventually after 50 Irish harvesters were marched handcuffed through the streets of Mossend there was a full scale debate in Parliament on the subject.\(^6\) Assurances were given that Irish harvesters would not be conscripted in future and

\(^1\) LXXXI H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1330.
\(^2\) LXXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1546.
\(^3\) Ibid, Col. 12.
\(^4\) LXXXII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 2089.
\(^5\) LXXI H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 263.
\(^6\) LXXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Cols. 1516-54.
that there would be no more military raids like the one on a London Irish meeting\(^1\) to arrest conscription evaders. Arrests however did continue and the Government, fearing a significant reduction in the number of migrant agricultural workers at a time when it was desperate to increase food production; since the submarine campaign substantially impeded the import of food stuffs, was forced to introduce a system of 'limited residential' certificates guaranteeing immunity from conscription.\(^2\)

By mid 1916 the Government had become a substantial employer of manufacturing labour through its National Munition Plants, and despite extensive female substitution of labour there was still a considerable need for male workers. So the Government directly recruited Irish workers in Ireland, gave them a 'no conscription pledge'\(^3\) and sent them to the English munition works where they replaced English workers who were then sent to the trenches. By June 1918 there were 40,000 of these Irish workers in Britain.\(^4\) They were greatly resented by many, for unlike agricultural workers,\(^5\) the munition employees were relatively well paid. One MP was certainly speaking the thoughts of many when he referred to

"Irishmen filling positions in England that

\(^1\) LXXXV H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 190.
\(^2\) Times, 15 Aug., 1916.
\(^3\) LXXX H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 607.
\(^4\) LXXXII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 2349.
\(^5\) See an article in the Manchester Guardian, 27 Mar., 1915, on the poverty of the agriculture labourers as their wages fell far below inflation rates.
Englishmen have been compelled to forego and leave behind and are drawing wages which these Englishmen by their military service are being compelled to give up.\(^1\)

There was much friction between these Irish workers and the British inhabitants of the towns in which they were billeted. Even more galling to many British people was the War Office decision not to conscript those Irish Republicans living in Britain who had been interned after the 1916 Rising and were now released.\(^2\)

Ireland's freedom from conscription became a festering sore in relations between the two islands. Having suffered at least 415,000 casualties on the Somme in 1916,\(^3\) a further 350,000 at Passenchendale;\(^4\) the replacements were increasingly being obtained by recruiting officers following the biblical injunction of bringing in 'the halt, the lame and the blind'.\(^5\)

The total number of voluntary enlistments in Ireland for the whole of 1917 was three thousand less than the British casualty figure for a relatively minor one day battle

\(^1\) LXXXVIII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1722.

\(^2\) After several court martials and forcible enlistments the War Office decided that the determination of these Republicans was too strong to risk their presence in any army unit where they might well form a subversive nucleus, so they were released, see XC H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1628 and see Antoglagh Autumn 1966. For the reasons for this change of policy see Chief Secretary's Office (Dublin) File 5648/26056 (S.P.O.).

\(^3\) See John Terraine The Mighty Continent (1976) 102. But Correlli Barnet op. cit. 396, states the total British casualties might have reached 600,000.

\(^4\) See Marwick, op. cit., 191.

\(^5\) An Irish migrant in Scotland who because he was ... contd.
on the Messine Ridge. Many British people noted, most unfavourably, that Ireland with a population one tenth that of Great Britain's population had only supplied two per cent of the armed forces of Britain. Nationalists in Britain who tried to outline the Irish contribution were, if listened to at all, reminded that it had been made in 1914, 1915 and 1916 but the war in 1917 showed no signs of ending and the demand for recruits appeared unending. In these circumstances the Government which for very cogent pragmatic reasons did not wish to enforce conscription in Ireland was certainly out of step with the demand of the British public.

But in the Spring of 1918 the hitherto virtually static Western Front was torn asunder by a massive final gamble series of German offensives. In six weeks the British lost a quarter of a million men, the entire British Fifth Army was routed, seventeen year old half trained boys were sent to stem the German advance which had taken them back onto the River Marne where

blind in one eye and therefore had been totally rejected previously for military service was now conscripted - XCVI H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1596. It was true that most of these hitherto medically unfit men were placed in Home Defence and Garrison units, but their very conscription indicates the shortage of manpower.

1 There were 14,013 enlistments in Ireland in 1917 105 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 42. On the 7th of June 1917 the British Army suffered 17,000 casualties in what was only a preliminary to the main offensive later that summer. Barnet, op. cit. 401. It was considered a very successful battle.

2 101 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 103.

3 Terraine, op. cit., 112.

4 William Moore See How they Run - The British Retreat of 1918
they had been in the first month of the war. To reinforce a British Army literally fighting with its "back to the wall",¹ there was as near total as possible enlistment of all civilians under 25, while the age limit for conscription was increased to 55.² With fathers now following their sons into the trenches, Lloyd George told Parliament "It would be impossible without a deep sense of injustice and resentment in this country to carry through these drastic measures without enforcing conscription in Ireland".³

The British public wanted, nay demanded, the conscription of the Irish, 150,000 new soldiers⁴ to replace the decimated Fifth and Third Armies. The only problem was that the Irish nationalists who had long since ceased to regard the war as 'their war' did not wish to be conscripted. The Irish Nationalist MPs withdrew from Westminster to lead a mass campaign against conscription in Ireland. Farmers threatened to plough in their crops, workers went on strike,⁵ and


² 104 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1135.

³ 105 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1344.

⁴ This was the Cabinet estimate of the number that could be obtained in Ireland - War Cabinet Minute 375 (2) of 27 March 1918.

⁵ For a detailed account of the Anti-Conscription Campaign in Ireland see Robert Kee The Green Flag (1972), 618-623 and Calton Younger, Ireland's Civil War (1970), 63-84.
most ominously the Catholic Hierarchy was resolutely opposed to conscription especially as it was also to apply to the clergy. All the old English fears of the 'catholic threat', the 'disloyal alien religious minority' were evoked in Lloyd George's statement that "The Church as a body in Ireland associated itself with a challenge to Imperial supremacy in that country", particularly so when he went on to imply a connection between the Church's anti-conscription-campaign and the alleged German Plot which had resulted in the arrest of many Sinn Fein members in Ireland. In reply to a bitter editorial attack on Catholicism in the Times, Earl Denbigh wrote "It almost makes me ashamed of the word Catholic to see the action now taken by the Irish Hierarchy to combat and resist the Law." The leader of the House of Lords, Lord Curzon, suggested that

1 107 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 962. According to Michael Kinnear The Fall of Lloyd George (1973), 14, Lloyd George believed the Roman Catholic church's opposition to conscription was a conspiracy against Britain but King George V had warned him that the introduction of "Conscription in Ireland was bound to have the direst consequences in the near future... It could mean an end of Ireland as part of the British Empire", an opinion shared by Lord Middleton, the Southern Irish Unionist leader, who told Lloyd George it was "one of the most foolish experiments ever attempted in that country" - Donald McCormick The Mask of Merlin: A Critical Study of Lloyd George (1963), 185.

2 106 H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 1963. Also see Sean O'Luing 'The German Plot, 1918' Capuchin Annual XXXVI (1968), 377-81.

3 Times 24 April, 1918 and 1 May, 1918. For the Irish Hierarchy's opposition to conscription see Tomas O'Flach 'The Irish Bishops and the Conscription Issue, 1918' Capuchin Annual XXXVI (1968), 351-68.

4 Catholic Herald 4 May, 1918.
the Catholic Bishops had threatened their flocks with eternal damnation. The Catholic Union of Great Britain, a self elected aristocratic body, condemned the actions of the Irish Hierarchy for supporting "a movement for organized disobedience to the law."¹ The already wide divisions between sections of the English and Irish Churches, stemming from very different views as to the desirability of Irish Home Rule opened now to chasm-like proportions and not just between the national churches. The Bishops of Nottingham and Salford were only prevented from publicly repudiating the Catholic Union by the last minute discovery that it was officially permitted to act as a spokesman for the Hierarchy on political issues.²

The inability of the German Army to consolidate its Spring offensive gains, the speed with which the American Army was transferred to France, the success of the reorganized French Army offensive of July 1918 and finally the first major successful thrust by the British Army in the War, combined to negate the need for conscription in Ireland. But the wounds that this issue had opened in Britain remained open and festering for a long time afterwards. When a prolonged armed conflict later developed in Ireland many in Britain

¹ Denis Gwynn A Hundred Years of Catholic Emancipation (1929), 259.
² Ibid, 259-60. The Catholic Union had been given in the previous century this authority.
would recall that the Irish had resolutely resisted conscription, played a relatively insignificant part in the British war effort but had secured some of the best paid jobs. Such would be the unfavourable image of Ireland's contribution to the war.

What of the War's effect on Irish Nationalism in Britain? There was not a United Irish League council which had not lost some of its best activists in the flooded trenches of Flanders, on the bloody beaches of Gallipoli or on the snowy heights of Serbia. We may dispute the figures of Irish enlistment in Britain but the UIL contribution must be reckoned as sizeable. In doing so the UIL effectively destroyed itself as a viable political organization. The combination of battlefield casualties and general disillusionment with British policy in Ireland sapped the strength of the UIL to the point where a police officer in its Liverpool stronghold could confidently write:

"Now every Irish Catholic house in Liverpool have some members of the family either serving in the Army in France or risking their lives at sea in merchant ships and they are not influenced by the same tosh which is written about Ireland as they used to be."

1 The UIL Executive Council of Great Britain attributed the poor state of its branches in 1918 to the numbers who had enlisted which it put at 200,000 plus. See the Catholic News 17 August, 1918.

2 Letter from Supt. Dinkworth (Liverpool Special Branch) to the Home Office, 7 April, 1918, reporting on Irish Nationalist support H.O. 45, Box 11009/ File 20126.
But Liverpool was to become the chief IRA centre in Britain. It did not necessarily follow that because a man had served in the British Forces he would be a subsequent opponent of Republicanism. Some of the most famous IRA members had been in the British Army. The only two members of the IRA to be executed in Britain in the 1919-22 period were London born men who had voluntarily enlisted in the British Army in 1914 and had been invalided out as a result of wounds. Loyalties were not necessarily static but variable elements influenced by changing environmental factors. Even before the end of the War Colonel Cowen, who had played a prominent part in recruiting for the Tyneside Irish Brigade in 1914, had organized a Petition signed by 60,000 Irish persons living in Great Britain in favour of immediate Self-Government for Ireland.¹ This demand was reiterated by the Irish Nationalist Veterans Association of Scottish Ex-Servicemen when it was formed.²

In the 1918 General Election the prediction of T. Healy made in the previous year that the policy of the British Government had so weakened the status of the Nationalist Party, "so prejudiced our position that practically every man of us will disappear in a puff of blue smoke

¹ Times 3 May, 1918.
² Home Office Intelligence Report GT 1566 July 1919. CAB 24/82
at the General Election,1 was realized.

Before the Election the Nationalists had 69 seats. They were now reduced to a rump of only 7 seats (4 of them held only because of a regional 'no contest pact' with Sinn Fein in Ulster) while Sinn Fein won 73 seats. T.P. O'Connor was returned unopposed for Liverpool Scotland which he had held since 1885. At the last contest in 1910 he had obtained 78% of the votes cast.2 In the one other constituency that the Irish Nationalists contested in Britain, Liverpool Exchange, Austin Harford polled 8,225 votes, a very creditable 45%3 of the poll considering that a high proportion of his supporters still in the British Army had been unable to cast their votes.4 The Nationalist vote in Liverpool also indicates its relative success in mobilizing the votes of many electors, who had never previously had an opportunity to exercise the franchise.5 Much of this electoral support was the product of the city's violent sectarian

1 XCVIII H.C. Debs. 5, Col. 7945.
3 Ibid.
4 Marwick, op. cit., 264. Estimated that 75% of the soldiers still serving were unable to cast their votes.
5 Kinnear, op. cit., 21, estimates that 80% of the electorate in 1918 had been newly enfranchised.
history; in 1909 one person was killed and hundreds fled their homes when an outbreak of fighting between Catholics and Protestants required the closure of many schools\textsuperscript{1} and two years later two people were shot dead by troops called in to quell renewed rioting.\textsuperscript{2} The Conservative Party in Liverpool was a de facto Protestant Party and in some of the local wards actually contested elections under that banner.\textsuperscript{3} In this sectarian environment the fledgling Labour Party progressed considerably slower than in most other large industrial cities, but whereas in the local government elections of 1913 it had done very badly,\textsuperscript{4} by 1919 it had managed to stabilise a bridgehead and captured several traditional Nationalist wards.\textsuperscript{4} Labour's inroads into the Irish vote was substantially aided by the virtual demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The Executive Council of the United Irish League formally proposed closer co-operation with the Labour Party\textsuperscript{5} and the Northern Irish Nationalist M.P., Joe Devlin, who had briefly been the General Secretary of the UIL in 1904, actively encouraged the Irish in Britain "to go Labour".\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{1} E. Roberts, \textit{Religion and Politics in Liverpool Since 1900}, London University M.A. Thesis (1967), 53-60.
\textsuperscript{2} P. Waller, \textit{op. cit.}, 250-55.
\textsuperscript{3} Roberts, \textit{op. cit.}, 52.
\textsuperscript{4} Waller, \textit{op. cit.}, 266-270.
\textsuperscript{5} Catholic News, 17 August, 1918.
\textsuperscript{6} Frederick James Whitford, \textit{Joseph Devlin: Ulsterman and Irishman}, London University M.A. Thesis (1959), 137.
a course of action also subsequently advocated whenever possible by the Scottish UIL Executive. "Whenever possible" however effectively meant; unless no Nationalist candidate was actually standing and certainly did not imply uncritical support for the Labour Party who were to face Nationalist electoral challenges in Liverpool for another twenty years. But by 1919 the United Irish League in Britain resembled an expeditionary army who having seen their homeland conquered retreat into a fortress more intent on surviving than on sallying forth to fight for a defeated cause.

In this respect the UIL of Great Britain had at least been more fortunate than its counterpart in the United States, which fell to pieces in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising when as one of its leaders acknowledged, "at this junction moderation seems out of the game." The Australian United Irish Leagues (organized on a States basis) initially followed their Irish, British and American counterparts' action in denouncing the Rising but quickly changed their position when it became apparent that the executions had aroused

1 Times 1 March, 1920.


substantial feeling against Britain among the Irish community.¹ This anti-British feeling fused with the emerging Australian Nationalism - strongest among the Irish community - and organized working class opposition to the War, in a campaign that defeated the Government's plan to extend conscription to Australia. A counter, sectarian backlash then developed among the pro-British, largely Protestant, section of the population. This reaction also seemed at one point likely to produce a schism in Australian Catholicism,² on the part of those Catholics who deeply resented Archbishop Mannix's prominent role in the anti-conscription campaign.³

Many of the UIL members in Australia actively involved themselves in this campaign and in the later pro-Irish Republican, Self Determination League while retaining their membership of the UIL which, unlike its American counterpart, survived both the First World War and the subsequent Anglo-Irish War of Independence. A pattern of dual allegiance and even dual membership repeated


to a lesser extent in the United Irish League of Great Britain.

The parliamentary tactics of the Irish Nationalists may often have exasperated many British people, but while seeking a degree of change in the political relationship between Britain and Ireland, they never denied the fundamental unity of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Unlike the new Irish political movement, Sinn Fein in Ireland and the various Self Determination Leagues throughout the British Empire, which demanded a radical rearrangement of that traditional political link with some, especially the leaders, demanding nothing less than the cessation of all political links between the two countries. In the recent War, a Tsar, a Kaiser and an Emperor had been deposed, ancient Empires had been dissolved and replaced by new independent Republics but in Britain there was no significant popular demand for the abolition of the Monarchy or the creation of a new Republic in Britain's oldest colony, as Middlemass observes:

"To have considered the question of a Republic, outside the Empire, however associated, was impossible within the English party system, to believe otherwise was a dream!"

Yet in pursuit of that 'dream', almost 40,000 members of the Irish community in England and Wales, living in

1 Keith Middlemas in his introduction to Jones' Whitehall Diary op. cit., Vol. III, XXII.
an environment already hostile to the Irish as a result of the conscription issue, were to join an organization: the Irish Self Determination League dedicated to ending British rule in Ireland and some of whose leaders, actively involved themselves in sabotage incidents in Britain itself, while providing much of the arms and ammunition the IRA required to wage its campaign against the British forces in Ireland. The next three years were to be the most turbulent period in the history of the Irish community in Britain, generating considerable external tensions and creating substantial internal stresses as the United Irish League leadership stood by; powerless onlookers as the new Irish Self Determination League turned its back on the previous forty years' experience of working within the British political system.
Chapter 6

The Emergence of the Irish Self Determination League

A political movement is a social product, created by the interaction of a complex of environmental and personal factors. To ascribe the 'birth' of an organization to any one, or a small group of individuals is to over-simplify a complex process that is too involved to be simplified in this manner. However members of a political organization can come to realize that their own group, for a variety of reasons, is unable or unlikely to make any significant progress and that a changed political environment requires a fundamental political realignment. This situation happened in the United States when the long established Irish Republican Clan na Gael organization realized it was too small and had too 'secretive' an image to mobilize the growing Irish-American support for the new campaign for Irish Independence. So Clan na Gael sponsored an Irish Race Convention in New York in 1916 for the purpose of forming a much larger and broader based Friends of Irish Freedom organization.¹ Clan na Gael exercised such a strong control over the Friends of Irish Freedom and directed its activities to pursuing its own very Irish-American brand of Republicanism to such an extent that the Sinn Fein movement in Ireland eventually found it necessary to create a new support organization more amenable to its wishes. But the formation

¹ Carroll, op. cit., 52.
of the Friends of Irish Freedom had demonstrated what a small but highly organized group could achieve in the way of mobilizing a new upsurge of ethnic support. The pattern was to be repeated in England by Sinn Fein.

Sinn Fein in England in 1919, unlike the same organization in Scotland, was a relatively minor group "about half a dozen cumannns (branches)over here".\(^1\) It was a regionalized phenomenon essentially located in Lancashire, in particular the Liverpool-Manchester areas\(^2\) though in 1917 a 'cumann' had been established in London. Regional\(^3\) and personal disputes characterized the existence of Sinn Fein in England. Such an organization in a perpetual state of flux could hardly appeal to the growing number of disenchanted nationalists. Who then could organize the 60,000 people who had signed the 1918 Petition which called for immediate self-Government in what was basically a one man initiative? Certainly not Sinn Fein in England since that very large proportion of Irish men in England who had voluntarily or otherwise fought in the British forces were constitutionally debarred from joining Sinn Fein. They could join the IRA but not Sinn Fein.\(^4\) Such

\(^1\) An account of the early Sinn Fein period recalled in a letter from the ISDL to Sinn Fein Head Office, O'Brien, Ms. 8431, 16 Jan., 1925.

\(^2\) O'Brien, Ms. 8435.

\(^3\) There was constant trouble between the London, and Liverpool Sinn Fein branches. See 'The Minutes of Roger Casement cumann', TS 27/179, 14-15.

\(^4\) Rose Killeen when told by the Deportees Compensation Tribunal, that the two executed IRA members Dunne and O'Sullivan were members of her (the Roger Casement) Sinn Fein cumann denied this. She said that as both had served in the British Army and were drawing disability pensions they were constitutionally disbarred from Sinn Fein membership. See, 'The Hearing of the Fifth Day', TS 27/183.
a purist organization could not become a mass movement, but properly used, its small groups could serve as the nucleus of a new movement. That was the argument advanced by two Sinn Fein leaders in England in the early months of 1919 who claimed that the Irish National Aid Fund had demonstrated the possibility of drawing in wider circles to support a Republican cause.

Art O'Brien, a London born civil engineer by profession but publisher by choice\(^1\), though a member of Sinn Fein, was relatively well known and respected in the Irish community having been for many years the President of the London Gaelic League. His position within Sinn Fein was immeasurably strengthened by his appointment as the Dail Envoy (the assembly of the 73 Sinn Fein MP's who refused to take their seats at Westminster) in London in February 1919.\(^2\)

The new Irish Republican Government (Dail Eireann)\(^3\) appointed O'Brien at the not then inconsiderable salary of £750 a year (plus £120 a month expenses) to be in effect their Ambassador, though of course he was not recognized by the British. The Dail Eireann London

\(^1\) Biographical details in O'Brien, Ms. 8417.

\(^2\) Some confusion exists as to the precise date of his appointment, as both February and April are mentioned at different points in the O'Brien Ms. 8419.

Office (3 Adam Street)\(^1\) became an important component of the Dail's Foreign Ministry. O'Brien played a prominent role in establishing contact with foreign correspondents and later with foreign Government representatives, in London.\(^2\)

The Republic's President, De Valera, personally charged O'Brien with the formation of a mass movement in England and Wales similar to the Self Determination Movements then being organized in Australia, New Zealand, Canada, South Africa and Argentina to publicize the Irish demand for independence.\(^3\)

Before O'Brien could begin the process of establishing such an organization he had first to gain the support of Sinn Fein in England, to ensure they would not jeopardize its formation by a public campaign against it in the crucial early stage. In this task O'Brien was greatly aided by Sean McGrath (MacCrait) who since emigrating to London in 1908 had become an important figure in the IRB, and a confidant of Michael Collins. McGrath who had fought in Dublin in 1916, been interned, and served a

\(^1\) The brass nameplate with the title "Delegation of the Elected Government of the Republic of Ireland", 3 Adam St., is preserved in the O'Brien Ms. Box 8457.

\(^2\) For O'Brien's relations with the Dail Department of Foreign Affairs see DE 1/1 and 1/2.

\(^3\) For a detailed account of O'Brien's career as Dail envoy see 'Ireland's First Ambassador in London', M. Maguire's prize winning entry in the feature article section of the Listowel 1979, Writer's Week Competition, in the Irish Post, 22 Dec., 1979.
prison sentence in 1918 for arms smuggling, had a Republican record that few in Sinn Fein dared to openly challenge.¹

Yet it is an indication of the extent of Sinn Fein's resistance to the suggestion of a new organization which would undoubtedly supplant its influence in England, and an explanation of why later, Sinn Fein members were so determined to wind up the Irish Self Determination League, that it required a delegation from Sinn Fein Headquarters in Ireland finally to persuade their English members to accept the necessity for a new organization.

At a conference of Sinn Fein delegates in Manchester in March 1919, the presence of Harry Boland² and Laurence Ginnell TDs (as the Sinn Fein MPs. were now titled)³ representing the organization leadership, convinced the participants, reluctantly, to sanction the creation of a new organization.⁴ The presence of Ginnell, a former Nationalist MP was particularly apt for he had given the farewell speech to the London Volunteers en route to Dublin in 1916.

¹ Biographical details from information his family supplied to Father Gaughan and published in J, Anthony Gaughan, Memoirs of Constable Mee, (Dublin, 1975), 188.

² Boland was to become somewhat of a specialist in launching 'exile' support movements; he helped re-organize the Clan Na Gael movement in America; see A.J. Ward, The Irish Question as a Factor in Anglo-American Relations 1899-1921, London University PhD Thesis, (1967), 284.

³ TD means Teac Dail, member of the Dail.

⁴ See article by S. O'Connor in An Poblacht, 9 Feb., 1929.
The minutes of this conference have not survived, and an unusual degree of security seems to have been observed for the meeting appears not to have come to the attention of British Intelligence. This conference did however impose a number of important pre-conditions before giving the new organization their reluctant sanction. The delegates insisted it must "not be affiliated or officially connected with the Sinn Fein organization in Ireland", and as Sinn Fein in England was to remain as a separate organization, constituting the English section of the Republican movement, the new organization was not to incorporate the title "Republican" in its name.

A non-Republican image would have been very desirable for the new organization as it would have facilitated the recruitment of the many former nationalist supporters, not yet convinced that Ireland should become a Republic. But that was not the motivation behind the Sinn Fein demand. They were determined that the situation in Ireland where many Nationalist politicians "had realized that Sinn Fein was going to win and had come over to it en masse", would not be repeated in Britain. Their insistence that the new organization neither take part in British Parliamentary politics or ally itself with other parties so involved, was aimed at excluding the UIL

1 The only details that I could trace of this conference are contained in a letter from Art O'Brien to Liam MacMahon 24 June, 1919, Ms. 8435.

2 P.S. O'Hegarty, "The Victory of Sinn Fein", (Dublin, 1924), 29.
leaders, who as the influence of their organization declined, were now seeking an accommodation with the Labour Party.¹

Four titles were suggested for the new organization,² the "Irish Republican League" was rejected by Sinn Fein for the reasons given above. It was felt that the proposed name "Irish National League" was too reminiscent of the UIL which had formerly used that name. A third suggestion "Irish Independence League" implied an organizational goal which precluded the mobilization of that considerable number, probably the majority of the Irish in Britain, who still believed that a re-negotiation of the political union between Britain and Ireland was still the maximum possible attainable objective. "Self Determination" embodied in a title; conveyed that element of goal unclarity and ambiguity of objective that best accomodated the tactical differences and conflicting perspectives of the organizers of the new movements. Moreover the chosen name "Irish Self-Determination League of Great Britain" suggested that it was part of the world wide chain of organizations similarly named.

To secure the maximum possible support the initial

¹ The UIL at its August 1918 Executive Council meeting had decided to cooperate with the Labour Party in areas where such tactical alliances were possible, Catholic News, 17 Aug., 1918.

² See an undated discussion document in the O'Brien Ms. 8435.
objectives of the new organization were confined to two aims sufficiently ambiguous in definition and humanitarian in scope to be widely accepted. The ISDL's objectives were proclaimed as:

(1) "To secure the application of the principles of Self Determination for Ireland";

(2) "To secure the release of all Irish political prisoners" - a very popular demand.¹

"Two thousand to two thousand five hundred and many hundreds not able to be accommodated"² attended the inaugural meeting of the ISDL held in London, in May, 1919, justifying the Irish Labour leader, Johnson's observation that "it was quite evident there was a widespread desire on the part of workers of Irish descent and birth to organize and have some connection with the movement in Ireland."³ There was indeed a substantial reservoir of support that could be tapped given the selection of reasonable aims and a good organizational structure.

In the week previous to this London inaugural meeting, a number of Irish miners in Merthyr (Wales), former UIL supporters, not knowing of the planned formation of the ISDL, had founded 'The Merthyr Liberty League for

¹ a 'release the Prisoners' meeting in Liverpool was described as "one of the largest and most enthusiastic gatherings of Irishmen and women ever held in the city". "Hundreds were unable to gain admission" Catholic Herald, 25 January, 1919.

² Letter from Art O'Brien to MacMahon (9 May, 1919) MS 8435.

the self-determination of the smaller nations and the abolition of the Monarchy. This soon became an ISDL branch and a month later the ISDL had spread to "Newport, Bargred and Cardiff".

The Government ordered the seizure of a "Seditious leaflet to the Irish in Britain from De Valera" appealing to them to join the ISDL which the Cabinet was informed was a Sinn Fein initiative "to interest British Labour in Irish affairs". The co-operation between Irish and Labour organizations in Battersea where seven Irish candidate contested the council election was attributed to the influence of the new Self Determination League.

The ISDL spread rapidly across England and Wales. 6,000 were present at its first public meeting in Manchester in July, 1919. By October the growth of the ISDL to 3,823 members organized in 54 branches required a full time secretary and office staff to administer the organization.

1 ROR 1, 30 April, 1919. GT 7195, CAB 24/78.
2 ROR 7, 12 June, 1919. GT 7463, CAB 24/81.
3 Ibid.
4 ROR 8, 18 June, 1919. GT 7534, CAB 24/82.
5 ROR 26, 23 October, 1919. GT 8400, CAB 24/90.
6 ROR 15, 7 August, 1919. GT 7933, CAB 24/86.
7 Letter from A. O'Brien to MacMahon, MS 8433.
At this period of time the ISDL had a Provisional Executive Council. For tactical reasons Art O'Brien held the position of Vice-Chairman having persuaded P.J. Kelly, a leading, if rather independently-minded Liverpool Nationalist Councillor, to accept the position of Chairman. Liam MacMahon an IRB member from Manchester who had drafted the two formative objectives of the ISDL\(^1\) was the Honorary Secretary though ill health reduced his effectiveness. Branches sent their delegates to meetings of this Council but by July, 1919 there were sufficient branches in London to necessitate the formation of an ad hoc local administrative structure by creating a London District Committee.\(^2\) The Intelligence Department of the Home Office, no doubt accustomed to regarding Lancashire as the main area of Irish political activity, seemed to have been particularly surprised by the expansion rate of the ISDL in London, but they were still confident that the ISDL had made a major tactical error in booking the Albert Hall for a public rally in February, 1920 and predicted a small attendance.\(^3\) In the event, as the Intelligence officers had the courage to admit, they were very wrong.\(^4\)

\(^1\) O'Brien Ms 8435. See also Sheehy Skeffington Papers - Ms 24, 691, 24,110, 24,111, 24,112, 22,692, 22,693, 22,694, 22,695, 22,696, 24,113, 24,114, 22,698, 22,699, 24,008 (NLI) for details on the early period of the Irish Self Determination League, which duplicate the above references.

\(^2\) O'Brien, Ms 8435.

\(^3\) ROR 39, 29 January, 1920. CP 523, CAB 24/97.

\(^4\) ROR 41, 12 February, 1920. CP 620, CAB 24/98.
"Admission was by ticket and it was stated that application had been made by 50,000 people. The hall accommodated 10,000 and the great building was filled to overflowing,"¹ so that an overflow meeting was held outside the hall. The complexity of Irish politics in 1920 was shown by the fact that the speakers included a Mrs. Despard, the sister of Lord French, the British Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Two months previously an equally impressive meeting had been held by Manchester ISDL. "In addition to the Free Trade Hall, the New Queens Theatre had to be secured and a meeting was also held in the open air close by."²

In February 1920 the ISDL had 86 branches with a total of 7,300 members;³ a month later the Cabinet were informed that they had recruited another 1,755 members and added eleven new branches to the organization.⁴ The decision of the small Irish Labour Party based on the Tyneside not to affiliate to the ISDL was only a momentary set back.⁵ At least unlike the UIL, it

1 Times, 14 February, 1920.
2 ROR 32, 4 December, 1919. CP 256, CAB 24/94.
3 ISDL Executive Committee Minutes (February, 1920) O'Brien, Ms 8433.
4 ROR 50, 15 April, 1920. CP 1086, CAB 24/101.
was not going to side with the Labour Party (British) at the expense of the ISDL.\(^1\) There was a considerable increase of new members in April, 1920,\(^2\) due at least in part to the publicity gained during the Wormwood Scrubs Hunger Strike when 150 Irish internees, arrested in Ireland and taken to Britain,\(^3\) staged a mass protest action. The ISDL organized a series of marches and meetings, outside the prison, attended by crowds of up to 20,000 people.\(^4\) Attacks on these meetings by anti-Irish elements were resisted by a force of "over 1,000 men (who) marched to Wormwood Scrubs in military formation and formed a protective cordon around women demonstrators as opponents stoned them;\(^5\) the casualty toll of 150 injuries in one protest gives an indication of the violence employed on these occasions.\(^6\) As the condition of the hunger strikers worsened, the protest spread to other areas and took new forms of action. A deputation from the influential and well organized Irish Societies in Liverpool met the Lord Mayor and threatened to bring the port to a standstill if the

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1 At a Scottish UIL Conference a resolution was passed "that it was in the best interests of the Irish to throw in their lot whenever possible with the Labour Party" (British) Times, 1 March, 1920.

2 'A Survey of Revolutionary Movements in Great Britain During 1920', CP 2455, CAB 24/118.

3 128 HC Debs. 5, Cols. 833-4.

4 See Art O'Brien letter Ms 8427, 26 April, 1920 also Harry O'Brien Memoir, 34-35 and DE 2/320.

5 Times, 29 April, 1920.

6 ROR 53, 6 May, 1920; CP 1239, CAB 24/105.
prisoners were not released within two days.\(^1\)

In a parliamentary debate on the issue, T.P. O'Connor, the Liverpool Irish Nationalist M.P. stated

"Many of the Liverpool dockers are Irish men who naturally sympathized with their Irish countrymen."\(^2\)

Another M.P., Mr. Sexton, who was also the Secretary of the Dockers Union, while admitting he had received "numerous letters to call an executive meeting to consider the question of the Irish prisoners" categorically warned that if

"Sinn Fein workers struck, they would do so without authority from their union and would receive no strike pay."\(^3\)

Two thousand dockers did come out on strike in Liverpool on the 29th April, 1920\(^4\) and in Parliament Sexton condemned this "use of the industrial weapon of the strike for political purposes", referring to the unrest in Liverpool which "affected him as a responsible trade union leader and also as a British citizen".\(^5\) Significantly however, in view of the strong inference from O'Connor's remarks that there was considerable concern among the Irish in Britain on this issue, Sexton did ask for the

\(^1\) Times, 28 April, 1920. See leaflet issued by the Irish Workers' Vigilance Committee, "48 hours has been allowed to the Authorities to release the 174 interned Irishmen now on Hunger Strike in Wormwood Scrubs". Pamphlet No. 95 (ILB 300:12 (NLI)).

\(^2\) 128 HC Debs. 5, Col. 1340.

\(^3\) Ibid, Col. 1343.

\(^4\) Times, 30 April, 1920.

\(^5\) 128 HC Debs. 5.
release of the internees. The Hunger Strike was not officially resolved but fizzled out, as strikers became weaker they were paroled to hospitals from whence, as the section on military incidents illustrates, they were smuggled out and hid among the Irish community in London.

An even stronger and more intensive community response was evoked during the 74 day long hunger strike of the Cork Lord Mayor Terence McSwiney in Brixton later that year. In McSwiney's case the Cabinet, perhaps because of what happened in Wormwood Scrubs and afterwards in the hospitals, decided to pursue a firm unyielding approach; and so created the incident which more than anything else in 1920, solidified the determination of the majority in Ireland to secure their independence, while generating a massive shock wave of publicity that reverberated around the world. The Times could "recall no parallel in the history of this country to the duel now reaching its climax in Brixton Prison."

The ISDL was very active throughout the long drawn out affair, organizing protests. One march to Brixton was broken up by a mounted baton charge which was "met with volleys of stones and bricks". The ISDL helped to

2 Times, 26 August, 1920.
3 Ibid.
create a strong lobby for McSwiney's release,¹ and London's Labour Lord Mayors who supported this appeal informed the Prime Minister that "they would not hold themselves responsible for any outbreaks arising from the cruel vindictiveness of the policy of H.M. Government."²

McSwiney died on the 25 October, 1920,³ his body was taken to "lie in state" in Southwark Cathedral where "for many hours before arrival at the Cathedral large crowds had gathered". They had come to mourn, weep and bring floral tributes; "the wreathes or sheaves, often brought by poorly dressed people, almost without exception consisted of white and yellow chrysanthemums, the colours of the Irish Republic."⁴ The Requiem Mass the next morning was celebrated by Archbishop Mannix, Bishops Amigo and Cotter. The congregation included the Labour Party leaders Henderson, Clynes and J.H. Thomas as well as the Mayors of Southwark, Poplar, Stepney, Fulham and Lambeth.

The Times described the funeral procession that followed:

"a mile long was a low estimate and though it walked quite briskly took quite half an hour to pass.... First came bodies of mounted and

¹ ROR 60, 24 June, 1920. CP 1535, CAB 24/108.
² Times, 1 September, 1920.
³ For the hunger strike see: 'Terence McSwiney: Diary Extracts' Capuchin Annual (1941), 308-11; Moirin Chavasse Terence McSwiney (Dublin, 1961); DE 2/4 Correspondence on McSwiney.
⁴ Times, 28 October, 1920.
pedestrian police who were followed and the contrast seemed an epitome of the complete scene - by an advance guard of Irish Volunteers (IRA in uniform).... Line after line of priests walked immediately before the two hearses.... The crowds around the Station (Euston) were so large that the police had trouble in keeping the way clear:1

The Times correspondent, a very observant individual, if not a budding sociologist, remarked that in the procession

"the old were few, the mature were rather numerous while young men and women who had scarcely passed beyond boyhood and girlhood were the majority". As we shall later observe emigration from Ireland in this period was relatively low so the inference must be that many of the young people were not born in Ireland. The correspondent noted that while

"Some of the men looked comfortable and prosperous, the women were more often poorly clad and barehead"!

This scene in London which amazed many spectators, and frightened some of them, was repeated throughout England. 40,000 marched in Manchester, 12,000 attended an open grave ceremony in Liverpool, 4000 in Newcastle and the same number in Bradford. 3

1 Ibid, 29 October, 1920. See also the Police File on the Funeral - MEPOL 2/2465.

2 "Are we to take it that all these people are Sinn Feiners, said one man to his neighbours as he stood on the pavement. It is rather a serious thing for London isn't it. I never guessed we had so many of them right in our midst". Daily News, 29 October, 1920.

3 ROR 79, 4 November, 1920. CP 2067, CAB 24/114.
The emotional response of the Irish community to McSwiney's death reached a level of intensity never before seen and never since equalled, while a considerable section of the British public, including members of Parliament, regretted McSwiney's death even if they did not sympathize with his motives. Others regarded the Republican demonstrations of support as blatant provocations and some employers sacked their Irish workers for attending them.

The ISDL played a very active role in this affair. It had by far the largest contingent of the organized groups in the funeral procession and benefitted from the publicity gained which increased the flow of recruits. In 1920 the ISDL as an organization raised £26,399/1/1½ and the Irish National Aid £13,425/7/3.

In November, 1920 when the ISDL held its first conference it claimed a membership of 26,000. The planned venue of the conference was Manchester but the police there prohibited it so the conference went across the river

1 134 HC Debs. 5, Col. 180
2 Ibid., Col 73. Col.
3 Letter in the Irish Post, (24 March, 1979) by the daughter of a man so dismissed, written as a result of my article on 'McSwiney's Funeral' - Irish Post, 10 March, 1979.
4 ROR 65, 29 July, 1920; CP 1706, CAB 24/110.
5 A. O'Brien, Ms 8432.
6 Ibid, Ms 8433.
to Salford in a different police area. Here a police prohibition was also issued but as the ban legally could not come into effect for 48 hours the conference was able to proceed.¹

The conference minutes were lost in the uproar that followed the IRA Liverpool arson attack (discussed in another chapter) but the main business of this Conference appears to have been the ratification of a Constitution which had already been employed by most branches in a de facto manner. A Constitution of any political organization is usually a composite document embodying various compromises which link together the largest possible number. In the case of a 'Limited Platform',² or 'Solidarity' type of organization, to which category the ISDL belonged, the constitution must either be sufficiently flexible in operation or defined in an extremely ambiguous manner. Alternatively the Constitution may be of such simplicity that in fact it consists of no more than the delineation of its principal objectives. In theory such a constitution is possible; in practice the only form of organization that can exist within such a constitutional framework is a 'Mass Movement'.

¹ Gaughan Mee, op. cit., 193.

² As used in the sense of a 'minimum programme' as employed by Felik Gross, The Revolutionary Party - Essays in the Sociology of Politics (Connecticut, 1974), 78.
as so defined by Parkin.¹

The founders of the ISDL had certainly not envisaged an informal structured organization, based on the category of 'supporters' rather than 'members' for as we shall see the Sinn Fein delegates had established a number of organizational preconditions.

We can modify Clews'² analysis of the membership of 'Communist Party Fronts', for the ISDL could reasonably be described as, at least partially, falling into the category of a 'Front', so as to define the membership or potential membership as consisting of three groups:

1) Those already members of a political organization³ - the precise nature of which will be discussed later - the 'Politicos'.

2) 'Supporters' of political organizations but not actual members either through lack of commitment, or some form of personal impediment eg. age, infirmity, etc.

3) The 'Innocents', constituting by far the largest category of ISDL members; these had been drawn in on the strength of the current political situation, and the ISDL's widespread campaigning.


³ Principally Sinn Fein.
The constitution therefore had to incorporate the not always mutually agreed interests of these groups and wherever possible to mediate between conflicting objectives. Ostensibly the Constitution primarily had to satisfy the largest category of members - the 'Innocents' - hence the two objectives, "Self Determination" and "Release of Prisoners". The first appeared reasonable by virtue of its ambiguity, the second to be a humanitarian objective eminently realizable considering that the 1916 Prisoners had all been released in 1917.

The 'Politicos' insisted and the 'Innocents' concurred that membership of the ISDL should be determined by ascription criteria. A preamble to the Constitution stated that "The League is open to all people of Irish birth and descent" but without actually defining "descent". Given the environment in which the ISDL operated in a country de facto, if not de jure, at war with the country it was supporting, then such 'Membership Exclusiveness' or as Wilson called it "Selective Recruitment" was not unusual.

The equivalent Self Determination organizations in the rest of the world, operating in a very different

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1 John Wilson, *Introduction to Social Movements* (New York, 1973) shows how many racial and ethnic minority groups deliberately repudiate any aid from the members of the opppressor society they are struggling against.
environment, of course welcomed the help of any person; in the USA 50 Chinese applied to join a branch of one organization. While the 'Politicos' undoubtedly wished to ensure that the control of even local branches of the ISDL would not pass into the hands of non-Irish elements, the 'Innocents' could hardly object to a policy which even the UIL had adopted though in a more limited manner. (It had restricted the membership of the non-Irish to 25% of the total branch membership and formally barred them from holding office). The Irish Self Determination League's constitutional emphasis on 'Membership Exclusiveness' would have in these circumstances seemed quite reasonable to members, particularly as the issue of "Irish descent" was never formally defined and was flexibly interpreted by many branches in a highly pragmatic manner. But a proposal by the Bradford Number Three Branch "that English Catholics also be admitted as members" was defeated.

Sinn Fein before, reluctantly, sanctioning the formation of the Irish Self Determination League had insisted the new organization must rigidly pursue a strategy of 'Political Isolationism' and Art O'Brien assured

1 The Times, 7 July, 1919 reported that 50 Chinese persons had applied to join the Rockway Long Island branch of the Friends of Irish Freedom Society.

2 See, Wollaston, op. cit., 82.

3 O'Brien, Ms 8435.
a doubtful Sinn Fein member that the ISDL constitution would specifically include a clause to this effect;¹

"The League takes no part in British politics and is not allied to any political party in England". The unambiguous tone and clarity of wording was in marked contrast to the manner in which the "Self Determination for Ireland" principle was written into the Constitution. This clause which symbolized the new organization's rejection of the long standing Irish political tradition of alliances with English parties was publicly explained as a sign of the ISDL's determination not to associate itself "with English Parties who use the Irish population in this country for their own purposes".² One important intention behind this particular clause was the exclusion of the old Nationalist leadership, in particular T.P. O'Connor who had defined "Self Determination to my mind and to those with whom I am in agreement, is such a measure of liberation, as can be expected in our day and generation and by methods which we consider more practicable in the end than resort to revolutionary methods... but all have the right to work which way

¹ See. letter (19 May, 1919) from O'Brien to an unnamed Sinn Fein member reassuring him that Sinn Fein's objection to participation in British politics would be incorporated in the new organization's constitution - Ms 8435.

² Irish Exile (June, 1922), Charles Diamond, the editor of the Catholic Herald and a bitter, irreconcilable foe of the Irish Self Determination League, had earlier been denounced as a 'political opportunist'; "To a man who has one eye on the English Parliament as a prospective candidate and the other on the Irish people in Great Britain, such an ordinance of self-denial is very disagreeable" - Irish Exile, March, 1922.
they wish."¹

Art O'Brien with his long experience of Irish organizations in Britain was clearly familiar with T.P. O'Connor's tendency to dominate organizations and certainly did not wish to see him as a member of the ISDL. But the ISDL's policy in respect of the United Irish League and its membership was rather ambiguous for while Art O'Brien wrote "I think our attitude towards the United Irish League should be that of ignoring the existence of the organization"², many of the ISDL branches were welcoming rank and file members and even local UIL leaders into their organization.

Thompson and McEwan³ show that this 'co-option' process is necessary if an organization is to mobilize all potential resources and certainly many ISDL branches benefitted from the organizational experience of former UIL branch leaders. Others found that recruiting Nationalist or Labour local authority Councillors considerably facilitated their use of public halls for meetings and fund raising events. But studies by Selznick⁴

¹ T.P. O'Connor to T. Moore of the Leeds ISDL branch (5 June, 1919); O'Brien, Ms 8435.

² O'Brien to MacMahon (19 June, 1919) Ms 8435.


⁴ Phillip Selznick TVA And the Grass Roots (New York, 1966).
and Aldrich\textsuperscript{1} show that 'co-option' can substantially affect and modify the existing organizational structure while Etzioni suggests an influx of new members may 'contaminate' the 'purity' of the organization's programme and substantially weaken it.\textsuperscript{2} Many of the former UIL members certainly brought a moderating influence to the ISDL when they joined it and some of these, Alderman Kelly in particular, later strongly opposed efforts by the Republicans to commit the ISDL to an Anti-Treaty position; but this was not always the case and other former UIL members became radicalized through their participation in the ISDL in a manner similar to Useem's study of American students.\textsuperscript{3}

The inclusion of a 'political isolationist' clause in the Irish Self Determination League's Constitution ensured that former United Irish League members could not join an ISDL branch and use it as a springboard for electoral intervention. In the event this prospect of electoral intervention was actually one of the least important sources of internal tensions that developed inside the ISDL. These basically centred around Sinn Fein's determination to commit the League to an openly Republican

\textsuperscript{1} Howard Aldrich 'Organizational Boundaries and Inter-Organizational Conflict', Human Relations 24 (1971), 279-93.

\textsuperscript{2} Amitai Etzioni A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations (Glencoe, 1951), 103-4.

\textsuperscript{3} Michael Useem 'Ideological and Interpersonal Change in the Radical Protest Movement', Social Problems, 19 (1971), 451-69. Useem shows how previously non-radical American students underwent a radicalization process as a result of their participation in the Anti-Vietnam War Protest Movement.
position even though this was not specifically advocated in the Constitution.

We can best consider the conflict between the different sectional interests in the ISDL and the contradictions inherent in the resulting compromises, if we examine a particular statement of aims and objectives that appeared in the *Irish Exile* after the treaty was signed. In this particular paragraph we will observe how the Constitutional flexibility of power structure and policy formation permitted the public presentation of an extremely elaborated, not to say extrapolated, interpretation of ISDL policy and objectives, which were delineated as being: "To band together the Irish residents in Great Britain in order that they shall as a body support their compatriots in Ireland...

and use every means in their power to secure the application of the principles of Self Determination for Ireland and the recognition of the Irish Republic proclaimed in Dublin in Easter 1916 and confirmed by the representatives of the people of Ireland at the first meeting of the Dail Eireann in January 1919 and further in the meanwhile to render all and every assistance to any Irish subjects imprisoned for political offences in Great Britain and Ireland and to do other acts which will further the cause of an Independent Irish republic".

(My own underlining for emphasis).

1 Note the use of the term "Irish residents" rather than the 'Irish in Britain', implying a minimal connection with British society.

2 *Irish Exile*, May, 1922.
It is very clear that this declaration went a considerable distance beyond the original 'Two objectives' of the ISDL. The phrase "recognition of the Irish Republic", particularly when it was augmented with "an independent Irish Republic", was straight out of the 1917 Constitution of Sinn Fein\(^1\) and was the central plank of the bridge which had linked the traditional dual Monarchists of Sinn Fein\(^2\) with the Volunteers of 1916.\(^3\) It is interesting to note that in the United States where Sinn Fein did not have its own organization, the movement closest to its policy took the name the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic. Sinn Fein itself was constitutionally pledged to the "Recognition of an Independent Irish Republic" but its constitution, also somewhat contradictorily declared that "Having achieved that status, Irish people may by referendum freely choose their own forms of Government."\(^4\) What if the Irish people voted to abolish that Republic, to accept, however reluctantly, membership of the British Empire, and recognize the British Monarch? When that situation did occur, the Sinn Fein party split, civil war occurred in Ireland and the ISDL fragmented in England.

1 D. Williams (ed.) *The Irish Struggle 1916-22* (1966), 34.
4 Williams, op. cit., 34.
To committed Republicans, recognition of the Republic and Self Determination were not mutually inconsistent terms. But the majority of the ISDL membership were not committed Republicans; they pragmatically interpreted the Self Determination principle in a manner similar to that formulated by T.P. O'Connor. Thus the organization's organ, the Irish Exile, was not expressing the views of the majority of its members on this issue.

Other contradictions are contained in the phrases that I have underlined above. It is clear that these centred on the issue of legal and illegal activities. Some prominent members of the ISDL had, as we shall observe later, been involved in the organization of prison escapes in Britain. Indeed one of the prisoners who escaped from Lincoln in December, 1919, Sean Milroy, had spent some time in England organizing new ISDL branches while "on the run".¹

The phrase "rendering all assistance" could, and indeed was, by many interpreted as implying more than just humanitarian aims. To an extent therefore this declaration clashed with the ISDL's repeated professions of its legal nature.

"The ISDL is a perfectly open organization; its aims, objects and operations are absolutely legitimate".²

¹ Gaughan Mee, op. cit., 194.
² Irish Exile, July, 1921.
"The League courts publicity and has nothing to hide, not even a Strickland Report." ¹

These repeated declarations of "legality" were probably necessary to reassure the 'Innocents'. For the ISDL was, as we shall observe, very much of interest to the Police who were to deport a considerable number of its members in two separate periods of the organization's existence.

Figure 1 is a diagramatic representation of the Power Structure of the ISDL; this was structured on four levels. At the top there existed the supreme policy making Annual Conference. However for all practical purposes tactical policy was formulated by the Central Executive Council² and in particular by the much smaller Standing Committee. Branch members potentially had direct access to the Annual Conference, but only indirectly to the Central Executive Committee via the District Committee. This 'governing structure' was the compromise outcome of the 'Politicos' desire to influence the Central Executive Council and the Standing Committee and the necessity to permit the rank and file the appearance of exercising some influence within the organization. The provision of a Special Conference on the demand of twenty-five per cent of the Branches was intended as a reassuring safeguard which would be

¹ Irish Exile, April, 1921. - The 'Strickland Report' was an investigation by the British Army into the Burning of Cork by the Auxilliary RIC Division which was never published.
Fig. 1 Diagramatic Representation of the ISDL Power Structure (1920-1922).

1 Convened by the request of 25% of the branches

2 President, 2 Vice Presidents, 2 Treasurers, General Secretary and delegates.

3 Five District Committees sent delegates to the Central Executive Council on a proportional representation basis.

4 Each branch sent one delegate to the District Committee.
difficult in practice to implement.

Conferences, in fact, were relatively trouble free until after the signing of the Treaty when the divergent views could no longer be contained within the pre-treaty structure of the ISDL.

The Conference agenda was effectively confined within parameters established by Sinn Fein and so we shall discuss in somewhat more detail the position of Sinn Fein when we investigate the Interorganizational Field of the Irish Self Determination League in Part III. The determination of the 'Politicos' to constitutionally enshrine an isolationist orientation and exclusivist strategy, was considerably facilitated by the 'Innocents' dissatisfaction with the attitude of the British Labour Movement to Ireland and so we shall also consider this aspect in Part III.

We earlier observed the 'millet' type relationship between Irish Catholicism and Nationalism. This relationship was clearly exhibited in the Funeral of Terence McSwiney; an event which considerably boosted the League's reputation. Incidents such as this however exacerbated the traditional strains between English and Irish Catholics. Most Irish political movements had in the past been attacked by the English Hierarchy and we shall now observe in Chapter 7 how the Irish Self Determination League, with the aid of a visiting Australian Archbishop,
responded to a particularly serious attack.
Chapter 7
Catholicism in Britain and the Irish War of Independence

The Irish Self Determination League had now some twenty-six thousand members organized on a nation wide basis with a clearly delineated communications structure linking the most geographically isolated branch to the Central Executive Council. The prospects of a considerable membership increase appeared very encouraging although the political environment had become rather more hostile following the recent widespread arson incidents, at the end of November 1920, in Liverpool. Sectarian passions in that city had reached new levels of intensity and the police fearing that a proposed Sinn Fein meeting would provoke widespread outbreaks of fighting between Loyalist and Republican supporters persuaded the Home Secretary to ban all the meetings in the city for the next fourteen days. Ten thousand people lined the Liverpool funeral route of William Ward, the teenage son of Irish parents, shot while trying to help the police capture one of the arsonists. The presence of all the city's Nationalist Party (United Irish League) Councillors at the Requiem Mass was a visible reminder that many, probably the majority, of the Liverpool Irish disapproved of the introduction of a military campaign into their city.  

1 ROR 84, 9 Dec., 1920. CAB 24/116.
3 Times, 4 Dec., 1920.
The Catholic Herald adopted (what was for that publication) a very restrained attitude to the new military campaign. It reported the Liverpool arson under the headline "Roads to Disaster"\(^1\) but with little editorial comment and the following week it inferred that the arson may have been committed by 'Agents Provocateurs' to destroy the image of the Irish political organizations,\(^2\) while several months elapsed before these incidents were condemned as a "crime against the cause".\(^3\) Charles Diamond, the editor and publisher of the Catholic Herald, during a speaking tour in Wales, suggested that as the Labour Party now supported Self Determination for Ireland there was no reason why it and the League should not work together jointly. This suggestion although strenuously opposed by the leadership of the League was supported by local branches like the Clydach on Towe branch in Wales.\(^4\) Some branches of the League like the one in Manchester, which sold one hundred and twenty copies of the Catholic Herald weekly\(^5\) were supporters of Diamond's line on Irish/Labour co-operation. The price of the rapid expansion achieved by attracting former United Irish League organizers like John Brown to the new Felling League Branch\(^6\) was the grafting of elements

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1 Catholic Herald, 4 Dec., 1920.
3 Ibid., 14 May, 1921.
4 Ibid., 29 Jan., 1921.
5 Ibid., 8 Jan., 1921.
6 Ibid., 20 Nov., 1920.
of the old Irish political organizations onto the new and with the subsequent deportations of some of the most important members of the League leadership, a considerable degree of political unorthodoxy among the membership flourished unchecked in many areas. Art O'Brien himself was forced to 'go on the run' and forced to maintain a very low profile as far as the day to day running of the League was concerned for several months\(^1\) but he still remained in the London area operating as the Dail Envoy.

The Irish Self Determination League at this crucial point fortunately gained a very influential propagandist in the person of Dr Mannix\(^2\), the Archbishop of Melbourne and the Titular head of the Roman Catholic Church in Australia. The Australian Catholic Church had still in 1920 a very pronounced Irish character,\(^3\) following the triumph of the

\(\hspace{1cm}^{1}\) According to ROR 93, 17 Feb., 1921. CP 2603. CAB 24/120 "Art O'Brien the President of the Irish Self Determination League is still in hiding", and the Catholic Herald of 23 July, 1921 stated "the annual meeting of the London District Committee welcomed back its President (Art O'Brien) who attended after a very long absence owing to a cause which he had no control over". Subsequently the Catholic Herald implied that Art O'Brien "was on the run in well known London hotels" (4 March, 1922). Detective Inspector Cosgrove told the Deportees Compensation Tribunal that in late 1920 an arrest warrant had been issued for Art O'Brien but he was unable to apprehend him, see TS 27/183. 95

\(\hspace{1cm}^{2}\) See Niall Brendan Dr Mannix (Adélaïde, 1964) and Frank Murphy, Daniel Mannix: Archbishop of Melbourne, (Melbourne, 1938).

\(\hspace{1cm}^{3}\) For example Dr Mannix had been elevated to the Melbourne See while he was still serving in Ireland as the President of Maynooth Seminary and his 'transference' was by no means unique; see A.P. Cosgrove, 'Australia: The Influence of the Irish on the History of the Church in Australia', Irish Ecclesiastical Record, IXIX (1944), 883-95.
Irish clergy over the English Benedictines, a conflict that had dominated the nineteenth and early twentieth century history of Australian Catholicism. Irish Catholicism in Australia had a long history of opposition to British rule, having originally developed illegally in the convict settlements. The Catholic Hierarchy and clergy, like their counterparts in Ireland, had spearheaded the campaign against World War I conscription in Australia. Their opposition to conscription had so antagonized non-Catholics and staunch supporters of the British connection that the aftermath of the controversy was still influencing Australian politics long after the war was over. One episode in this ongoing conflict, an attempt to impose the very symbol of British rule – the Union Jack – on a Irish Catholic demonstration ironically rebounded on the pro-British Melbourne Council.

Archbishop Mannix who declared "I was an Irishman before

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1 For the development of the Catholic Church in Australia see Patrick O'Farrell, The Catholic Church in Australia, (1969), and also his Documents on Australian Catholic History, (2 Vols., 1969).

2 Catholic priests were originally excluded from the convict settlements but subsequently the authorities paid English missionaries, mostly Benedictines, from the Police Fund to counteract the influence of Irish clergy who had arrived in the colony without permission; O'Farrell, op. cit., 16.

3 See Gilbert, op. cit., McKernan, op. cit., and O'Farrell Kelly, op. cit.

4 The Melbourne Council insisted that the Union Jack had to be carried at the head of the city's 1921 St. Patrick Day's parade but Bishop Phelan subsequently wrote, "He was proud of the fact that no Irishman could be got to to carry the Union Jack, no Irish Australian would carry it either, when they got a man (who was a well known

contd.
I was an Archbishop and I remain an Irishman although I am an Archbishop\(^1\) had already incurred the wrath of the British Government as a consequence of his strident leadership of the Anti-Conscription movement in Australia. He now decided to travel to Ireland, via the United States of America where a series of fiery speeches in favour of an end to British rule in Ireland brought forth demands from some Conservatives that he should, at least, be charged with sedition if not actually treason.\(^2\) The British Government, concerned about American Irish opinion, wisely decided to ignore these demands but declared that Archbishop Mannix would not be permitted to enter Ireland. Ever defiant to British rule, Archbishop Mannix boarded an Irish bound liner which was intercepted in mid-ocean by a Royal Navy destroyer which removed him from the liner and conveyed him to Britain,\(^3\) a decision the British Government probably later regretted. Archbishop Mannix the Titular head of a National Catholic Church in a Dominion of the British Empire could not, without inflaming world opinion, be refused entry to Britain although his

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\(^1\) For an account of these events, see Thomas E. Hachey, 'The Quarantine of Archbishop Mannix: A British Preventive Policy During the Anglo-Irish Troubles', *Irish University Review*, I (1970), 111-30.
Exclusion Order from Ireland also applied to Lancashire.¹

Three hundred priests from the dioceses of Westminster, Southwark, Portsmouth and Brentwood signed a letter of protest against the Government's ban on Archbishop Mannix entering Ireland.² Three hundred and fifty clergymen attended a London hotel reception to welcome Dr Mannix,³ who was rapidly becoming the focal point around which a large number of British priests and even bishops organised their opposition to Cardinal Bourne's support for the British Government's Irish policy: a support almost so uncritical that Cardinal Bourne angrily rejected the right of the International Committee for Catholic Studies even to discuss the Irish situation which he declared to be, "a British domestic issue".⁴

Archbishop Mannix's first major public engagement in England was his participation in the concelebrated Requiem Mass for Terence MacSwiney,⁵ which we have already observed was a major propaganda/publicity manifestation for the

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¹ The Home Secretary was jointly petitioned by the Chief Constables of Lancashire, Birkenhead, Liverpool, Bootle and Wallasey to prohibit Archbishop Mannix from entering these areas. T. Jones, op. cit., 43-44.

² Tablet, 2 Oct., 1920.

³ ROR 74. 30 Sept., 1920. CP 1908, CAB 24/112.

⁴ Irish Exile, Sept., 1921.

Irish Separatist movement in Britain in general and the Irish Self Determination League in particular. His participation in the MacSwiney funeral might possibly have been interpreted as merely performing a priestly duty but a few weeks later Dr Mannix embarked on a prolonged series of public meetings throughout Britain, designed to mobilize support for the Separatist cause, which left no doubt about his willingness to play an active and very political role in Britain. He was the principal speaker at a meeting of five thousand people in Leeds (November 12, 1920) and two days later addressed four thousand in Bradford; the next week over five thousand people heard him speak in Bolton. The already noted police prohibition, prevented him from attending the Bootle 'Manchester Martyrs Commemoration', but some eleven thousand "Sinn Feiners" marched and the intelligence officers report of the event particularly noted that many of them "were wearing the costume of the Irish National Forresters". The significance of this

1 Art O'Brien had earlier realised the potential influence of Mannix on the Irish in Britain and suggested the Dail Government should discreetly encourage the Irish Hierarchy to issue the formal invitation to Mannix that Church protocol required, (see Memo., 16 Aug., 1920. DE 2/452.,) for his visit.


3 The 'Manchester Martyrs' was the name given to the three Fenians hanged in Manchester in 1867.

4 ROR 82. 25 Nov., 1920. CP 2169. CAB 24/115.
observation is that the Irish National Forresters, originally a cultural organization which had evolved into a 'friendly benefit society', paying allowances to unemployed and sick members, was traditionally identified as an important element in the constellation of organizations that revolved around the United Irish League. Its presence at this march was therefore an indication of the extent to which long established Irish organizations were moving away from the influence of the United Irish League and into the orbit of the Separatist movement spearheaded by the Irish Self Determination League. It is interesting to note that Archbishop Mannix's first public meetings were in Lancashire and Yorkshire, the traditional heartland of the United Irish League, and that most of them were organized by the Irish Self Determination League who realized the important role such an influential clergyman could play in attracting the vital support of the 'Innocents' and drawing them into the League.

Art O'Brien's own status within the Separatist movement was further enhanced by his mediating role in the abortive peace negotiations of the last month of 1920 between Archbishop Clune of Perth and Lloyd George when O'Brien communicated the views of Dail Eireann on the proposals

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1 The Irish National Forresters was founded as a breakaway from the English Forresters when the parent organization opposed a tribute by their Irish members to dead Fenians in 1876, see Catholic Herald, 27 Oct., 1928.
advanced. His involvement in these talks together with his undoubtedly exhaustive efforts on the international propaganda front enabled him to successively ward off an attempt to set up a specific Department of Propaganda office in London separate from his control. The opening months of the new year of 1921 saw a continuation of the steady expansion of the Irish Self Determination League across the country. The Merthyr branch recorded an increase of sixty members in a single month and more significantly the oldest Irish organization in Manchester (the Shamrock Club) became a branch of the League. In an attempt, at least partly designed to counteract the growing influence of the Irish Self Determination League, Charles Diamond gave a five hundred pound contribution towards the expenses of promoting the new Labour campaign on Ireland:

1 Tom Barry *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, (Tralee, 1969), 178.

2 See the large and detailed file on the opinions of the Spanish, French, German, Dutch, Norwegian, South American, Swedish, Greek, Australian and American foreign newspaper correspondents based in London on the Irish situation, O'Brien, Ms. 8427.

3 See letter from O'Brien (27 Dec., 1920), to Fitzgerald (Dail Director of Publicity) rejecting his suggestion to set up a new Publicity office in London and Fitzgerald's reply (3 Jan., 1921) confirming that London contact with foreign newspaper correspondents was to remain O'Brien's responsibility; O'Brien Ms. 8427, also see correspondence in DE 2/11, 2/436, 2/437 and S 155.

4 ROR 87. 6 Jan., 1921. CP 2429, CAB 24/114.

5 *Times*, 16 Feb., 1921.

6 ROR 92. 10 Feb., 1921. CP 2574, CAB 24/120.
which attracted an audience of six thousand to a meeting in the Albert Hall.\footnote{Times, 15 Feb., 1921.}

The British Government or at least one of its intelligence agencies, was also endeavouring to counteract the growth of the Irish Self Determination League and the influence of Art O'Brien by means of a 'Black Propaganda' campaign in which its agents and informers in the different Irish organizations implied that O'Brien was building up the organization to further his own political ambitions to obtain a seat in the Westminster Parliament\footnote{This 'opinion' was expressed in the London letter of the Irish Independent 4 Sep'H, 1920 a publication supporting the United Irish League and the Nationalist Party. We have already observed, earlier in this thesis, that such a viewpoint was totally at variance with O'Brien's demonstrated objections to an alliance with any organization involved in British Parliamentary politics.} and insinuating that he was covertly "carrying on a flirtation with Mrs MacSwiney"\footnote{ROR 93. 17 Feb., 1921. CP 2603, CAB 24/120. This thesis is not an appropriate place to speculate on O'Brien's sexual affairs or even on his sexual orientation. However my research indicates that he never married or had any apparent close relationship of any length with any woman. It would however be a logical assumption to suppose that if O'Brien had been having an affair with Mrs MacSwiney, which would certainly have offended Republican supporters, it would have featured in IRA/IRB intelligence reports. I can find no trace in these.} (the widow of the recently deceased Lord Mayor of Cork). The British Government also took more direct action against the Irish Self Determination League. Its General Secretary, MacGrath, was deported to the Ballykinlar Internment camp,\footnote{Times, 15 Feb., 1921. CP 2603, CAB 24/120. This 'opinion' was expressed in the London letter of the Irish Independent 4 Sep'H, 1920 a publication supporting the United Irish League and the Nationalist Party. We have already observed, earlier in this thesis, that such a viewpoint was totally at variance with O'Brien's demonstrated objections to an alliance with any organization involved in British Parliamentary politics.} after a series of arson incidents in the London area. An intelligence report subsequently informed the Cabinet that the: "recent arrests

contd.
are causing the more responsible Irish people to hold aloof from the Irish Self Determination League although they continued to contribute towards its funds.\(^1\) The League however maintained its steady rate of expansion. There were now so many branches in Durham that the area was removed from the control of the Tyneside District Committee and a new county District Committee was formed.\(^2\) Forty members joined the newly formed Mountain Ash (South Wales) Branch.\(^3\)

Archbishop Mannix continued to draw large audiences, four thousand in Edinburgh, three thousand in Greenock,\(^4\) and at Burnley the League officials who organized a meeting "attended by over two thousand people were forced to close the hall doors on a large crowd unable to be accommodated inside".\(^5\) Dr Mannix was now to play a very important role in protecting Irish Separatism in Britain, from Cardinal Bourne's onslaught. Cardinal Bourne having observed with considerable concern the involvement of members of the clergy in the Irish Separatist movement decided to

\(^{1}\) ROR 92. 10 Feb., 1921. CP 2574, CAB 24/119.
\(^{2}\) Catholic Herald, 9 Feb., 1921.
\(^{3}\) Ibid., 5 Mar., 1921.
\(^{4}\) Ibid., 26 Feb., 1921.
\(^{5}\) ROR 94, 24 Feb., 1921. CP 2631, CAB 24/120.
counteract its growing influence by reissuing Cardinal Manning's 1867 St Patrick's Day Pastoral letter condemning Fenianism. This letter when it was originally read had produced such discontent in some parishes that it "caused collections to drop to almost nothing" and fifty four years later when it was reissued there were again many "cases of Irishmen leaving the churches as it was read". Manning's anti-Fenian Pastoral Letter was in fact relatively moderate in tone when compared to the denunciations of Irish Bishops, notably Bishop Moriarty (Kerry) who had declared that: "Hell is not hot enough nor eternity long enough to punish such miscreants". Cardinal Bourne however added a personal letter to the original Pastoral letter proclaiming,

"The name Fenianism is no longer in use, but the activity that it connotated is still alive, and the denunciation of the second Archbishop of Westminster applies in unchanging measure to that activity today by whatsoever name it may be called". He ordered both letters to be read in churches throughout the diocese of Westminster. Cardinal Bourne appears to have considered the situation so far advanced that he could not even wait for another month until the more appropriate St Patrick's Day to reissue the Pastoral Letter. The incident of Bourne's Pastoral is an appropriate occasion to examine the impact of Irish immigration on the Catholic

2 ROR 93. CP 2603, CAB 24/120.
Church in England. We have already observed that during the 1918 'Conscription Crisis', the resolute and determined opposition of the Irish Hierarchy to the introduction of conscription in Ireland had generated considerable anti-Catholic sentiment in Britain. In response to this, influential sections of the British Catholic Establishment had consciously sought to publicly disassociate British Catholicism from the Irish anti-war movement. The tensions generated by this incident were still very visible in the reaction to Cardinal Bourne's Pastoral.

It was almost inevitable that conflict should develop between the British and Irish members of the Catholic Church in Britain. Membership of the same religion does not necessarily promote harmonious relationships between different ethnic communities residing in the same country, particularly if one community is the product of recent immigration. In their 1760 'Loyal Address' to George III, the long established Sephardic Jewish community in England went to considerable pains to distinguish themselves from the more recent Ashkenazie Jewish immigrants. The subsequent large scale Jewish East European immigration of the late nineteenth century was initially ignored by the established Jewish community until they realized that the maintenance of their socio-economic position was largely dependent on their efforts to 'anglicize' the aliens. Similar


hostility between the established London Greek community and the newer Cypriot immigrants resulted in the Cypriots building their own Orthodox Catholic churches. The development of Catholicism in the United States during the 1880's was plagued by the bitter controversy between the German and Irish clergy. In part its origins were ideological, with the German clergy influenced by strongly anti-liberal refugee Bishops who had fled Bismarck's 'Kulturkampf'. But much of the dispute and the motivating force to form a separatist 'German Church' in America stemmed from the German community's resentment against the two to one ratio of Irish and German Bishops in the United States during this period. While the Irish Bishops were in overall control; in several areas, particularly in Milwaukee, the local German Bishops tried to exclude all


non-German clergy from their dioceses. These attempts provoked Bishop McCloskey to protest to the Vatican

"if these German Prelates are allowed special legislation as Germans, great injury is likely to follow to the interest of religion. We will be looked upon as a German Church in an English speaking country".¹

McCloskey's comments could equally as well have been applied by English Catholics to voice their fears that mass Irish immigration in the second half of the nineteenth century bought with it the potential danger of Catholicism in Britain being identified as contiguous with Irish immigration. In Australia and the United States the Catholic Church was by definition an immigrant church, with rival immigrant groups competing for institutional control. But in Britain this ethnic religious cleavage embodied the even more potentially divisive issue of a tiny indigenous minority desperately determined not to be swamped by a foreign influx; many of whom resolutely opposed the host societal political system. The 'Recusant'² period of

1 Quoted in Coleman Barry, The Catholic Church and the German Americans, (Washington, 1953), 67.

2 Recusant is the generic term for the post reformation English Catholics though originally it only referred to a refusal to attend Church of England services.
post reformation English Catholicism has been examined at length and in great detail:¹ certainly to a much greater extent than most of the more modern period but none of the recusant historians have yet been able to satisfactorily refute Cardinal Newman's description of a once dominant and powerful institution reduced to a few adherents of the old Religion, "moving silently and sorrowfully about, as memorials of what had been".² Disproportionately concentrated in the higher social classes these Old English Catholics were subject to far less state persecution than their Irish co-religious³ and subsequently exhibited far less communal enthusiasm for the Emancipation so


³ Comparatively few English Catholics were executed, even at the height of the Elizabethan persecution; see, Arnold Pritchard, Catholic Loyalism in Elizabethan England, (1979) and they were never subject to the degree of economic, social, political and cultural discrimination embodied in the Irish Penal Laws which according to the Lord Chancellor did "not suppose any such person as an Irish Roman Catholic to legally exist", quoted in D. Connery, The Irish, (1968), 25.
determinately pursued by the Irish. The mass Irish immigration of the mid-nineteenth century transformed Catholicism in England from a tiny religious sect to a mass Church, yet this increase threatened the societal position of the indigenous Catholic population and adversely affected the emerging pattern of disillusioned Anglicans defecting to Catholicism. The Irish influx was largely responsible for the 1850 Restoration of the English Hierarchy; a move resolutely resisted by many of the Old

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1 See D. Gwynn, The Struggle for Catholic Emancipation 1750-1829, (1928), 41-58, for a concise account of English Catholic opposition to Emancipation.

2 See Mrs Charlton's declaration that she was an "English Catholic, not an Irish one, which is all the difference in the world. English Catholics are responsible beings who are taught right from wrong, whereas Irish Catholics, belonging to a yet savage nation, know no better and are perhaps excusable on that account", quoted in D. Gwynn "The Irish Immigration" in G. Beck (edt), English Catholicism, 1850-1950, (1950), 270.

3 Many of these converts, notably Newman and Manning who both subsequently became Cardinals originally belonged to the Oxford Reform Movement in the Church of England. The act of conversion to Catholicism became popularly known as "going over to the Irish"; see D. Fennell, The Changing Face of Catholic Ireland, (1968), 51, though the number of converts was never more than "a trickle compared to the Irish torrent", see E. Watkin, Roman Catholicism in England, (1957), 181.

4 Upon the death of the last pre-Reformation consecrated Bishop the English Hierarchy ceased to exist as a Vatican recognized body, though subsequently Vicars Apostolic were appointed for administrative purposes.
Catholic elite\(^1\) and one which produced a strong public and state counter-reaction.\(^2\) Unfortunately for the public position of English Catholicism this new upsurge of anti-Catholicism\(^3\) occurred at a period when many of the Catholic clergy in England had departed from their previous staunch public support of their country's foreign policy to champion the unpopular cause of the Papal State's opposition to the Italian Reunification movement which had gained the enthusiastic support of both the British Government and public.\(^4\)

The subsequent loss of the Papal States generated a siege mentality in Catholicism with the Papacy physically withdrawing into the Vatican from which flowed a stream of Papal Encyclicals condemning the growth of liberal and secularist ideology and further isolating Catholics from the mainstream of society. The English Hierarchy's defence of the doomed Papal States did however boost their influence at the Vatican which despite British support for

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1 The Duke of Norfolk denounced this "apotheosis of Papal aggression" and ceased to practice his religion, see V. McClelland, *English Roman Catholics and Higher Education 1803–1903*, (Oxford, 1973), 120.

2 See G. Albion, 'The Restoration of the Hierarchy' in *Beck, op. cit.* Parliament in the wake of several anti-Catholic riots passed the 1851 'Russell Act' forbidding the new Catholic Bishops from taking pre-Reformation Diocesan titles.


Italian Reunification now sought to improve its relations, albeit unofficial, with the British Government. Inevitably Ireland featured prominently in the British Government and Vatican exchanges with the English Hierarchy invariably supporting the efforts of their Diplomats\(^1\) to influence Vatican policy on Ireland\(^2\) and in particular

1 Officially the British Government did not have any diplomatic representation with the Vatican until World War One but frequent exchanges were conducted throughout most of the nineteenth century by British consuls stationed in neighbouring states like Tuscany for this purpose. Their negotiations with the Vatican and the extent of their influence on Irish affairs are clearly detailed in the Foreign Office Class FO 43, 79, 170 and 918 papers and also in the Granville Papers, (PRO 30 Class). Much of the British negotiations with the Vatican on the Fenian issue are however included in the Clarendon Papers in the Bodelian Library (Oxford). For the biographical details etc., of some of these British Diplomatic representatives see, Alec Randall, 'A British Agent at the Vatican: The Mission of Odo Russell', Dublin Review, No. 479(1959), 40-48, and Rachael Weigall (edt), The Correspondence of Lord Burghesh, (1912).

2 For a very readable account of the British influence on the Vatican's Irish policy see John Broderick, The Holy See and the Irish Movement for the Repeal of the Union with England, 1829-1947, (Rome, 1951). British influence at the Vatican was not confined to its diplomats in the adjoining states and the representatives of the English Hierarchy, for according to McClelland op. cit., 120, the unofficial but highly influential representatives of the English Catholic aristocracy successfully interfered in the appointment of several mid-nineteenth century Irish Bishops. While in 1883 George Errington, a leading Old Catholic layman acting on a secret private mission on behalf of the Foreign Secretary, claimed to have been instrumental in securing the appointment of Edward McCabe, as Archbishop of Dublin against much Irish Episcopal opposition; see C.J. Woods, 'Anti-Irish Intrigue at the Vatican', Eire-Ireland, 42(1969), 87-92.
the appointment of pro-British Bishops in Ireland: an interference deeply resented by the laity and Hierarchy in Ireland. Vatican co-operation with the British Government was particularly strong on the Fenian issue in the 1860's with the Papacy clearly identifying the Irish Fenians as posing the same threat to British interests that the Garibaldians posed to Vatican interests. Fenianism was also strongly denounced by the Irish Hierarchy who detested its revolutionary ideological connections with the radical European movements and disliked its secret society organizational format; though it attracted the support of many of the junior clergy.

1 The Vatican was forced to withdraw its proposal that the British Government should have a formal 'veto' on the appointment of Irish Bishops as a result of its hostile reception by the Irish laity, clergy and Hierarchy; see Broderick, op. cit., 68 and Watkins, op. cit., 156-161.

2 Papal, Curial and Vatican official declarations clearly indicate that their condemnation of Fenianism was motivated more by political than religious considerations; with the official Vatican organ, Correspondence de Rome proclaiming "Fenianism was a punishment from heaven for the revolutionary policy of Great Britain on the Continent" quoted in FO 43/101 Dispatch No. 8.


4 See Donal McCarthy, 'The Church and Secret Societies', in T. Williams (edt), Secret Societies in Ireland, (Dublin, 1973), 74.

5 This clerical sympathy for Fenianism so concerned the British Army that the Queens Regulations incorporated a procedure by which officers were to remove their troops from Catholic Church parades if the priest used "seditious or inflammatory language"; See H. Hanhan, 'Religion and Nationality in the Mid-Victorian Army in M Foot (edt), War and Society, (1973), 159, and also see A.J. Semple, 'Fenian Infiltration in the British Army', Society for Army Historical Research Journal, (Autumn 1974).
But when after their failure to incite insurrection, many Fenians turned to political agitation and supported the land reform movement, a serious difference of opinion arose between the Irish and English Hierarchies particularly following Pope Leo XIII's denunciation of the Land League. Land reform was fervently supported by the Irish peasantry who constituted the bulk of the Church and hence their socioeconomic aspirations could not be easily ignored by the Hierarchy even if this brought them into conflict with the Vatican. Irish Republicans have frequently, if rather polemically, condemned the Irish Hierarchy for their support for British rule in Ireland. Certainly the Hierarchy consistently condemned militant Republicanism but in general it supported the constitutional Home Rule or Nationalist movement. Unlike the Cypriot Orthodox Catholic Episcopacy, the Irish Hierarchy never placed itself in the forefront of the resistance to colonial rule but neither did it support British colonialism in the same enthusiastic manner pursued by the

1 See, David Miller, Church, State and Nation in Ireland 1898-1921, (Pittsburgh, 1973), 10.

2 See C.J. Woods, 'Ireland and Anglo-Papal Relations 1880-1885', Irish Historical Studies, 28(1972), 29-60.

Maltese Hierarchy. The overall attitude of the Irish Hierarchy to the fact of British colonial rule was essentially a cautious but highly pragmatic acknowledgement of the status quo, combined with tacit support for constitutional reform.

The late 19th century emergence of a mass Irish Home Rule movement, cautiously supported by the Irish Hierarchy, further strained its already tense relations with the English Hierarchy. Irish Home Rule was not only a deeply divisive issue in British politics, fiercely opposed by

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1 The British conquest of Malta removed it from the ecclesiastical control of the unpopular Sicilian Hierarchy and consequently the Maltese Hierarchy supported the British Colonial rule to such an extent that the Archbishops accepted honorary Major Generalships in the British Army. This traditional close identification of the Hierarchy with Colonial rule has generated in Malta and among Maltese immigrant communities a bitter anti-clericalism of a virulence not found in Ireland; see G. Dench, Maltese In London - A case study in the Erosion of Ethnic Consciousness, (1975).

the English Hierarchy\(^1\) and most of the non-Irish Catholic community\(^2\) but its championship in a 'Millet' type manner by Irish Catholics in Britain also seriously impeded the English Hierarchy's efforts to make denominational education a major electoral issue. Unfortunately for the English Hierarchy, the party favouring denominational education, was the party detested by most Irish Catholics who repeatedly at the poll refuted Disraeli's dictum that "Catholics and Tories were natural allies".\(^3\) The Irish Nationalist movement in Britain, often with the tacit support of the Irish Hierarchy, almost invariably\(^4\)

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4 In the 1885 Election, Parnell advocated a tactical anti-Liberal vote and many Irish Catholics in Britain did temporarily switch their support to the Conservatives as instructed by the Nationalists; see R. Howard, 'The Parnell Manifesto of 21 November, 1885 and the Schools Question', *English Historical Review*, 62 (1947), 42-51.
solicited the Irish vote in Britain on behalf of the Liberals; the party most amenable to Home Rule but opposed to a religious controlled educational system.¹ A similar situation occurred in New Zealand where the Irish community tended to electorally support the pro-Home Rule but secularist Labour Party despite efforts by that country's Hierarch to mobilize a Catholic bloc vote on the schools issue.² Relations between the Irish and English Hierarchies were further strained by Cardinal Newman's abortive efforts to 'take over' the new 'Catholic' University College in Dublin and transform it into an 'Oxford' for the English Catholic elite.³

The hostility exhibited by the old established Sephardic Jewish community in England towards the Ashkenazim; though doctrinal differences and issues of religious practice were involved, largely centred around their disparate socio-economic status and an instinctive fear that the

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¹ Gwynn's observation that the Catholic Church in Britain "could always count on the Irish vote whenever its religious needs were involved" in Beck, op. cit., 286, is not empirically supported in any consistent manner by the detailed electoral studies of Roberts, op. cit., Howard, op. cit., and P. Whitaker, 'The Roman Catholics and the Education Act of 1944', Political Studies, 4(June, 1956).


³ This episode is dealt with at great length in V. McClelland, op. cit., but also see W.N. Field, 'Newman in Ireland', Catholic World, CXII, (1978 ), 28-35, and Roger McHugh, 'Newman's Irish Years', The Bell, X(1950 ), 661-68, for a summary of the intra-Hierarchical tensions generated by this incident.
social position of the Sephardic would be endangered by the 'Alien' Ashkenazim influx which had aroused such deep xenophobic feelings in Britain. Similar tensions between the older Greek and newer Cypriot orthodox Catholic communities in London were almost totally the product of disparate socio-economic status. The deep divisions between the English and Irish Catholic communities in Australia were however fundamentally rooted in the political relationship between England and Ireland. All of these factors, disparate socio-economic status, xenophobia and anti colonial nationalism contributed to the tensions that plagued the uneasy relationship between Irish immigrants and English Catholics. In the United States the dispute between the German and Irish Catholic communities basically centered on the German resentment to the Irish dominated Hierarchy. This tension also emerged in the English Catholic Church, though in a rather different form than in the United States.

English Bishops, regarding themselves as the lineal descendants of the Reformation Martyrs, deeply resented the proselytizing attitude of the Irish Hierarchy towards their country, the often, unrequested, dispatch of Irish missionary priests, as if England was just another mission field of the British Empire where Irish clergy were building their 'spiritual empire'. For their part the Irish Hierarchy deeply resented the combined political influence wielded by their English fellow prelates and the British Government at the Vatican in purely Irish ecclesiastical
affairs. The highly disproportionate number of Irish born members of the English and Welsh Hierarchy in relation to the proportion of Irish clergy\(^1\) and laity in the English and Welsh Church;\(^2\) a much greater disproportion than the ratio of German to Irish Bishops in the United States, was a further source of underlying tension between the Irish and English Hierarchies. In the first 125 years since the Restoration of the English Hierarchy in 1850, there have been 115 bishops;\(^3\) of these 12 were born in Ireland.\(^4\) For the earlier period the ratio of Irish born appointments to the Hierarchy was even more disproportionate; 3 out of 47 bishops in the 1850-1899 period.

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1 J. Bossy, op. cit., 354-60, claims that 12% of the priests working in England and Wales in 1840, i.e., before the famine influx, were Irish born, but unfortunately there do not seem to be any similar figures available for the remainder of the century.

2 In 1851, 520,000 of the 700,000 Catholics in England and Wales were Irish born but thirty years later the proportions of Irish born had declined to only a third; source:Census and Catholic Directory for relevant years.

3 Diocesan bishops (Sedi in Residentus) there have also been, since 1876, Auxilliary bishops (Sedi Titular Infedilius Partibulum).

Gwynn advances several explanations for this disproportionate ratio, particularly in the 19th and early 20th century period. His suggestion that the Irish clergy in England had mostly only parochial experience and therefore could not reasonably expect elevation to administer a diocese cannot be satisfactorily substantiated. His observation that one of the criteria influencing many of the earlier diocesan appointments was social status and the availability of a private income is however probably correct: but Gwynn undoubtedly identifies the real root of the failure of Irish priests to gain ecclesiastical promotion as their possession of "political sympathies that were scarcely compatible with promotion to the Episcopacy in England".

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2 According to P. Hughes, 'The Bishops of the Century', in Beck, ibid., 187-88, two thirds of those appointed to the Hierarchy in the 1850-1950 period had only experience of parochial work.

3 Gwynn, ibid. Many of the early bishops came from a small coterie of upper class families. The Vaughan family alone produced three 19th century bishops.

4 Gwynn, ibid. A. Spencer, 'The Catholic Community as a British Melting Pot', New Community, 2(1973), refers to this problem but his conclusions regarding the influence of the Irish on the control of the Catholic Church in Britain are rather different than mine. In the case of the Westminster Archdiocese, the premier post in the Hierarchy, even more than compatible political sympathies appear to have been the criteria when the name of Merry del Val was deleted by the English bishops from their 'ternia', (nomination list to the Vatican) as Cardinal Vaughan's successor on the grounds that he was a "non British subject", see Beck, op. cit., 213.
Politics bedevilled relations between the Irish and English Hierarchies, and divided the Catholic communities in Britain. The long drawn out crisis of the various Home Rule Bills was followed by the open rebellion of the Irish Hierarchy against the British Government's proposal to enforce compulsory conscription in Ireland when relations between the two Hierarchies reached a new nadir.\(^1\)

It was rather unfortunate that the most influential member of the English Hierarchy during this early 20th century critical period had gained the reputation of being very "unsympathetic" on Irish issues.\(^2\) Cardinal Bourne was elevated to the Archdiocese of Westminster from the adjoining Southwark diocese in 1903 but his early attempts to merge both dioceses antagonized his former clergy and flock, many of whom were Irish.\(^3\) An even more ambitious proposal, that the Vatican, should ecclesiastically recognize the subordinate political relationship between Ireland and Britain, by elevating the sixty year old see of Westminster above the thousand year old See of Armagh, infuriated the Irish Hierarchy: though Bourne's move almost backfired when an annoyed Pope Pius X counter-proposed that Armagh should be elevated to the status of a Patriarchy over all the British Isles.\(^4\) Cardinal Bourne's determination to train

\(^1\) Even during the early war period when the Irish Hierarchy was supporting the British war effort a dispute developed with the English Hierarchy over who should supply Army chaplains, see Miller, op. cit., 312.

\(^2\) Quoted in Beck, op. cit., 176.

\(^3\) See D. Gwynn, 'Cardinal Bourne and Ireland' Irish Ecclesiastical Record LVI(1940), 87-101.

\(^4\) Catholic Herald, 26 Mar., 1921.
his own clergy rather than import priests from Ireland further antagonized the Irish Hierarchy.\textsuperscript{1} His efforts to obtain a Papal Rescript against the Catholic Herald, a publication advocating the assimilation of the Irish in Britain, was a classic example of his highly authoritarian approach and refusal to brook criticism that so needlessly alienated potential supporters. His refusal to permit the celebration of a mass for Michael Davitt, who as a teenager had used his IRB pistol to prevent a mob burning down a Lancashire Catholic church and who subsequently became a respectable Nationalist leader, offended many Irish Catholics.\textsuperscript{1} While his objection to a special St. Patrick's Day mass in Westminster Cathedral indicated a near total failure to recognize the importance of the 'Millet'-type juxtaposition of Catholicism and nationalism in Ireland even though his mother was Irish born. Or perhaps he had indeed learnt from his mother the situational ethnic significance of this dual link and instinctively shrank from any action that might offend English Catholics.

Cardinal Bourne was almost certainly aware that he had not been his fellow prelates first choice for the Westminster See and that he had only emerged as the compromise candidate after Merry del Val had been eliminated for political reasons. The Old Catholic aristocracy deeply resented a middle class successor to the

\textsuperscript{1} Catholic Herald, 29 Oct., 1921.
aristocratic Vaughan¹ and often ignored or even snubbed his views in the course of their 'defence' of Catholic interests in the House of Lords. Bourne himself was certainly a conservative on political issues - he subsequently condemned the 1926 General Strike as a "sin"² - but for the sake of Catholic education (his main interest in church affairs) rather bravely formed a tactical alliance with the Irish Parliamentary Party to amend the 1906 Education Bill. But this temporary alliance with their traditional Irish opponents infuriated many Catholic conservatives.³ Two years later Bourne enraged the Liberal Government when he publicized a private instruction by Prime Minister Asquith forbidding any public procession during the 1908 Eucharistic Congress in London.⁴ An infuriated Asquith then publicly denounced, "this gang of foreign cardinals taking advantage of our hospitality to parade their idolatries through the streets of London, a thing without precedent since the days of Bloody Mary".⁵

In the ensuing public uproar, the Liberals failed to hold

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¹ George Scott, The Roman Catholics, (1967), 240, quotes one aristocrat, Vaughan "had been succeeded by Cardinal Bourne with whom relations had been impossible".

² "a sin against the obedience which we owe to God", quoted in Beck, op. cit., 178.


⁴ See The Annual Register, (London, 1908), 195-7, for this exchange of correspondence.

⁵ Quoted by Liam de Paor in a Radio Telefis Eireann broadcast as reported in the Irish Times, 16 Jan., 1977.
a Newcastle constituency after the United Irish League successfully mobilized an anti-Liberal Irish by electoral backlash against this "anti Catholic insult". But many English Catholics believed that Bourne had displayed a serious error of judgement; breaking the traditional low public profile of English Catholicism when he published Asquith's reminder of the existing anti-Catholic legislation.

Bourne was certainly not however prepared to confront the Lloyd George government on its Irish policy, when criticized for not supporting the Irish Hierarchy's denunciation of 'Official Reprisals', Bourne argued,

"I am an Archbishop in England and in London... I cannot forget that, in any public statement I make. In Ireland, it is Ireland that counts. In England it is not only Ireland but also England and the whole Empire... You have to expect a

1 Irish Catholic, 26 Sept., 1908.

2 Some Catholics however publicly tried to defend Bourne see, Catholic Processions, a Defence of the Right of Roman Catholics to Hold Public Processions, (Guild of Our Lady of Ransom, 1908).

3 In 1931 a police officer investigating a report that a Wimbledon Catholic procession had broken the law by merely walking under eighty yards from one church entrance to another wrote "it appears that the carrying of the Host and the wearing of vestments in public places is contrary to the 1829 Act", MEPOL 2/303, and also see MEPOL 2/3062 for a similar incident in 1938. In 1926 the Cabinet decided not to support a private member's Roman Catholic Relief Bill which would have abolished the 1549 provision against keeping Roman Catholic books in the realm, the 1791 injunction against Catholic churches having bells or steeples and the 1549, 1791 and 1829 provisions outlawing all foreign religious orders, see Cabinet 33(26), 19 May, 1926. CAB 23/53.
slightly different point of view on the Irish question from one whose duty it is to be English as well as a Catholic and a Archbishop."\(^1\)

This was a reasonable, and even an honestly frank admission of the political pressures bearing on the head of a national church. The French Hierarchy faced similar pressures during the Algerian conflict\(^2\) and even Cardinal Gibbons, while privately supporting the Irish cause, persuaded the 1920 National Conference of American Bishops not to issue any public statement on the Irish conflict; after the Foreign Office intimated that they might permit American missionaries to replace the expelled German priests in Palestine, India and East Africa.\(^3\) In Ireland itself, only Bishop Fogarty displayed any real enthusiasm for the politics of Sinn Fein; most of the Hierarchy condemned IRA actions in far stronger tones than they castigated the British Official Reprisal Policy\(^4\) while

\(^{1}\) Quoted in Francis Oldmeadow, *Cardinal Bourne*, (1944), Vol. 2, 184-5.


the Bishop of Meath actually placed the "curse of God" on the IRA\(^1\) and Bishop Cohalan even excommunicated the entire Cork IRA.\(^2\)

But when members of the Irish Hierarchy attended a function organized by the Rome Representative of the Government of the Irish Republic, a *Times* editorial asked whether the Vatican "realized what feelings such an open act of sedition is calculated to produce in loyal British subjects".\(^3\) The passions aroused by Ireland flowed at a very high tide level throughout the Catholic Church in Britain in the early 1920's. The Belgian Cardinal Mercier who had been lionized by the English Catholic establishment during the War was now bitterly reviled by Admiral of the Fleet Lord Kerr, the President of the Catholic Union, for suggesting that Ireland like Belgium was entitled to its independence.\(^4\) The "lies and deliberate falsehoods of the Tablet" were denounced by Bishop Fogarty\(^5\) of Kerry at a Harrowgate clergy reception to greet Archbishop Mannix, though that leading English Catholic journal had strongly condemned the Official Reprisal policy.\(^6\) English members of the congregation walked out in protest when a London

\(^1\) *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Nov., 1919.
\(^2\) But apparently not a single IRA member resigned in the face of this injunction; see T. Barry, op. cit., 65.
\(^3\) *Times*, 7 June, 1920.
\(^4\) *Catholic Herald*, 8 Jan., 1921.
\(^5\) Ibid., 20 Nov., 1920.
\(^6\) *Tablet*, 2 Oct., 1920.
priest offered prayers for the dying MacSwiney.\textsuperscript{1} After a similar incident an irate English parishioner sent his Irish born parish priest £5 to say masses for "RIC men murdered by the IRA" only to hear him subsequently announce masses for "Irish policemen who have recently died".\textsuperscript{2} The Catholic Young Men's Society of Great Britain refused to discuss Ireland at their Annual conference; allegedly under pressure from Cardinal Bourne.\textsuperscript{3}

Cardinal Bourne's Pastoral letter however produced the most serious counter reaction of the Anglo-Irish War of Independence. To many in the Irish community, he was reviled, though wrongly, as having vetoed Roger Casement's admission to the Catholic Church just before his execution until he renounced his 'treason'.\textsuperscript{4} Bourne had however instructed the Wormwood Scrubs Prison Chaplain to refuse the sacraments to hunger striking Irish prisoners.\textsuperscript{5} His Pastoral letter now alienated many more of the laity and clergy. There were mass resignations from the Westminster Catholic

\textsuperscript{1} Catholic Herald, 27 Nov., 1920.
\textsuperscript{2} Quoted in D. Gwynn, 'Bourne', op. cit., 93.
\textsuperscript{3} Catholic Herald, 28 May., 1921.
\textsuperscript{4} See D. Gwynn, ibid., 95, who denies the reports and also his 'Roger Casement's last weeks', Studies liv (1965), 63-73, where he claims Casement had been baptized by his Catholic mother and therefore did not need to be 'received' into the Church.
\textsuperscript{5} See report in DE 2/135, according to Art O'Brien; Fr Musgrave the Chaplain refused to obey Bourne's order.
Federation\(^1\) and reports of large scale walkouts by angry members of the congregation when Bourne's Pastoral was read.\(^2\) One London priest prefaced the Cardinal's Pastoral with the observation "my brethren as far as I can see this is a political letter. I however have been enjoined to read it to you. I shall do so and you can form your own opinion of it".\(^3\) Father O'Gorman of the Church of the English Martyrs in Tower Hill read out the Pastoral and then collected £30 for Irish Relief from his congregation.\(^4\)

The Catholic Herald expended many column inches in a theological effort to show that Cardinal Bourne's Pastoral letter was not binding on Catholics and the men of the Church of Our Lady of Compassion (East Ham) convened a meeting to protest against the Cardinal's action.\(^5\) Many of Cardinal Bourne's most vociferous critics could not have been described as Republicans. The Nationalist MP Jeremiah MacVeagh wrote to the Times denouncing this "political manifesto" and bluntly informed Cardinal Bourne that when,

"Catholics of Irish birth or sympathies need guidance on faith or morals they will receive it at the hands of their own episcopacy and not from an English Cardinal..... Cardinal Manning was a democrat, worked for the cause of temperance and was a devoted and fearless friend of

\(^1\) Catholic Herald, 26 Feb., 1921.  
\(^2\) ROR 93. 17 Feb., 1921. CP 2603, CAB 24/120.  
\(^3\) Catholic Herald, 19 Feb., 1921.  
\(^4\) Ibid.  
\(^5\) Catholic Herald, 19 Feb., 1921.
Ireland. I fail to discern any points of resemblance between Cardinal Mannix and Cardinal Bourne.¹

This blunt public repudiation was but the forerunner of the major onslaught on Cardinal Bourne, launched by Archbishop Mannix who as the head of a National Church had equal status with the Cardinal. Archbishop Mannix deliberately chose a luncheon attended by a hundred and twenty members of the Lancashire clergy to attack his fellow prelate and though he did not name Cardinal Bourne directly, the inference in his remarks was clear:

"there were men today who in their references against Ireland quoted Cardinal Manning. Cardinal Manning was a friend of Ireland, a friend of the people and if he was alive today he would be on the side of Ireland."²

Dr Mannix formed a focal point around which members of the clergy, dissatisfied with Cardinal Bourne's Irish views rallied.³ In 1921 there were three Irish born members of the English Hierarchy.⁴ Bishop Cotter of Portsmouth was one of the concelebrants of the MacSwiney Requiem Mass and had received an Irish Self Determination League delegation.⁵ He actively aided Archbishop Mannix and was subsequently presented with three hundred guineas by the Melbourne

¹ Times, 15 Feb., 1921.
² Catholic Herald, 26 Feb., 1921.
³ Cardinal Bourne described Self Determination for Ireland as a "foolish catchword", Catholic Herald, 19 Feb., 1921.
⁴ The country of birth was ascertained by consulting the Catholic Directory (1920-1) and Annuario Pontifico, (Rome, 1920-1).
⁵ Irish Exile, June, 1921.
clergy in recognition of his help. Bishop Kelly of Plymouth appears to have kept a very low profile on the issue of Ireland and I can trace no speeches by him on this subject but Bishop Lacey of Middlesborough antagonized the Cabinet when he wrote a letter to his local Irish Self Determination League branch supporting their objectives. Some non-Irish-born members of the Hierarchy also showed their dissension from the policy of their Government in different ways. The Bishop of Nottingham in his Advent Pastoral Letter commented that the "present conditions of affairs in Ireland is a public scandal" and stated that "things would be very much worse if it was not for the fundamental strength of Irish Catholicism" which restricted the degree of resistance to the British forces. The Archbishop of Birmingham, whose mother, like Cardinal Bourne's, had been born in Ireland, played a prominent role in the formation of the Committee of British Catholics for Reconciliation between Great Britain and Ireland. This Committee sent a Memorial to the Prime Minister stating that,

"Ireland in virtual rebellion is a drain on our military strength and military resources.... social unrest in Great Britain is seriously aggravated by the disaffection with His Majesty's Government of the masses of British workingmen of Irish extraction owing to the troubles of Ireland".

1 Catholic Herald, 4 March, 1922.
3 Catholic Herald, 4 Dec., 1920.
4 Tablet, 30 Oct., 1920.
Bishop Amigo of Southwark was responsible along with Archbishop Clune of Perth for a particularly crucial personal intervention at the Vatican which persuaded the Pope not to release a prepared statement condemning Sinn Fein in Ireland. This Gibraltar born prelate, who wished however he was "an Irishman", concelebrated in his Southwark Cathedral the Requiem Mass for Terence MacSwiney which provided the Irish Republican political organizations in Britain with such an important opportunity of demonstrating their new strength. He also appeared on the platform at several of Archbishop Mannix's public meetings.

Considerable sums were raised by the Catholic Church in Britain in response to the Northern Irish bishops appeal for aid for the five thousand Catholics forced out of the Belfast shipyard. Archbishop Ilsley sent £1000, Bishop Cotter £550 and many individual parishes were included in the long list of donations. But many Irish Catholics noted with bitterness that Cardinal Bourne who had been so energetic in raising post war relief funds for central European distress did not subscribe to the Irish appeal. Bourne found himself increasingly out on a limb.

1 See report from Gavan Duffy, the Dail Representative in Rome to De Valera (21, Feb., 1921, DE 2/441).
2 Catholic Herald, 7 May, 1921.
3 Irish Exile, June, 1921.
4 Catholic Herald, 1, 15 Jan., 1921.
5 See letter from Jeremiah MacVeagh, Times, 19 Feb., 1921.
The Daily News claimed Cardinal Bourne had not only failed on his visit to the Pope to gain a strong condemnation of Sinn Fein but had been told by the Pontiff to moderate his stance on Ireland which was apparently embarrassing the Vatican.\(^1\) Whether this instruction did modify Cardinal Bourne's views cannot be ascertained\(^2\) but at the annual meeting of the Hierarchy a month later, Cardinal Bourne was requested to communicate the bishops' "unease on the Government's Irish policy to the Prime Minister."\(^3\) The Hierarchy collectively issued a joint pastoral letter stating that "events are daily occurring which perplex and shock the public conscience of both nations", and called for the month of May to be a 'month of prayer' for peace in Ireland.\(^4\) "Thus reluctantly and with some misgiving did the Roman Catholic Church in England join the ranks of denominational bodies expressing their opposition to Government policy in Ireland."\(^5\) Several weeks before this Pastoral Letter, seven Anglican bishops and the leaders of the fourteen Nonconformists Churches wrote to the Times\(^6\) supporting the Archbishop of Canterbury's denunciation of the official reprisal policy\(^7\) while Bishop

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1 Daily News, 2 March, 1921.
3 Times, 7 April, 1921.
4 Ibid., 25 April, 1921.
5 Boyce, op. cit., 79.
6 Times, 6 April, 1921.
Gore and other influential Anglican clergymen formed a Church of England Peace League to intervene in the Irish issue.  

The leadership of the Irish Self Determination League undoubtedly one of the organizations that Cardinal Bourne associated with latterday Fenianism, organized a series of public meetings to condemn the Pastoral Letter. The Poplar and Wapping branches marched en masse complete with pipe and fife bands, to a local church for a Mass to honour Kevin Barry. The Chorley Branch of the League formed a Catholic Truth Society and recommended other branches to do the same. A large protest meeting in the Kingsway Hall (London) was subsequently reported as a "spontaneous outburst of protest by men and women who were wounded in their deepest religious and patriotic feelings by the unwarranted attack made by Cardinal Bourne on the Irish Cause". The twin notes of religion and nationality were clearly and distinctly struck from the very opening of the meeting which began with the singing of "Faith of our Fathers living still in spite of danger, fire and sword". Liam McCarthy who chaired the meeting told the audience that they were "engaged reluctantly in a solemn task and that only a sense of duty to their fellow countrymen and the cause of Irish freedom induced them to

1 Church Times, 3 Dec., 1920.
2 Catholic Herald, 1 Jan., 1921.
3 Ibid., 12 Nov., 1921.
4 Ibid., 26 March, 1921.
undertake that meeting". Councillor Purcell moved the
resolution: "We warn Cardinal Bourne that whilst as
dutiful Catholics we will respect and obey the Church
in matters of faith and morals, we will not suffer any
ecclesiastical dictation or interference in political
matters". P.D. O'Harte seconding the resolution reminded
the audience that the "layman was just as much entitled
to his political opinions as the Cardinal "and expressed
his gratitude to the "Archbishop of Canterbury, Bishop
Gore and the Bishop of Peterborough for their outspoken
condemnation of the barbarities perpetrated in Ireland".
The meeting then concluded with the singing of 'God save
the Pope' and 'the Soldiers Song' (the Republican anthem).
The Irish Self Determination League considered the chal-
lenge of Cardinal Bourne to be sufficiently important
to warrant a two page account of this meeting in the Irish
Exile, (April, 1921) while another page was given to an
interview with Archbishop Mannix, entitled "the Vatican
and Ireland" in which the readership were assured that the
Pope did not share Cardinal Bourne's viewpoint.

An Intelligence officer reported that "revolutionary senti-
ment is damaging the influence of the Roman Catholic Hier-
archy"¹ and the tidal wave generated by Cardinal Bourne's
actions continued to ripple through the columns of the
Irish Exile for months. The alienation of many Irish

¹ ROR 66, 5 Aug., 1920, CP 1743, CAB 24/110.
Catholics from the viewpoint represented by Cardinal Bourne was expressed in a very strident manner in an article, entitled, "A Contemptible Clique, English Catholics and Irish Nationality". This article expressed the frustrations of those who believed that,

"We Irish are the Catholic Church in this country. Without us the Churches and the altars would be deserted" .... "we have subscribed out of our poverty to raise edifices to the Almighty in a Pagan land.... what's our reward, the malignant hatred of the Norfolks".

The refusal of Church authorities in some areas to allow the Irish Self Determination League to use church halls as meeting places provoked the bitter criticism that "we have little or no voice in the affairs of the churches we have built, which we maintain, and we are refused the use of Catholic halls because we are Irish".

The writer of this article was only partly correct, for an examination of the columns of the Irish Exile and the Catholic Herald reveals, that the Irish Self Determination League branches reported more instances of permission to use church halls than refusals and more examples of local priests arranging special masses at the request of the League, to commemorate events with a definite Irish political connotation than refusals. The article does however illustrate Denis Gwynn's

1 Irish Exile, August, 1921.

2 The Duke of Norfolk was bitterly disliked by many in the Irish community in Britain. A fervent Unionist he had chaired a rally, in support of the Ulster Loyalists at which he had presented Carson with a gold sword; see D. Gwynn Redmond, op. cit., 211.

3 Irish Exile, August, 1921.
view that "very deep divisions did emerge in the Church in Britain over the issue of Ireland during 1920-21."¹

The proposal in the *Irish Exile* that the Irish Catholics should form a separate Irish Church in Britain was never a feasible proposition. The Vatican would never have sanctioned such a divisive and controversial change and the British Hierarchy would never have tolerated such a political move fraught with profound consequences for the relationship of the Church in Britain to the wider society. There may not have been any specifically Irish Churches in Britain like the Belgian Church of Our Lady of Hall in Camden,² or the Polish Church of Our Lady and St Casimir in Shadwell.³ But in many churches where the congregations were predominantly Irish and the clergy were Irish priests prepared to say masses with definite political connotations, there existed 'de facto' if not 'de jure' Irish Churches. In many other churches the clergy permitted collecting and the congregations contributed generously to the various Irish Relief funds. This strength of feeling was often too intense for individual bishops to attempt to curb and the divided opinions of the Hierarchy in Britain prevented any efforts by individual

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¹ Gwynn, Beck, op. cit., 262.
² Catholic Herald, 28 June, 1922.
³ Ibid., 24 Dec., 1921.
bishops to discipline their clergy for involvement in the Irish Separatist Movement in Britain during the 1920-1 period.

Cardinal Bourne's attack on the ISDL and the deportation of some of its leading members had shown the extent to which both Church and State were concerned about the influence of the League and its ideology on the Irish in Britain. The response of the League and its new supporters in the nationalist movement, towards Cardinal Bourne's onslaught indicated that the ISDL and its members were determined not to be intimidated by the Hierarchy: just as the continued influx of new recruits, despite the deportations, indicated a determination by many in the Irish community to resist the efforts of the State to discourage support for the Irish cause in Britain. We shall observe this continuing expansion of the ISDL in the next chapter.
St Patrick's Day (March 17) 1921 was celebrated more soberly than usual by the Irish community in Britain. In deference to the situation in Ireland, many of the traditional banquets were cancelled in favour of concerts held to raise funds for the White Cross Fund. At the Gaelic League Queens Hall concert attended by four thousand people there was a ten minute long standing ovation for Archbishop Mannix. The Catholic Herald remarked that "a remarkable feature of the St Patrick Day celebrations in London was the number of coloured people from all parts of the world who showed an anxiety to identify themselves with Irish national sympathies" by attending the masses and concerts. The Birmingham area of the Irish Self Determination League jointly organized a large rally in the town hall in co-operation with the Irish National Forresters and the local Irish Institute but their choice of speaker, Charles Diamond the editor of the Catholic Herald, no doubt was not approved by the League's leadership whose policy was

1 Catholic Herald, 19 March, 1921. This was an Irish Relief Fund whose trustees included Cardinal Logue and Michael Collins.

2 Ibid., 26 March, 1921.

3 Ibid.

4 Catholic Herald, 26 March, 1921.
to exclude Diamond from all platforms whenever possible.

The Irish Self Determination League continued to expand. At the March (1921) meeting of the Executive Council it was reported that since December 1920 the League had gained fifty one new branches and twelve thousand recruits and had sent three and half thousand pounds from its central funds to Ireland. The Halifax Branch had now almost five hundred members, a local Anglican vicar addressed the Leicester Branch meeting and the Dowlais Branch built its own Irish Club. The first edition of the new Irish Exile (March 1921) produced by the London District of the League reported encouraging signs of growth throughout the London area. The Walworth Branch had doubled its membership, to one hundred and twenty members, since the beginning of 1921. Fulham's membership had increased from sixty four, in May 1920, to three hundred and fifty. The Central London Number Four Branch was reported as having two hundred and fifty members. Southwark, Balham and Battersea had three hundred and forty, two hundred and five and one hundred and twenty members, respectively. The Poplar Branch with four hundred members had the largest recorded membership but Forrest Gate with over three

1 Catholic Herald, 12 Mar., 1921.
2 Ibid., 5 Feb., 1921.
3 Ibid., 26 Mar., 1921.
hundred and twenty members reported that: "it is not yet fully representative of the Irish population of the district". The Peckham Branch decided to appoint a "canvassing committee to go through the local register (the report does not specify whether this was an electoral roll or some other directory) and call upon all Irish residents and invite them to join the Branch".

The growth of offensive IRA operations in Britain had resulted in many Irish Self Determination League branches being denied the use of local halls: "Since last November it was almost impossible to secure halls for our meetings". This report by the Central London Branch was echoed by the Forrest Gate, Wood Green and Canning Town branches. The central direction of the League was impeded by the actions of the authorities who withheld mail from the branches to the head office and frequently raided the premises. The League officers however glossed over these difficulties with a stirring appeal to

"fill up the ranks and show the Government that they more they fill Ballykinlar (an Irish internment camp to which League officials were deported), the more they fill the Irish Self Determination League".

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1 *Irish Exile*, March, 1921.
2 *Irish Exile*, March, 1921.
3 Ibid.
4 See a large file of correspondence from Art O'Brien to the Post Office complaining that his mail was being delivered days late, if at all; O'Brien, Ms 8427.
5 *Irish Exile*, March, 1921.
"By the spring of 1921 an influential body of political, intellectual and ecclesiastical opinion was ranged against the conduct of Government policy in Ireland."¹ The British Government had lost the all important propaganda battle in Britain and the ramifications of this defeat extended to the British Army in Ireland where the GOC reported his, "Soldiers (were) disillusioned by propaganda in Britain, meetings and House of Commons debates".² The hard line advocate of crushing Republicanism by military means, Sir Henry Wilson, (Chief of Imperial General Staff) confessed his reservations about the wholesale imposition of Martial law to all Ireland: "unless England was on our side, we would fail, and if we failed, we would break the army".³ With the exception of small ineffective pro-unionist organizations like the Truth About Ireland League⁴ the Government had few public defenders, a situation which one commentator ascribed to the fear of inviting attacks by the IRA in Britain.⁵ Lloyd George's harsh military policy had been intended to restore sufficient order to permit elections to be held in Ireland.⁶ But according

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¹ Quoted By Boyce, op. cit., 81.
² GOC Ireland Weekly report, 23 May, 1921. CP 2965, CAB 24/123.
⁴ They confined their efforts primarily, to showing films on 'Sinn Fein atrocities' to selected audiences - people were asked to send "their visiting cards and five shillings for a ticket", Times, 22 June, 1921.
⁵ See Richard Dawson, 'Weekly Reports', 18 April, 1921. D 989, 5/16 (Belfast PRO).
⁶ For the British policy in Ireland see C. Townsend, contd.
"March (1921) proved to be the worst month for murder - intimidation and attacks on the Royal Irish Constabulary were extended to England".¹

The Cabinet's intelligence advisor also gloomily reported that in Ireland: "It cannot be conscientiously said that any headway has been made against the IRA and there is a feeling among the people that Sinn Fein will win".² The army, however, still expressed its confidence that it could still win a military victory³ and embarked on a new policy of executing all rebels taken in arms.

The Irish Exile reported the growing list of executions under the banner headline "They died for Ireland. Execution of Prisoners of War".⁴ The mother of one of the men executed, Thomas Whelan, a former 1917 Frognach camp internee, was presented with a crucifix from Hammersmith Catholics which was brought by a girl dressed in Republican colours to Archbishop Mannix for his blessing.⁵ Thomas Whelan was executed for his involvement in the shooting of fourteen British Intelligence officers in Dublin.

¹ T. Jones, op. cit., 53.
² ROR 100, 7 April, 1921. CP 2811, CAB 24/122.
³ GOC Ireland report, 12 April, 1921, CP 2826, CAB 24/122.
⁴ Irish Exile, May, 1921.
⁵ Ibid.
(November 11, 1920) and Archbishop Mannix's gesture could have been interpreted by many in Britain as an expression of support for the actions which had led Whelan to the scaffold. Whelan's execution along with five other men aroused strong feelings of opposition in the Irish community in Britain. The Irish Nationalist Party members of the Liverpool City Council convened a special meeting on the eve of the executions to denounce the "barbaric policy of the Government" and declared that the men's "only crime is that of striving for the freedom of their own country". The Southwark League Branch officers were received by Dr Mannix and Bishops Fogarty and Cotter when they presented the Archbishop with an illuminated address, made by a local nun., in recognition of Dr Mannix's services to the Irish Self Determination League. Over three hundred ecclesiastics attended a farewell dinner for Archbishop Mannix and his departure from London was turned into a striking manifestation of the strength of the Irish Separatist Movement in England:

"Distinguished members of the Irish and English Hierarchy, Irish priests and thousands of Irish residents in London, assembled at Victoria Station to wish God speed to His Grace, who was deeply affected by the touching and impressive demonstration so peculiarly Irish in character. Republican colours were much in evidence and one of the most remarkable features of the send off was the singing of the 'Soldiers Song' which the Archbishop, Bishops, priests and laymen honoured by uncovering their heads".

1 Catholic Herald, 19 March, 1921.
2 Irish Exile, June, 1921.
3 Ibid and see Catholic Herald, 14 May, 1921.
Archbishop Mannix returned to Australia via Rome where he performed one more valuable service to the Irish cause by persuading the Pope to make a public donation to the White Cross Fund accompanied by a letter he had drafted for the pontiff. ¹ The Irish Self Determination League must have regretted losing the valuable services of their most effective propagandist, who had spearheaded their recruitment drive in the old United Irish League strongholds in Lancashire and Yorkshire, with such success that the Blackburn Branch had now five hundred members and had collected over three hundred and fifty pounds in under a year, while the Bolton Branch had formed a Gaelic Athletic Association club. ² The Swansea No. 13 Branch had collected over six hundred pounds since July 1920, ³ and the four hundred and seventy members in Poplar had raised three hundred and seventy pounds. ⁴ A bazaar held by the Fulham League Branch in the local town hall and opened by the Mayor and Mayoress of the Borough raised over a hundred pounds. ⁵ Almost the only area in the Irish Self Determination League to report a decline in membership during April 1921 was Wigan where "over two hundred young men of the district had returned to Ireland owing to the

² Catholic Herald, 23 April, 1921.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid.
coal trouble.\textsuperscript{1}

The leadership of the League endeavoured to maintain its political isolationist stance stressing that its proposed May Day "demonstration is entirely distinct from any other gathering which may be held in Hyde Park on the same day".\textsuperscript{2} Over seven thousand people attended the League rally,\textsuperscript{3} and the Peckham Branch refused an invitation to participate in a Labour Party meeting on Ireland on the same day.\textsuperscript{4} The Standing Committee, at its May meeting, in a move designed to isolate further the League from other political influences decided that

"propagandist literature issued by branches shall be subject to the approval of the District Committee and that propagandist literature issued by the District Committee shall be subject to the censorship of the Executive Council".\textsuperscript{5}

Some of the League leaders were concerned that several branches had sent delegates to a Communist organized conference.\textsuperscript{6} The Standing Committee also decided, "to render all and every assistance to any Irish subjects imprisoned for political offences in Great Britain and Ireland", and

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textit{Catholic Herald,} 25 April, 1921.
\item \textit{Irish Exile,} April, 1921.
\item \textit{Catholic Herald,} 23 April, 1921.
\item \textit{Irish Exile,} April, 1921.
\item \textit{Irish Exile,} June, 1921.
\item The Northern Section of the British Bureau of the Red International of Trade Unions (Profintern) had a conference on March 5, 1921 at which several League branch delegates were present ref. ROR 96, 10 March, 1921. CP 2698, CAB 24/120.
\end{enumerate}
to "assume responsibility for legal defence fees of the twenty one Irishmen in Manchester arrested and on remand, on Treason Felony charges".¹ This decision had considerable political implications for the League, which following the deportation of the *Irish Exile* editor (Fintan Murphy) had challenged the police to show even the slightest link between the League and the IRA.² The Manchester arrests had occurred following a weekend which had started with a wholesale series of major arson incidents in the city and concluded in a late night shooting encounter at the Erskine St. Club (an Irish Self Determination League Branch meeting place) which left one IRA volunteer dead and another along with three police officers, wounded. Twelve pistols, grenades and a considerable quantity of explosives were found in the club where all the twenty one men had been arrested.³

The arrested, in the opinion of many, could only be described as being charged with 'political offences' if one believed that setting fire to seven buildings and shooting at the police was a political action. Several League members were deported in May 1921 following a series of armed attacks on the relatives of RIC members living in London which resulted in one fatality. The Cabinet were informed that as a result of the police raids and arrests,

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¹ *Irish Exile*, June, 1921.
² Ibid.
³ ROR 100, 7 April, 1921, CP 2811, CAB 24/123.
"Irish people who have hitherto been outspoken in their sympathy for Sinn Fein have become reticent." But the Very Rev. D. O'Meara (administrator of Southwark Cathedral) wrote to the press condemning their attributions of the arson incidents to Sinn Fein stating that: "that kind of thing is apt to lead to condemnation of what is itself a perfectly legitimate and good movement." There were few branch reports in the April edition of the Irish Exile, the copy having being seized in a police raid but the new London organizer, Councillor Purcell reported the next month that new branches had recently been formed in Kennington, Finsbury, Shepherds Bush, Charlton and that fourteen other branches were in the course of formation throughout London. The Stepney Branch, founded in June 1920, had now almost two hundred and fifty members. At a meeting of two hundred members of the Forrest Gate Branch twenty five pounds was collected for the 'Derry Election Fund'.

The June 1921 issue of the Irish Exile appeared with the banner headline: "The Great Republican Victory". Its victory context was, that despite dozens of raids, which had resulted in the deportation of Brian O'Kennedy (Acting

1 ROR 107, 28 May, 1921, CP 2979, CAB 24/123.
2 Irish Exile, May, 1921.
3 Irish Exile, May, 1921.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
General Secretary of the Irish Self Determination League) C.B. Dutton (Treasurer), Dermot O'Brien (Organizer) and four other officials, the League was still expanding but there was a much wider context perhaps not then fully realized by the Irish Exile's editor. There had indeed been a victory, though it could not literally be described as a Republican victory. Under the Government of Ireland (1920) Act elections were held in May 1921 for the proposed new Northern and Southern Irish Parliaments. In the North the Unionists obtained forty seats to the Nationalist's and Sinn Fein's twelve but in the South, Sinn Fein swept the board in one hundred and twenty four constituencies (the other four, Trinity College seats were taken by the Unionists)\(^1\). Partition in Ireland had become a virtual reality which the IRA was not strong enough to defeat.\(^2\) The British Cabinet had prior to the elections decided on a nine to five vote not to have a truce during them for fear of weakening their military position.\(^3\) On the day before the elections, General Macready (GOC) warned the Government that with the morale of his forces at such a low level, "unless the rebellion is effectively smashed by October..... practically the whole of the troops will have to be relieved".\(^4\) The day after the elections

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1 Kee, op. cit., 713.


3 T. Jones, op. cit., 70.

4 GOC's Weekly Report, 23 May, 1921, CP 2965, CAB 24/123.
(May 25) one hundred and twenty IRA volunteers launched a 'Tet' style offensive. In broad daylight they burned the Customs House (the administrative centre of the British Civil Service in Ireland) situated in the centre of Dublin.\footnote{See Oscar Traynor (who led the attack), 'The Burning of the Custom House', in \textit{Dublin's Fighting Story}, (Tralee, N.D), 162-8. The IRA lost five dead and eighty volunteers were captured but like the 'Tet Offensive' in Vietnam (1968) an apparent military defeat was a shattering psychological victory.} It took almost another two months of bitter bloodshed and fighting before a truce was arranged. The Government, while tentatively negotiating indirectly with De Valera and others through its officials,\footnote{For the convoluted history of the often tortuous course of those pre-truce overtures, see R.S. Churchill, \textit{Lord Derby, 'King of Lancashire'} (1959) Lord Derby was a British diplomat who met De Valera in April. John Wheeler-Bennett, \textit{John Anderson} (1962) 72-7. Anderson was the Under Secretary, Ireland. C.U. Street, \textit{Ireland in 1921}, op. cit., (chap. 5) - Street was a Dublin Castle Intelligence officer. Ormonde Winter, \textit{Winters Tale}, (1955), - Winter was the chief of British Intelligence in Ireland. W.A. Phillips, \textit{The Revolution in Ireland}, (1923), 204. The Diaries of Mark Sturgis, (PRO 30/59/4). Lord Longford and T.P. O'Neill, \textit{DeValera}, (1970), 115-25.} still seemed to favour a hard line policy of declaring the South of Ireland to be a Crown Colony and the imposition of Martial law.\footnote{Cabinet meeting 24 May, 1921, CAB 23/25, and a discussion document on Martial law, 27 May, 1921, CP 2483, CAB 24/123.} Many people were involved in the tortuous road to the truce so that it is difficult to single out any one individual. 

Art O'Brien given his position as Dail Eireann representative in London undoubtedly knew of the tentative peace
proposals but there was no mention of them in either the June or July issues of the *Irish Exile*. His main efforts, other than countervailing the effects of the deportations, which had now reached the figure of twenty one, were devoted to preparations for the forthcoming Second Annual Conference of the Irish Self Determination League. O'Brien and his supporters apparently hoped to persuade the Conference to modify the communications channels of the League in a manner that would have substantially weakened the influence of the branches outside London. The Central Executive Council consisting of over seventy delegates from the District Committees met four times a year at a cost of eight hundred pounds - "clearly unwieldy and expensive". It was now proposed to create a much smaller Council consisting of the President, Vice President, Treasurer, Secretary, with ten delegates elected to represent the five 'Areas', into which England and Wales were to be divided. In effect this proposed Council would only have been marginally larger than the Standing Committee. The League would have been much more closely controlled by the central group of 'Politicos' in London. The ordinary branch membership would ultimately have had considerably less influence in the formation of League policy but were to be persuaded to accept the change by employing the emotional argument that it would reduce "expenses by five or six hundred pounds a year which would

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1 *Irish Exile*, June, 1921.
be saved for Ireland".\(^1\)

In the event this controversial proposal was never put to the Conference which met on the 25th of June (1921) in Clerkenwell Hall (London). Shortly after the Conference commenced a large squad of detectives accompanied by short hand writers entered the hall and announced their intention of observing the proceedings. Only routine administrative matters were then dealt with and there were no specific references to the strength of the Irish Self Determination League. The outgoing officers - Councillor P.J. Kelly (President), Art O'Brien and Hugh Lee (Vice Presidents), Martin Maloney and Liam McMahon (Treasurers) were re-elected without a contest. President Kelly in his address to the delegates, referred to the police presence in the hall and reminded them that although their first Manchester Conference was prescribed, many of their officers deported and their premises constantly raided, the League now had "upwards of three hundred branches and a membership greater than any of the previous Irish organizations in Great Britain".\(^2\) Kelly reaffirmed the 'Political Isolationist' foundation principle of the League remarking that "Our attitude towards British Labour is the same today as when I addressed you at Manchester. Whilst grateful to British Labour and other English organizations for their sympathy... we must still maintain our attitude of complete and

\(^1\) Irish Exile, June, 1921.
\(^2\) Irish Exile, August, 1921.
absolute independence of English organizations". The bitterness of the controversy provoked by Cardinal Bourne's Pastoral Letter resurfaced during Kelly's subsequent remarks. He praised the attitude of the Protestant Churches before referring to the:

"silence of the Hierarchy of the Church to which the majority of us belong has been totally inconsistent with the high moral principles which that Church propounds... it has been a shock to many of us who have always looked to the Hierarchy of the Catholic Church for leadership when questions of morality and righteousness were involved, to smite the wrong doers no matter how mighty or exalted. Here we have looked and looked in vain".  

The sense of alienation from many of the Hierarchy that pervaded these remarks was to appear in an even stronger form during the subsequent history of the Irish Self Determination League. Speaking of the rumours of new peace proposals, Kelly said "the vital factor in any measure, the complete control of the fiscal system is absent and a nation which does not control its fiscal system controls nothing". Shortly after concluding the Presidential address, Kelly was arrested and detained for two days, an event which provoked a number of questions in Parliament by members of the House who believed the police action was uncalled for. The Conference ratified the practice already adopted in some areas, of naming branches after

1 Irish Exile, August, 1921.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Ibid.  
4 143H Debs 5, Col. 2173.
dead patriots and permitting District Committees at the discretion of the Executive Council to make their own 'bye-laws'. The delegates, the next day, attended a large demonstration in Trafalgar Square at which the presence of numerous tricolours was said by several MPs to have caused "great irritation to loyal citizens". Other MPs adopted a different stance. Several weeks prior to this incident, in a furious debate on Ireland, Jack Jones, who spoke at many League meetings was ordered out of the House after referring to the Chief Secretary of Ireland as "the Chief Assassin" and Oswald Mosley spoke of "the organization of a murder gang under the auspices of an English Government". Oswald Mosley "shocked by the excesses of the Black and Tans crossed the floor of the House". He was not the only one to desert the Government benches on the issue of Ireland.

And when the Government narrowly won a vote on its Irish policy in the House of Lords (normally a Government

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1 *Times*, 27 June, 1921; *The Catholic Herald* 2 July, 1921 described it as the "largest Irish meeting ever seen in Trafalgar Square".

2 *HCDebs. 5*, Cols. 2329-31.

3 *Catholic Herald*, 13 June, 1921.


5 Other notable figures were, Lord Robert Cecil, Lord Henry Cavendish-Bentwick, Brigadier General Sir George Cockerill: see Boyce, op. cit., 63.

stronghold) the ultimate arbitrator in the British political system decided to make a rare direct political intervention. The history of how King George V's rejection of a Government prepared speech for the opening of the new Northern Ireland Parliament, in favour of his own appeal for conciliation finally broke the Government created logjam of intrigue, duplicity and double-dealing and thus cleared the way to the establishment of a truce has been recorded often. But historians have seemed strangely reluctant to speculate to what extent the King intervened to counteract, what he considered to be the mistaken policy of his Government. Was the undoubted direct pressure he exerted on his ministers also accompanied by an unprecedented series of officially (Palace) inspired 'leaks' to foreign newspapers making public the King's disagreement with his Government?  

On the 24th of June, 1921, two days after the King's speech at Stormont, Lloyd George invited DeValera "as the chosen leader of the great majority in Southern Ireland" to attend a conference in London. After further discussion


2 The story behind the *New York Times* headline 'Irish Peace Offer Ordered by the King' was intensively investigated by Donald McCormick, op. cit., 192-4. His work cannot be regarded as forming part of the mainstream of academic history but nevertheless offers revealing insights which historians have tended, for their own reasons, not to explore.

3 D. MacArdle, op. cit., 471.
a meeting in the Mansion House (Dublin) on the 8th of July agreed to establish a truce\(^1\) to come into effect at midday on 11th July. The armed conflict with the British forces in Southern Ireland ended on the morning of 11 July 1921 in a manner strikingly similar to its commencement on the 19th January 1919. The first two members of the British Forces to die at the hands of the IRA had been Catholic policemen; the last two to die were also long serving Catholic policemen. In between these events a long list of casualties (never satisfactorily counted)\(^2\) had either produced a dramatic swing in public opinion, or so hardened many that they had become indifferent to the everyday reality of violent death. Whichever of these


\(^2\) James gives the figures of 752 Irish civilians killed i.e., including IRA volunteers, civilians shot by the British forces deliberately and by accident, civilians shot as 'spies' by the IRA and accidentally: killed and 866 wounded. His figure for British losses is 176 police and 54 soldiers killed, 251 police and 118 soldiers wounded. All figures are for the period 1 Jan, 1919 to 11 July, 1921; James, op. cit., 149. Kee gives the Crown Forces casualties (British Army and RIC) as 525 killed and 935 wounded for the same period. Kee op. cit., 699. The *Freemans Journal*, 12 July, 1921, claimed that 707 'civilians' had been killed and 756 wounded between the period 1 Jan., 1919 to 11 July, 1921. Comerford using IRA GHQ figures states that 109 IRA volunteers and sympathetic civilians were killed and over 800 wounded for the period Jan., 1919 to April 1921 - James J. Comerford, *My Kilkenny IRA Days*, (Kilkenny, 1978). James' British casualty figures are much lower than Kee's and his 'civilian' figures are also proportionately much lower than those of the Freeman's Journal while Comerford's statistics of course exclude civilians shot by the IRA as 'spies' whom Kee reckons as "well over a hundred", 699.
explanations is preferred, the reactions to the first and last deaths were very different. For whereas the Soloheadbeg incident had evoked a massive outburst of clerical condemnation, very evident general public displeasure, disquiet among the Sinn Fein membership and even unease in the ranks of the IRA, there was no such reaction to these last-minute killings,¹ despite the particularly dubious circumstances surrounding one of them.²

A fortnight prior to the Truce in accordance with Dail Eireann directives,³ a large number of census forms were collected from Irish residents in Liverpool and publicly burnt.⁴ Now the streets in the Irish areas were decorated in Republican colours⁵ (although the IRA had been instructed to discourage any such celebrations).⁶

¹ "Whereas the killing of Constables MacDonnell and O'Connell at Soloheadbeg had shocked the Irish nation, the deaths of Sergeant King and Constable Clarke barely caused the flicker of an eyelid except among those who mourned them." Kee, op. cit., 717.

² Constable Clarke, with thirty four years service in the RIC, was shot dead while digging his garden in Skibbereen Irish Times, 12 Jan., 1921. Skibbereen was one of the least Republican towns in Southern Ireland. Out of a population of 3,000, it had a dozen Sinn Fein members and only four IRA volunteers (three of whom were in prison at the time of the truce). Tom Barry, op. cit., 85, was very scathing about Skibbereen's militancy or rather lack of it and of Clarke's death.

³ Dail Decree, 11 March, 1921, DE 2/8, forbidding Irish citizens from aiding the British census.

⁴ Times, 22 June, 1921.

⁵ ROR 115, 21 July, 1921, CP 3154, CAB 24/125.

⁶ IRA GHQ issued a directive: "Men under your command are not to hold celebrations. Civilians in your Brigade area are to be discouraged also from holding celebrations. Victory has not yet come to our arms". Quoted in Comerford, op. cit., 823.
Truce to Treaty: The False Dawn

From the moment the Dail delegates, De Valera, Griffith, Barton, Stack, Childers and Plunkett disembarked at Hollyhead \(^1\) pier (14 July 1921) they were greeted with fervent enthusiasm by many of the Irish community in Britain. One delegate, later recalled that: "all the Irish in London seemed to be waiting for our train at Euston" \(^2\), "thousands of Irishmen and women from all parts of the city and suburbs cheered themselves hoarse" \(^3\) as they welcomed their leader to the historic meeting between the Prime Minister of Britain and the President of Dail Eireann at Downing St. (14 July 1921). Contemporary photographs show row upon row of Irish people kneeling outside Downing St \(^4\), praying for the success of the negotiations that commenced inside Number Ten with Art O'Brien, in his capacity as the Envoy of the Dail Eireann, introducing the Dail delegates to Lloyd George \(^5\).

The meetings of the 14th, 15th, and the 18th of July between Lloyd George and De Valera amounted to little more than a 'sizing up' assessment process \(^6\) by the two men, one determined to demonstrate the might of British power, the other

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1 See report in the Catholic Herald, 16 July, 1921.
2 Gaughan, Austin Stack: Portrait of a Separatist op. cit., 155
3 Irish Exile, August 1921.
4 See the photograph in Calton Younger, op. cit.
5 See T. Jones, op. cit., 89.
6 See Longford, ibid., 71.
equally determined not to be overawed by it. De Valera and his fellow Catholic delegates, in a calculated snub to Cardinal Bourne and Westminster Cathedral, attended Sunday Mass in Southwark Cathedral where a large force of police were unable to hold back the huge crowd who insisted on carrying the delegates shoulder high from the church doors to their cars.¹ One Catholic in London, however, did not share his co-religionists' jubilation at the course of events and Colonel Archer Shee, the Member of Parliament for Finsbury, showed his displeasure at the Truce and the negotiations by resigning the Coalition Government's Whip.²

De Valera and the other delegates met the Executive Council and London District Committee officers of the Irish Self Determination League, the officers of the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club, the Irish National Relief Fund and the Irish National Aid Fund, at a reception to assess the position of the Irish organisations in Britain.³ Later than evening (19th July 1921), Art O'Brien and Robert Barton were given (by Sir Edward Greig, the Prime Minister's secretary) the formal proposals of the British Cabinet.⁴ Lloyd George was essentially offering a modified form of Dominion Home Rule with severe limitations on Ireland's defence policy and the implied acceptance of the permanency of partition. De Valera rejected the proposals, which, with the exception

¹ Times, 18 July, 1921.
² Catholic Herald, 23 July, 1921.
³ Irish Exile, August 1921.
⁴ Times, 20 July, 1921.
of the modifications on Tariffs and Customs, were remarkably similar to the Treaty terms several months later and returned to Ireland to formulate counter proposals.

An editorial in the *Irish Exile* angrily rejected any form of partition: "Ireland will refuse to recognise the right of any six counties, north, east, south, west, to secede".\(^1\)

Art O'Brien was however aware\(^2\) that De Valera had frankly told Lloyd George that, rather than be responsible for causing a civil war on the issue of Irish unification he would "rather let Northern Ireland alone"\(^3\) and that he was prepared to favourably consider dropping the claim to a 'Republic' and recognise the King if that would assure the peaceful unification of Ireland.\(^4\) It is extremely unlikely that such an explicit editorial would have been printed in the *Irish Exile* without the knowledge of Art O'Brien who knew that partition had virtually been 'de facto' if not 'de jure' accepted by the most influential leaders in the Dail. His motives for permitting the publication of this editorial may have been to exert pressure on these Dail leaders although that would seem to have already become a hopeless

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1 *Irish Exile*, August 1921.
2 See T. Jones, op. cit., 90.
3 Cabinet 60 (21), 20 July, 1921. CAB 23/26.
4 T. Jones, ibid., 90. Yet De Valera on the 13th November, 1921 was advising the Plenipotentiaries to make the Conference 'break' on Ulster despite having earlier conveyed to Lloyd George the impression 'Ulster' was certainly not an important short term issue. See DEI/3. According to T. Ryle Dwyer (who is currently writing a book on the Treaty Negotiations) De Valera "stunned" a secret Dail session in the summer of 1921 by conceding that partition was now a reality. See *Irish Press*, 3 July, 1981.
task. Or perhaps he was simply exploiting the emotive character of the Belfast issue. 'The Pogrom' in Belfast had resulted in the deaths of fifteen Catholics, over a hundred wounded and a hundred houses burnt on the day the Truce came into effect and it showed no signs of abating its fury. We have already observed that considerable sums were raised in Britain particularly through collections in, or outside churches for the relief of the 'Belfast Pogrom' and League branches like Wallasey, which collected forty-four pounds on one Sunday in local churches, continued to find that the 'Belfast Pogrom' was a very emotive cause. Art O'Brien may have believed that any public diminution of the Irish Self Determination League's position on the unification of Ireland might have resulted in a decline in this fund raising.

The annual meeting of the London District Committee of the Irish Self Determination League was told that during the year the number of London branches had increased from twenty three to thirty six. The Fulham Branch had now over four hundred members, Bermondsey had two hundred and fifty, Walworth had tripled its size since its formation in April 1921 and Shepherd Bush, formed only in May 1921, had

1 'Pogrom' is a word with emotive connotations but it is the term still used by Belfast Catholics to describe the events of sixty years ago (and also of the 1969 sectarian onslaught).

2 Catholic Herald, 16 July, 1921 and also see reports in DE 2/247-8.

3 Catholic Herald, 16 July, 1921.

4 Irish Exile, August 1921, and Catholic Herald, 23 July, 1921.
already doubled its membership. Satisfactory progress was reported by League branches across the country. The Mid-Durham District Committee only formed in April 1921 had already established eight new branches and the Durham Annual Irish Gala organized that year by the League attracted an attendance of at least ten thousand people. Altrincham had recruited eighty four new members in two months and had raised over two hundred and forty pounds in the last six months while Rawtensall had raised ninety pounds in two months. The Chester League Branch after existing for seven months without a meeting place was now permitted to use the local Labour Party hall but many of its members had by now left the area because of the very high unemployment rate in the locality. The Newport Branch collectively marched to church for a 'Truce Communion' in aid of peace in Ireland.

A speaking tour by the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Barry Egan, and Professor Stockley, a Dail deputy, on behalf of the Irish Self Determination League attracted large

1 Irish Exile, August 1921.
2 Catholic Herald, 6 August, 1921.
3 Catholic Herald, 23 July, 1921.
4 Catholic Herald, 2 July, 1921.
5 Ibid., 23 July, 1921.
6 Ibid..
crowds in Manchester. The hall which held three thousand proved totally inadequate and a large outdoor overflow meeting had to be held simultaneously. The London District Committee of the League held a conference of branch officers to counteract the growing pressures of the British Press and formerly sympathetic organizations like the Peace with Ireland Council that Ireland must accept Dominion status. The officers were instructed that the League's fundamental principle, that "Ireland has precisely the same right to freedom as England herself", should be constantly asserted at meetings. Branches were recommended to approach all the Irish residents in their area and personally exhort them to join the League. Organizational isolationism was reaffirmed, members were to be kept in a "purely Irish atmosphere" but the key instruction was that the League membership should see the Truce merely as a "temporary measure and prepare for a new struggle". The Irish Self Determination League leadership were not the only ones who apparently thought that the Dail Executive would reject outright the Dominion status proposal and that the Truce would be terminated. The War Office drew up its plans to renew the conflict. These involved a massive expansion of prison accommodation in Britain and the IRA stepped up their arms purchases in Britain while losing a volunteer when a Greenwich bomb

1 Catholic Herald, 16 July, 1921.
2 See Boyce, op. cit., 147.
3 Irish Exile, August 1921.
4 Irish Exile, August 1921.
5 See War Office 'Preparations for renewed War in Ireland', 20 July 1921 CP 3164/CAB 24/126.
6 ROR 115, 21 July, 1921, CP 3154, CAB 24/126.
factory exploded.  

The introduction of the Truce did not see the end of Republican trials in Britain. In the week that followed, eighteen men were sentenced in Manchester to terms of imprisonment from three to fifteen years. In Glasgow many thousands and "an avenue of Sinn Fein flags" welcomed Father MacRory back to his presbytery after he was acquitted of the death of a policeman in the attempted seizure of a prison van, and he was subsequently presented with a gold chalice and a large cheque from his parishioners. A potentially serious conflict between Church and State in Australia was averted when the Commonwealth Government, in deference to the Truce, announced that it would not now compel Archbishop Mannix to take the oath of allegiance as a precondition of his return to Australia.

The Dail Cabinet's rejection of the British proposals, subsequently ratified by the new Second Dail, were conveyed, by hand, to the British Government by Art O'Brien, Robert Barton and Joseph McGrath on August 11th., 1921. But Art O'Brien, who did most of the talking, refused to regard the

1 Michael McInerney was killed on the 28th. July, 1921, see ROR 124, 22 September, 1921, CP 3333, CAB 24/127 and Catholic Herald, 13 August, 1921.
2 Times, 15 August, 1921.
3 Catholic Herald, 30 July, 1921.
4 Ibid., 12 November, 1921.
5 Ibid., 6 August, 1921.
6 Calton Younger, op. cit., 157; Jones, op. cit., 95; Longford, op. cit., 76
situation as critical and said that "all negotiations require plenty of time". Art O'Brien's comments on this occasion might be simply dismissed as diplomatic small talk but the next day in an interview with Tom Jones (Lloyd George's secretary and confidant), O'Brien further elaborated on the reply from De Valera and his Cabinet. The reply, O'Brien maintained, should merely be regarded as a step in the negotiations intended to educate the British people as to what Sinn Fein stood for. "He went on to say that we could offer nominal 'Independence' to Ireland as we had done in Egypt, putting it in the first clause of the Treaty, so as to speak and taking it away piecemeal in the rest of the clauses". It is inconceivable that on such a fundamental issue as Ireland's relationship to Britain that O'Brien could have been expressing a purely personal position, certainly not to the personal advisor of Lloyd George, nor could his remarks simply be described as amplifying De Valera's letter. De Valera's reply referring to "amicable but absolute separation" had little in common with O'Brien's suggestions. So the question then arises was this letter a personal reply of De Valera's or a compromise proposal collectively written by a cabinet divided on the issue of the acceptance or rejection of Dominion status and Partition?

1 Jones, op. cit., 96.

2 Jones, ibid., 96-7.

3 For the full reply see Proposals of HM Government for an Irish Settlement, Letter number II, 10 August, 1921, Cmd. 1502, (1921).
Whether De Valera, the previous month had informed Field Marshal Smuts that he was prepared to accept Dominion status is open to question but he certainly admitted, privately, "that a Republic was out of the question" and he devoted much time during July 1921 to formulating the concept of Ireland's 'External Association' to the British Empire, as a means of getting out of the "strait jacket of the Republic", while retaining the support of the committed Republicans in the Dail Cabinet. The recognised standard account of the negotiations, that took place between July-December 1921 (Longford's), does not refer to the visit that Art O'Brien made to Dublin and the long discussion that he had with De Valera at the end of July. If De Valera wanted discreetly to let Lloyd George know that a protracted period would be required to bring some of his Cabinet around to his position, then Art O'Brien was a more suitable messenger than Robert Barton, who had spent most of 1920 and 1921 in Portland Prison, or Joseph McGrath, then regarded as a rather junior figure. O'Brien's references to the envisaged protracted nature of the negotiations and his emphasis on the importance of 'Symbols' to the Dail set the tone of the ensuing correspondence between De Valera and

1 Nicholson, op. cit., 356.
2 Forrester, op. cit., 196.
3 Longford and O'Neill op.cit., 139.
4 O'Hegarty, op. cit., 87.
5 See report in the Times, 1 August, 1921.
Lloyd George. In the sixteen letters and telegrams\(^1\) that were exchanged between the two leaders during the next two months, De Valera sought to extract recognition from Lloyd George of Ireland's sovereignty, while the British Prime Minister endeavoured to make Ireland's recognition of the fundamental indissolubility of the link with the Empire, a precondition to any conference to negotiate the future relationship of the two countries. At a point in time when it seemed that the proposed conference would never take place, owing to Lloyd George's emphasis on the question of allegiance to the Crown as a precondition to negotiations, the Crown itself intervened and its pressure together with majority opinion in the British Cabinet\(^2\) proved sufficiently strong to be a moderating influence on Lloyd George's previously intransigent stance.

On the 29th. September, 1921 he invited De Valera to attend a conference for the purpose of "ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the Community of Nations known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish National aspirations".\(^3\) De Valera immediately accepted the invitation which in referring to him as "spokesman of the people

\(^1\) See Cmd. 1502, op. cit., and Further correspondence, Cmd. 1539 (1921); Official Correspondence Relating to the Peace Negotiations: June - September 1921 (Dail Eireann).

\(^2\) Rowland, op. cit., 551.

\(^3\) Cmd. 1539 (letter, 29 September, 1921).
whom you represent" certainly did not recognize the existence of an Irish Republic or even an independent state; and so by accepting this invitation De Valera tacitly agreed, in the opinion of many, particularly the British people, that Ireland was none of these things. If Art O'Brien informed any of the other Irish Self Determination League leaders about De Valera's real strategy, the news certainly did not percolate downwards to the rank and file membership. The Irish Exile scornfully dismissed the British 'Dominion Status' proposals as a "ridiculous claim" and carried several detailed articles refuting their specific clauses.¹ The Catholic Herald, which only a few weeks previously had stridently proclaimed its Republicanism,² now however declared that it had no counsel to offer the Irish people, "they must take the responsibility of accepting or rejecting the English proposals".³ These proposals were described as "a gross insult which could never be accepted"⁴ by Father McNiff, the President of the Moorthorpe Branch while Morton O'Connor, a barrister of the Inner Temple, told a large Poplar League meeting that they should: "be prepared to fight on for another twenty five years rather than accept any humiliating measure from the English Government".⁵

The October meeting of the Standing Committee of the League

¹ Irish Exile, September 1921.
² Catholic Herald, 2 July, 1921.
³ Ibid., 13 August, 1921.
⁴ Ibid., 27 August, 1921.
⁵ Irish Exile, August, 1921.
was informed that during the past year over seven thousand and six hundred pounds had been sent to the various relief and election funds in Ireland.¹ This donation from central head office funds excluded the contributions that many branches sent individually to Ireland. The Rochdale Branch had raised six hundred pounds in a year, mostly from church door collections.² One such collection had yielded thirty six pounds for the Darwen Branch³ and a house to house collection by the Wigan Branch had raised forty seven pounds.⁴ In Newport the branch had now become so large that a second one was being formed.⁵ The new Bow and Bromley Branch elected Major Hogan (a former RAMC officer) as its President, in continuance of the practice of selecting a 'local worthy' for such a position.⁶ The Leeds League Branch President, Dr. Wiseman was given a Republican funeral and his tricoloured coffin carried through the streets followed by a large crowd⁷, while the Richmond Branch charted a river steamer complete with tricolour flag for a trip down the Thames.⁸ The Chorley Branch now had two hundred and ninety members while Southampton had passed the hundred and twenty mark.⁹

¹ Catholic Herald, 15 October, 1921.
² Catholic Herald, 10 September, 1921.
³ Ibid., 17 September, 1921.
⁴ Ibid.
⁵ Ibid., 8 October, 1921.
⁶ Ibid., 17 September, 1921.
⁷ Ibid., 23 July, 1921.
⁸ Irish Exile, September 1921.
⁹ Ibid.
The London Branches organized a series of well attended local meetings, to reject the Dominion proposals, while the Hull Branch trained its members as "orators" to inform the English people on Ireland's rights. The Standing Committee, in contrast to its previous policy of increasing the influence of the central leadership over the local branches, decided not to intervene in a dispute over the boundaries of the Lancashire District Committees.

Another decision by the Standing Committee proved to be more controversial. It proposed that from the November 1921 issue, the Irish Exile, hitherto the publication of the London District Committee, was to become the responsibility of the central organization and the national publication of the League. Some branches rejected this proposal. Wigan declared that it would be "an unnecessary expense" as there were already papers like the Catholic Herald and the Self Determinator adequately covering the League's activities. The Liverpool No. 1 Branch bluntly declared that they would not sell the new publication, preferring the established local Sinn Fein paper, the Self Determinator. No disciplinary action was taken against the branches and others who followed suit. The Irish Self Determination League leaders realized that the price of the rapid expansion of the

1 Catholic Herald, 24 September, 1921, and Irish Exile, September, 1921.
2 Catholic Herald, 17 September, 1921.
3 Ibid., 15 October, 1921.
4 Ibid., 10 September, 1921.
5 Ibid., 1 October, 1921.
League and its nationwide branch coverage involved a degree of local autonomy, with periodic manifestations of branches' determination only to accept central authority when they chose so. The Irish Exile episode was the forerunner of a slowly emerging tendency towards the political decentralization of the League that gradually emerged during the uncertainties of the Truce period and gathered momentum when the Treaty was signed.

The Irish Self Determination League was deprived for over a month, of the services of some of its most active local leaders in London when Alderman Scurr, his wife, Councillors O'Callaghan and Kelly were sent to prison, saying "It will be an honour to find myself within the walls of Brixton, where Terence MacSwiney was martyred";\(^1\) when the entire Poplar Council was jailed for refusing to pay the police rate precept. The League leadership were also somewhat embarrassed when Michael Hickey was killed at work in the Woolwich Arsenal while trying, illicitly, to remove explosives from shells. He, his wife and son were all members of the local branch,\(^2\) but much greater embarrassment was to follow the next month.

The arrival of the Irish delegates, on the 8th. October, 1921, for the twice postponed conference was once again a major occasion for the Irish in London. The delegates were met by a pipe band and large crowds at Euston:

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\(^1\) Catholic Herald, 10 September, 1921; ROR 123, 15 September 1921, CP 3309, CAB 24/128.

\(^2\) ROR 124, 22 September, 1921, CP 3333, CAB 24/127.
"it seemed to the delegates that every Irish man and woman in London had come there to call a blessing upon their efforts and to cheer them for their task".¹

Hymn singing crowds assembled outside Downing Street for the first session of the conference.² This time De Valera was not present, having argued that his dual position as head of State and Government necessitated his remaining in Dublin.³ Collins, Griffiths, Barton, Duggan and Duffy who though given the title of plenipotentiaries were required to obtain the approval of the full Dail Cabinet before signing any agreement,⁴ faced an uphill task in trying to preserve the Irish Republic: for British opinion was virtually unanimous that Ireland must recognize the Crown and remain within the Empire. The hitherto sympathetic Times declared that Ireland "must understand that there can be no settlement of the Irish problem except on these conditions - Crown Commonwealth and Strategic Safety of the British Isles"⁵ and on this occasion the Times was speaking not only for the Conservative and Liberal parties but also for the Labour Party.⁶

¹ Macardle, op. cit., 485 and see the detailed reports in the Times, 8, 10 October, 1921.

² Times, 12 October, 1921.

³ A Dail Cabinet meeting of 27 July, 1921 decided that President De Valera should not take part in the Conference - DE 1/3.

⁴ Longford, op. cit., 88.

⁵ Times, 31 October, 1921.

⁶ Arthur Henderson described total independence for Ireland as "simply fantastic nonsense", Times, 8 August, 1921 and Clynes urged the "recognition of Irish Nationhood within the Empire", Catholic Herald, 29 October, 1921.
The course of the two month long negotiations has been reasonably adequately charted by the participants, and onlookers, described by those who subsequently interviewed the negotiators and analyzed by historians who have consulted the official records, so that we shall not concern ourselves here with the details, save where they intrude on the position of the Irish in Britain in general and the Irish Self Determination League in particular. Lloyd George commenced the Sixth Plenary Session (October 21st., 1921) by gravely informing the delegates that a "serious conspiracy" to send arms to Ireland and perhaps even cause explosions in Britain itself had been discovered and that some of the

1 Sir Charles Petrie, Life and Letters of Sir Austen Chamberlain (2 vols, 1939-40); Winston Churchill, The Aftermath, op. cit.. None of the Irish negotiators subsequently recorded their experiences; most were dead within a year of the negotiations.

2 T. Jones, op. cit., and Sir Geoffrey Shakespeare, Let Candles be Brought (1949) were both British civil servants. On the Irish side, two junior aides of the negotiators have preserved, or written, their recollections; see Kathleen Napoli McKenna 'In London with the Treaty Delegates, Personal Recollections', Capuchin Annual 38 (1971) 313-32 and the Lily O'Brennan Papers, P 13/2 (UCD).


5 The main Irish official records of the Treaty negotiations are contained in the DE 2/304: 1 to 8, DE 2/302 and DE1/3 files. Some other documents are summarized in A Draft History of Negotiations for the Treaty, 56295 (SPo). Erskine Childers' 'Treaty Papers', are currently being catalogued by Trinity College, Dublin, who have received a collection of his personal papers. Most of the British papers are in the CAB 23 series.
arrested were "in communication with high Irish officials".\textsuperscript{1} He was referring to the discovery of an extensive arms procurement network in South Wales\textsuperscript{2} and the subsequent arrest of ten people\textsuperscript{3}, all of whom were members of the Irish Self Determination League.\textsuperscript{4} The South Wales organizer of the League, J.P. Connolly, was found to have twenty seven weapons hidden in his lodgings,\textsuperscript{5} and more arms and explosives were discovered in the possession of Gilbert Barrington and Richard Purcell the two League organizers on the Tyneside\textsuperscript{6} Art O'Brien, who had been appointed to one of the negotiation's sub committees,\textsuperscript{7} was considerably embarrassed by the arrest of men known to have close connections with him, particularly as only a few weeks previously he had approached Lloyd George's secretary to have Sean McGrath and C.B. Dutton released from their internment camps.\textsuperscript{8} The Home Secretary, rather strangely refused to make an official statement on the 'Irish Self Determination League conspiracy in Britain'.\textsuperscript{9} An even more flagrant breach of the Truce was to follow the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Longford, op. cit., 138; Calton Younger, op. cit., 176; T. Jones, op. cit., 145.
\item ROR 128, 20 October 1921, CP 3436, CAB 24/129; ROR 127, 14 October 1921, CP 3408, CAB 24/129.
\item Times, 15, 27 and 29 October, 1921.
\item ROR 129, 27 October, 1921, CP 3451, CAB 24/129.
\item Catholic Herald, 22 October, 1921.
\item ROR 129, ibid.
\item MacArdle, op cit., 493.
\item T. Jones, op. cit., 117.
\item 147 HC Debs. 5, Col. 1062.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
next month, when raids on Windsor and Chelsea Army Barracks on successive nights yielded six machine guns and fourteen rifles\(^1\) for the IRA. Once again, the British Cabinet were informed that, with the exception of the decorated and wounded veteran Sergeant Roche, all involved were members of the Irish Self Determination League and were mostly London branch officers.\(^2\) These incidents undoubtedly had an effect on the negotiations and rather interestingly it was at approximately these periods that IRA units in Ireland were mobilized and informed that the Truce was about to break down.\(^3\)

Scotland Yard in an earlier public statement had referred to a definite link between the leaders of the Irish Self Determination League and IRA activities in Britain.\(^4\) Now following the arrests in South Wales a Catholic Herald editorial called on the League to organizationally dissociate itself from such activities and\(^5\) this demand was publicly supported by some individual League members.\(^6\) The Catholic Herald was not at this point of time prepared openly to criticize the IRA, who had not publicly accepted responsibility for these incidents, but its editor, Charles Diamond, saw an opportunity of using these episodes to attack the League's leadership. He had, in the past, often attacked the various

\(^1\) *Times*, 23 and 24 November, 1921.
\(^2\) ROR 132, CP 5090, CAB 24/131.
\(^3\) Comerford, op. cit., 857.
\(^4\) *Times*, 18 June, 1921.
\(^5\) Catholic Herald 5, 19 November, 1921.
\(^6\) Ibid., 12 November, 1921.
Irish organisations in Britain by implying that they were permeated by "agents provocateurs" who would be responsible for leading many members into prison. Diamond implied that the League members who had been arrested had been betrayed by "spies" within the leadership but while not supporting their actions he was prepared for the sake of their dependents to make a donation of fifty pounds to a "properly controlled fund", a not very subtle reference to his previous allegations that the League leaders were misusing organizational funds.\(^1\)

One event on the security scene that did meet with the approval of most of the League membership was the sudden dismissal of Sir Basil Thomson who, as the Assistant Scotland Yard Commissioner in charge of the Home Office Intelligence Department, had proved to be a most efficient foe of the Irish Separatist Movement in Britain. Thomson was ostensibly dismissed for his handling of an Irish inspired breach of security at Lloyd George's Chequers residence\(^2\) but the real reason was that his knowledge of the Prime Minister's business liaisons had become politically embarrassing.\(^3\)

Despite Art O'Brien's membership of the Irish negotiating

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1 *Catholic Herald*, 3 December, 1921.

2 Sir Basil Thomson had decided that four Irish young men had painted 'Up Sinn Fein' on a wall as a "laugh" without any political motivation and so he let them go - Basil Thomson *The Scene Changes*, op. cit., 153.

3 Thomson had discovered that the arms dealer Sir Basil Zaharoff was, with the knowledge of Lloyd George, endeavouring to divert munitions intended for the White Russians to Greece for the purpose of attacking Turkey - MacCormick, op. cit., 208-9.
team, the membership of the League were given little factual information as to the progress of the conference though from the November issue of the Irish Exile a special 'Irish Bulletin' section to counteract the British Press was included. Over ten thousand people packed the Albert Hall for a reception organized by the ISDL for the Dail Eireann delegates.\(^1\) Art O'Brien, who introduced the delegates to the huge audience stressed that, it was a "social not a political occasion" and that none of the delegates could make any comment on the progress of the conference.\(^2\) The previous Sunday well over twenty thousand people had crowded into Trafalgar Square to attend the League's Terence MacSwiney Commemoration, an audience so large that three separate platforms of speakers were necessary.\(^3\) Five hundred members of the Preston Branch marched to a MacSwiney Commemoration Mass,\(^4\) while at Wigan Father Madden referred to "honouring these heroes, Catholic and Irish"\(^5\) at a High Mass for MacSwiney and Kevin Barry - executed for an armed attack which resulted in the death of a British soldier. The Parish Priest however refused the Chorley Branch's request for a similar mass\(^6\). Fr. O'Shaughnesssey chaired a large public League meeting at Cudworth,\(^7\) forty new

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2 **Irish Exile**, November 1921.
3 **Catholic Herald**, 24 Oct., 1921; **Irish Exile**, November, 1921.
4 **Catholic Herald**, 5 Nov., 1921.
5 Ibid., 12 Nov., 1921.
6 Ibid., 29 Oct., 1921.
7 Ibid., 3 Dec., 1921.
members joined the Stepney Branch after a meeting addressed by Jack Jones MP\(^1\), while the Oldham No. 7 Branch gained forty recruits after a whist drive.\(^2\) Swansea reported that its "branch register now holds seven hundred names",\(^3\) though there is some doubt whether all of these were actually paid up members. Elsewhere in Wales the Cardiff No. 7 Branch recorded an increase of seventy eight members in under two months.\(^4\) The newly formed Hunslet Branch in Yorkshire reported a membership of one hundred and seventy eight.\(^5\) Rochdale now had over three hundred and fifty members and Halifax nearly five hundred and fifty.\(^6\)

The other Irish organizations also reported very satisfactory progress during the month of November 1921. The Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club (London) referred to a "rapidly increasing membership which proves the genuine awakening of national consciousness"\(^7\) and the Gaelic League in London reported that: "enthusiasm for the learning of Irish is extraordinarily keen this year".\(^8\) Some of the congregation at a Clerkenwell church were no doubt bemused when the responses at evening devotions were led in Irish by children

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1 *Catholic Herald*, 19 Nov., 1921.
2 Ibid., 12 Nov., 1921; *Irish Exile*, November 1921.
3 Ibid., November 1921.
4 Ibid.
5 *Catholic Herald*, 12 Nov., 1921.
6 *Irish Exile*, December 1921.
7 *Irish Exile*, Nov. 1921.
8 Ibid.
To a certain extent there was a sense of unreality surrounding this expansion of Irish activity in Britain, for few in the Irish Self Determination League knew just how far the real political negotiations had diverged from the type of settlement propounded in the columns of the Irish Exile. At Lloyd George's bidding the plenipotentiaries effectively excluded Art O'Brien from their counsel during the last critical weeks of the negotiations. Lloyd George had by now developed an almost pathological aversion to Art O'Brien, "that swine, a little man neglected. Nothing is so pitiable as a small man trying to handle big things", but his secretary's rather more considerate view was that "O'Brien is more diplomatic as an Ambassador should be and it is less easy to read his mind". Lloyd George's opinion of O'Brien, no doubt, stemmed from his inability to cajole and bully him in a manner similar to his treatment towards Griffith. The failure of the plenipotentiaries to consult O'Brien on the crucial evening of the fifth of December 1921, when faced with Lloyd George's ultimatum for an immediate decision on the draft proposals, was the subject of a critical speech in the Dail during the subsequent debate on the Treaty. The Scottish Communist MP, William Gallacher,

1 Catholic Herald, 5 Nov., 1921.
2 T. Jones, op. cit., 196.
3 Ibid., 91.
crossed over to Dublin to warn Rory O'Connor (the OC IRA Britain) that a 'Treaty' was about to be signed,\(^1\) but it is not clear whether he was acting on the instructions of Art O'Brien or Erskine Childers, the Secretary of the Delegation.

At ten minutes past two o'clock on the morning of December the sixth 1921, the long drawn out negotiations were concluded when the plenipotentiaries, in contravention of the requirement to obtain the Dail Cabinet approval before signing any document, signed the Articles of Agreement - henceforth known as the Treaty.\(^2\) Two signed reluctantly, Robert Barton subsequently repudiated his signature, in response to Lloyd George's threat of "War within three days",\(^3\) the "stigma from which the Dominion settlement of 1921 never escaped".\(^4\) The Treaty provided for the creation of the Irish Free State as a Dominion within the British Empire, with its final boundary in relation to Northern Ireland to be determined by a Boundary Commission. It was a compromise between members of the Conservative Party who sought to ensure that Northern Ireland would not be coerced into a Southern Irish State, Liberals who were no longer prepared

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\(^1\) *Irish Democrat*, Sept. 1965.

\(^2\) T. Ryle Dwyer has contributed some valuable new insights into the proceedings of the last part of the negotiations; see the *Sunday Press*, 6 Dec., 1981.

\(^3\) Longford, op. cit., 239.

\(^4\) Nicholas Mansergh, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, Oxford University Press, (1958)153 The 'ultimatum' was almost certainly a bluff.
to risk the disapproval of world opinion by coercing an unwilling Southern Ireland into the old United Kingdom framework of relationships; and the representatives of the Irish Republic who reluctantly accepted that in the face of British intransigence the Republic could no longer be maintained. It was a Treaty that in one form or another effectively ended the political career of many and even in some cases, the lives, of those who signed it. For Lloyd George it was his "greatest achievement, but it was also the greatest single cause of his overthrow".¹ The Morning Post denounced it as "an abandonment and betrayal of British powers and British Friends in Ireland".² The Diehards in the Conservative Party, who had made Ireland the central plank in their attack on the Coalition Government, played a major role in the Carlton Club meeting (19th. October, 1922) that formally ended the Coalition and drove Lloyd George out of Government, never to hold office again. Collins died in a Republican ambush, Childers before a Free State firing squad, Griffiths of a cerebral haemorrhage, probably occasioned when he learnt of Collins' involvement in the killing of Field Marshal Wilson.

The political groupings that negotiated the Treaty were soon rent asunder. In Britain the alliance between Conservatives and Liberals came to an end. Sinn Fein in Ireland was split in two and the Irish Republican Army and the Irish Republican Brotherhood divided on the Treaty. The Irish Self

² Morning Post, 8 Dec., 1921.
Determination League had organizationally demonstrated its compatibility with the socio-political environment of the Irish community in Britain prior to the Treaty but it did not necessarily follow that it would organizationally remain compatible with the post Treaty environment. The League had expanded rapidly on the deliberately ambiguous platform of Self Determination for Ireland, it had absorbed many diverse political elements from long time 'Home Rulers' of the United Irish League, to hard line Irish Republican Brotherhood members and in between a great mass of people swept into the organization on the high tide of national sentiment. The League's organization and membership commitment resembled a series of concentric circles of increasing radius as one moved away from the centre.\(^1\) The Treaty was bitterly to divide the inner circles, the 'Politicos' in the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Sinn Fein, their active 'Supporters', and so with the centre crumbling, what gravitational force was there to hold the outer circles of 'Innocents' together? If the 'Politicos' and 'Supporters' soberly decided that acceptance of the Treaty, no matter how reluctantly, was the only realistic choice, would those 'Innocents' who had been mobilized by the passionate oratory of Archbishop Mannix decide otherwise? With 'Self Determination' secured; at least in the minds of many of the Irish in Britain, was there any need for the continued existence of the Irish Self Determination League; and if the League leadership decided to campaign against the Treaty could they

\(^1\) I am employing here a modified version of a structure suggested in Allan Potter's Organized Groups in British National Politics (1961), 128.
realistically hope to hold together this diverse coalition of political interests in a new campaign that flouted the wishes of the majority of the Irish and British people?

The League's success to date had been aided by the de facto surrender of the United Irish League in the contest for the political leadership of the Irish in Britain but there were leaders of that organization who now believed that the changed post Treaty environment would present them with new opportunities to rebuild their former influence.

The Irish Self Determination League leadership in refusing a leading position, on his own terms, to Charles Diamond had made a very formidable enemy, one who had some forty years experience of political infighting. The preference shown by some League branches for the Catholic Herald instead of the Irish Exile and their support for his call for close links with the Labour Party had demonstrated that Diamond was not without influence among the rank and file membership of the League. Diamond, while the struggle in Ireland was at its peak, had, by his own standards, been remarkably restrained in his attacks on the League leadership. The post Treaty period was to see a very different attitude on the part of the Catholic Herald. The leadership of the Irish Self Determination League had only succeeded in imposing their own political strategy, tactics and views on the membership when they were either in accordance with the latter's wishes or regarded as being unimportant to them. The League leadership had repeatedly shown itself unwilling or unable to discipline branches and members who opposed their policies, as in the case of Father O'Meara who had
publicly urged the Irish in Southwark to support the Labour Party candidate in a Parliamentary by-election.\(^1\) But no disciplinary action was taken against him despite the rule that League members were not permitted to become involved in Parliamentary politics. Father O'Meara was a Labour Alderman on Southwark Council and had chaired a Trades Council meeting to protest against the expulsion of the Belfast Shipyard workers\(^2\), while in his capacity as the Administrator of Southwark Cathedral he had convened the men of the parish to issue a protest to Lloyd George on his Irish policy.

The leadership of the League could not afford to alienate such an influential leader of the local Irish community and if that required a flexible collective blindness to such a flagrant breech of the League's constitution then that was considered a necessary evil. The history of the League to date however indicated that a crumbling centre could hardly be expected to hold a disintegrating periphery together.

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2. Ibid., 19 Nov., 3 Dec., 1921.
Part III The Cosmosociology of the ISDL

The ISDL reached its peak with the Anglo-Irish Treaty. To many members the organization had apparently attained its goal and so they simply dropped out. Membership steadily declined, until the tensions generated by the Treaty erupted, six months later, into full scale civil war in Ireland. This new conflict in Ireland irrevocably split the remaining ISDL membership. And so as the Post-Treaty ISDL was a very different organization than the Pre-Treaty League it is appropriate that at this point we should depart from our narrative account of the ISDL to examine in some detail its membership during its peak period. In Chapters 10 and 11 I shall analyze the Ecology and Socio-economic composition of the league membership. I concluded Chapter 6 by observing that the role played by Sinn Fein and the Gaelic organizations in the formation of the ISDL and its subsequent development, would be investigated in Part III and this aspect is dealt with in Chapter 12. I also observed that the isolationist/exclusivist orientation of the ISDL largely stemmed from dissatisfaction with the attitude of the British Labour Movement to Ireland and so Chapters 13 and 14 explore their role during the Irish conflict. Finally as much of the preceding chapters utilize information from the Irish Exile it is necessary in Chapter 15 to investigate the role played by the organizational publication of the ISDL.
CHAPTER 10

The Ecology of the ISDL

We shall now consider the geographical distribution of the ISDL membership and then attempt to evaluate the extent to which the second and third generation Irish born in England and Wales participated in the League's activities. We shall then conclude this section by considering the participation, or more accurately the non-participation of newly arrived emigrants.

The Geographical Distribution of the ISDL Membership

Table 1 shows that over 70% of the ISDL membership, at its peak period, lived in Northern England (Lancashire, Yorkshire, and the North East regions). And looking at Table 3 we can see that almost a third of the membership lived in only three urban areas, Manchester, Liverpool and Wigan, in the Lancashire region, even though these three towns only contained just over a twelfth of the Irish born population in England and Wales. The most cursory glance at the percentage ratio of ISDL membership to the Irish born population of Wigan, Table 3, indicates that many ISDL members in this town were not Irish born and we shall subsequently consider the participation of the non-Irish born

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in more detail in the next section.

Table 1. The Geographical Distribution of the ISDL Membership in 1921

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of ISDL members</th>
<th>As percentage of total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lancashire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>7,465</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>3,349</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.W. Lancs.</td>
<td>1,372</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13,768</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teesside</td>
<td>3,965</td>
<td>10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tyneside</td>
<td>2,440</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Durham</td>
<td>1,736</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8,141</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London and South East</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bradford</td>
<td>2,447</td>
<td>6.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leeds</td>
<td>1,768</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield</td>
<td>1,515</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,730</td>
<td>14.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>1,151</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff</td>
<td>1,053</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontypridd</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>3,166</td>
<td>8.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>670</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>N. Stafford</td>
<td>415</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notts</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>0.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midlands</td>
<td>1,440</td>
<td>3.7</td>
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<td>England and Wales</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>38,726</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Compiled from membership lists in O'Brien Ms 8433.
### Table 2. ISDL Branch Membership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Date attained</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Halifax</td>
<td>543</td>
<td>Dec. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fulham</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Aug. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poplar</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>Mar. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochdale No 22</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>Dec. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwark</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>Mar. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest Gate</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea</td>
<td>303</td>
<td>Oct. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnley</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>Sept. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chorley</td>
<td>290</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central London</td>
<td>255</td>
<td>May 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolton</td>
<td>251</td>
<td>Dec. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bermondsey</td>
<td>250</td>
<td>Aug. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stepney</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>May 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balham</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>Mar. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walworth</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>Aug. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontypridd No 4</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Jan. 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Altrincham</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>Dec. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashtown in Makerfield</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>Jan. 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haslington No 4</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Durham No 3</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Battersea</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Mar. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southampton</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>Sept. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swansea No 8</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>Jan. 1922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shepherds Bush</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Aug. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cardiff No 7</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Nov. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oswaldcastle</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>Dec. 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid Durham No 20</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pontypridd No 2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Ibid.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total                     | 6100   |
Average Branch Size       | 218    |

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1 Complied from *Irish Exile* branch reports

2 As given in *Irish Exile* of that date.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>ISDL Membership</th>
<th>As % of total</th>
<th>Irish Born Population</th>
<th>As % of total</th>
<th>% ratio of ISDL membership to Irish Born</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manchester</td>
<td>7,465</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>16,743</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>6,481</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>52,206</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liverpool</td>
<td>3,349</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>31,287</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wigan</td>
<td>1,582</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>1,442</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>109.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18,877</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.7</strong></td>
<td><strong>101,678</strong></td>
<td><strong>27.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>18.6</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures compiled from 1921 Census, England and Wales, (1925 ), Table 45.*
Hausknecht and Greer both revealed a positive correlation between the degree of urban concentration and lower rates of political participation in their American studies and the particular case of Wigan would seem to substantiate their findings. It is also noticeable, from observing Table 2, that outside the London and Manchester conurbations the larger ISDL branches tended to be found in the smaller towns, particularly those in the coal mining areas. It is not surprising that Lancashire, the traditional Irish political stronghold in England, the parliamentary and local government base of the United Irish League, and the main circulation area of the Catholic Herald, was also an ISDL stronghold. But the very disproportionate size of the ISDL in the region's two largest conurbations, Manchester and Liverpool does perhaps require some further explanation.

With 3,349 members the ISDL could hardly be described as a weak force in Liverpool, even if its 'Primary Density' - ratio of membership to its Irish born population - was considerably less than in London and far smaller than in Manchester. If the ISDL was proportionately weaker in Liverpool than in many of the larger towns; this was not so much an indication of lack of Liverpudlian interest in Irish affairs, as evidence of competing Irish interests.

3 See HO 45. 11009/20126.
Liverpool Republicans claimed with considerable justification that their city was the stronghold of the Irish Republican Movement in England and Wales. The city's Sinn Fein cumanns, which raised £12,000 in 1919 alone, made Liverpool the foremost centre of Sinn Fein in England and Wales. Liverpool was the centre of IRA activity, both logistical and offensive, in Britain. Liverpool's IRA volunteers organized a large scale seizure and burning of the 1921 Census forms in the city's Irish areas. These same areas witnessed many streets decorated in the Republican colours to celebrate the Truce. Much of this activity, in particular the November 1920 large scale dockside arson, reinforced traditional sectarian hostility which erupted into serious street clashes between Protestants and Catholics on several occasions during the Anglo-Irish War of Independence. And Art O'Brien's poor personal relations with Liverpool Sinn Fein undoubtedly hindered the growth of the ISDL in that city.

Liverpool had an Irish Nationalist MP and a strong Nationalist presence in its local government but the ISDL was


2 Times 22 June, 1921, this destruction of census forms was the result of a decree issued by the Dail Home Affairs Minister prohibiting the holding of the British Census in Ireland, see Dail Eireann Decrees.

3 ROR 115. 21 July, 1921. CP 3154. CAB 24/125.

relatively strong in the other UIL strongholds in Yorkshire and the North East regions. And here the ISDL also faced competition from entrenched local Irish Labour Parties which refused to affiliate to the new organization.\(^1\) Seamas O'Kelly complained that the Cardiff ISDL had a membership of "only 1200 although there were 30,000 people of Irish origin in Cardiff"\(^2\) and though this represented a membership/target recruitment group ratio that many a political organizer would have been very happy to achieve, a Special Branch officer also commented that "considering the strength of the Irish element in South Wales the ISDL is not making the headway that might be expected".\(^3\) And here again the ISDL faced competition from sizeable remnants of the UIL, particularly in the more isolated mining villages,\(^4\) and its ally the Ancient Order of Hibernians who had relatively large membership rolls in places like Maesteg (300) and Newport (280).\(^5\)

Tables 1 and 2 clearly show that the smallest regional ISDL membership was in the Midlands but the UIL was also much weaker here both in absolute and proportional terms. The ISDL was also much stronger than the UIL in the London


\(^2\) See ROR 94. 24 Feb., 1921. CP 2631. CAB 24/120.

\(^3\) ROR 43. 26 Feb., 1920. CP 748. CAB 24/99.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) Ibid.
area. By 1919 the UIL had been reduced in London to only a token presence and in 1923 it was declared "practically defunct"\(^1\) by the Special Branch who confidently and accurately predicted that its new replacement, the Irish Democratic League would attract "very little interest"\(^2\) from the metropolis' Irish population. The UIL's predecessor the Irish National League had initially been relatively well represented in London. From lists of branches represented at the 1887 and 1896 Conventions, as compiled by Wollaston,\(^3\) it is possible to build up a composite picture of the geographical distribution of the Irish Nationalist presence in Great Britain. Of the 161 branches represented at the 1887 Convention, 116 were located in England and Wales and 38 in Scotland (the location of another 7 branches could not be adequately identified). 38 of these English and Welsh branches were located in the London area but at the 1896 Convention, when the branch representation was reduced to 123, only 10 of the 95 English and Welsh branches were from London. By comparison, Liverpool had lost only 2 branches (from 11 to 9) and Bradford (from 4 to 7), Manchester (from 2 to 6), Leeds (from 1 to 6) had all shown considerable increases despite an overall decline in the number of branches between the 1887 and 1896 Conventions. Thompson verifies my interpretation that the Irish Nationalist Movement in Britain declined at a much faster

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1 ROR 192. 6 Feb., 1923. CP 91(23). CAB 24/158.
rate in the London area than elsewhere, by observing that
the London Irish in the early 20th century exhibited "little
general interest in Irish issues".\(^1\) One reason for this
was of course the declining proportion of the Irish born
population in England and Wales who were residents of
the capital. In 1841, 28% of the Irish born population in
England and Wales lived in London but 20 years later, when
the total Irish born population had more than doubled, the
proportion living in London had declined to 18% and in the
period 1901-21 only 14% resided in the capital.\(^2\) With
almost 17% of its membership living in the London area the
ISDL had managed to achieve a presence in depth that the
post 1900 UIL had so evidently failed to do so.

According to Fitzpatrick, Sinn Fein had a considerably smaller
mass organizational membership than the UIL in Ireland. He
calculates that whereas the UIL had in 1914 enrolled 31
people in every thousand of the Irish population, Sinn
Fein by comparison in 1919 only enrolled 27 per thousand.\(^3\)
The UIL achieved its peak membership figure of 46,000 in
1914.\(^4\) If we allow for the UIL's Scottish membership, it

\(^1\) Paul Thompson, Socialists, Liberals and Labour: The

\(^2\) J.A. Jackson, The Irish in London, (Unpublished MSc
Thesis, London (1958), Table XIX.

\(^3\) D. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., 159.

\(^4\) Wollaston, op. cit., 77.
is almost certain that the ISDL with its known 38,726 members in 1921 in England and Wales was a larger organization in these two countries than the UIL at its peak. It was certainly a much more widely geographically distributed organization.
The Generational Composition of the ISDL Membership

Table 3 indicates that in some areas, notably Wigan, there was a strong non-Irish born element in the ISDL, as in Merthyr Vale where the local branch reported that the "Irish adult population of this town is about 2,000, the majority of whom are children of the Irish exiles". Yet this branch had a membership of 180 and a good record of activism. Two of its members, Mr. and Mrs. Evans (hardly the most Irish of names), even received prison sentences for their political activities. The ISDL founders had deliberately framed their Constitution in such a way as to encourage those of Irish descent to join the League. Art O'Brien was himself born in England and John Scurr in Australia, to cite only two of the ISDL non-Irish born leadership. The two men who shot Field Marshal Wilson were London born and Harry O'Brien relates how a large number of the London born children of Irish parents at his school were caned for refusing to salute the Union Jack on Empire Day (some even spat at it) in 1917.

It could be argued that these incidents were all committed as a result of parental influence for Dawson and Prewitt

\[\text{\begin{thebibliography}{1}
1 Irish Exile, Feb. 1922.
2 Ibid., Jan. 1922.
3 John Scurr's wife Julia, also a councillor, was London born.
4 Harry O'Brien Memoir 5.6.
\end{thebibliography}}\]
argue strongly that "the family generally stands out as the most important agency determining the extent and direction of political learning". Yet while parents may play an important role in the political socialization of their offspring it is by no means unknown for radical divergence to occur between the generations. Taylor claims that the Londoners who killed Wilson had certainly not been reared on Irish nationalism. We have already observed the presence of a Mrs. Despard on ISDL platforms; her brother, Lord French, was the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the object of unsuccessful IRA assassination attempts. The Earl of Middleton was the leader of the Southern Irish Unionists, his son fought in the British Army against the Republicans who numbered in the ranks of Cumann ná hÉirinn, one Gobnát Nic Bhriúdaí (Albina Broderick), the Earl's daughter. She was subsequently wounded fighting against the Free State Army in the Civil War. Brendan Bracken the Conservative Information Minister tried to hide his Irish origins, perhaps because his father was an IRB member. Maurice Foley, the son of the Labour Minister responsible for overseeing the Secret Intelligence Service in 1968, joined the Republican Movement in the early 1970s and somehow

1 R.E. Dawson and K. Prewitt, Political Socialization (Boston, 1969), 107.


3 Taylor, Assassination, op. cit., 167.

4 See Charles Lysaght Brendan Bracken (1979) and Andrew Boyle Poor Dear Brendan (1974).
managed to acquire a pronounced Kerry accent before finding it advisable to leave his country of birth and settle in Ireland.

The transmission\(^1\) of ethnic identity to the offspring of immigrants has long preoccupied many American sociologists seeking to create a theoretical framework of analysis to interpret the 'melting pot society' or as Novak phrases it the "unmeltable ethnics".\(^2\) Parreti\(^3\) and Wolfinger\(^4\) have analysed the persistence of ethnic generational voting patterns while Fitzpatrick, Kasard and Janowitz\(^5\) have focused their research on the community as the primary source of the persistence of ethnic solidarity. Molon, Paton and Lambert\(^6\) have elaborated Barth's\(^7\) conceptualization of ethnic boundaries while Sharot\(^8\) has updated Herberg's pioneer work on the 'triple melting pot' hypothesis. Herberg concentrating on the generational transmission of religious values argued that while the second generation often renounced their immigrant parent's religious values, as part of

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3 M. Parreti, op. cit.

4 R.E. Wolfinger, op. cit.


their 'Americanization' process, the securely Americanized third generation often return to their grand parents' religious values.¹ Novak² and Greeley³ have during the last decade focussed research attention on a 'new ethnicity', extending far beyond immigrant religious values and constituting a new third and even fourth generation ethnic political consciousness.

However, much of this theoretical framework appears to be specific to the American case. Of more particular relevance to the position of the post Irish first generation in Britain are Meinecke's concept of the 'Kulturnation'⁴ and the idea of 'Patria' or allegiance to the country of non-residence. Thus Art O'Brien, born in England, spoke of British-Republican negotiations in terms of talks between "Your Government and Mine". In a similar turn of phrase the largely non-Irish born membership of Merthyr Vale ISDL spoke of a "sense of duty to our oppressed fatherland that inspires us with that determination which enables us to overcome all obstacles however mighty".⁵ Situational ethnic identity manifestations can play an important role in perpetuating ethnic identity beyond the first generation. We have already noticed the important role played by the Gaelic

² M. Novak, op. cit.
³ Andrew Greeley, Ethnicity in the United States (New York, 1974).
⁴ Meinecke, op. cit.
⁵ Irish Exile, Dec. 1921.
League in maintaining ethnic identity among the non-Irish born offspring of immigrants and even as a channel of recruitment into the IRA; a situation which has continued until the present day with Sean MacStiofain\(^1\) and Fr. Fell\(^2\) following the path trodden by John 'Blimey' O'Connor\(^3\) a generation ago.

Sean McGrath complained that although "the Irish population of Great Britain is about 1,500,000 the total membership of the League is at present only 26,000".\(^4\) McGrath however gave no indication as to how he had arrived at this ISDL target recruitment group figure. O'Day however estimates the first and second generation Irish community in Britain at between one and a quarter and one and a half million in 1881\(^5\) when the census recorded 781,119 Irish born people living in Britain. So McGrath's estimate certainly extended to the 3rd generation.

Art O'Brien was by no means the only prominent Irish leader to come from the second generation Irish community in Britain. James Connolly, Jim Larkin, Liam Mellowes and Erskine Childers all came from this section and many other unknown individuals not born in Ireland itself were active

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1 See Sean MacStiofain Memoirs of a Revolutionary (1975)34. The son of an Irish mother and an English father who disapproved of his subsequent Irish political involvement, Sean MacStiofain became the IRA Chief of Staff in 1969.
2 The English born Fr. Fell was imprisoned between 1974-82 for IRA activity in Britain.
3 A London born IRA volunteer 1916-23.
4 Quoted in D.G. Boyce, op. cit., 86.
5 Alan O'Day, op. cit., 108.
in the ISDL.

Recent Emigrants and the ISDL

Smith's claim that "emigrants do not generally make good nationalists"\(^1\) while in general far too sweeping a statement does however hold good for one particular group of emigrants. The ISDL was unlikely to attract new adherents from those who emigrated from Ireland during the 1920-21 period. British control in Ireland had historically been greatly facilitated by the continual haemorrhage of emigration, particularly of young people - the group most likely to pose a threat to the colonial power. Successive administrations encouraged emigration, some discreetly, others like Lord Salisbury less so, as when he declared during his 1886 Premiership,

"He would rather employ British wealth in aiding the emigration of a million Irishmen than in buying out landlords".\(^2\)

Over thirty years later Lord French claimed in an interview that

"the principal cause of the trouble is that for five years emigration has practically stopped. In this country there are from 100,000 to 200,000 young men from 18 to 25 years of age who in normal times would have emigrated"\(^3\)

With Lord French attributing the increase in IRB and IRA membership to non-emigration\(^4\) the Dail Defence Minister declared that emigration was "nothing less than base desertion in the face of the enemy"\(^5\) and the Home Affairs

\(^1\) A. Smith, *Theories*, op. cit., 109.
\(^2\) Annual Register (1886), 181-2.
\(^3\) Le Journal, 23 Jan., 1920.
\(^4\) GT 8227. CAB 24/89.
\(^5\) Geroid O'Sullivan, an Ms 8415 (NLI)
Minister subsequently issued a series of decrees forbidding emigration without IRA issued permits and the sale of travel tickets without such authorization.¹ When the British ordered Irish shipping agents to sell travel tickets to America via Liverpool; that city's IRA units raided the lodgings of emigrants en route to America and confiscated their tickets. This incident is discussed more fully in the section on IRA activity in Britain 1916-1921. So with most of the 1920-21 emigrants to Britain leaving Ireland, without the necessary IRA authorization they were unlikely to join the ISDL, an organization supporting the IRA.

¹ DE 2/37 and DE 2/8.
Chapter 11
The Socio-Economic Composition of the ISDL Membership

Poulantzas has defined social class as a, "concept which indicates the effects of a totality of structures, the expression of a mode of production or a social formation in the actions of those who are their carriers. It is a concept which designates the effects of the total structure in the realm of social relationships".\(^1\) Giddens employs the term "class structuration"\(^2\) to convey the multi-elemental process that is class determination involving an 'objective' evaluation of empirical data and a 'subjective' interpretation of less tangible evidence, a process which Ossowski\(^3\) terms the 'simple' and 'synthetic' modes of analysis. The sociological analysis of class today basically centres around the axis of the Marxian class position in the ownership of the means of production and the Weberian concept of status. Poulantzas, Gramsci\(^4\) and Lukács\(^5\) have amplified the 'historicity' of Marxist thought, while Ossowski, Runciman\(^6\) and Marshall\(^7\) have all significantly extended the Weberian concept of status. Each school

\(^3\) Stanislaw Ossowski, *Class Structure in the Social Consciousness*, (1963)
\(^4\) Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince and Other Writings*, (1957)
of thought\(^1\) has, to varying degrees recognized the importance of some elements of the others' work, in particular the concept of class consciousness whether defined as the historically derived perception of class identity or the recognition of differing status group interests. Class consciousness is essentially a subjective phenomena, evaluated by the analysis and interpretation of a very wide range of largely subjective evidence.

The sociologist investigating a historical movement usually does not have such evidential material available for research purposes so that a retrospective evaluation of the social class composition of an historical movement is often not possible. A careful search, however, of membership lists and a close reading of organizational publications will often provide details relating to the occupations and income levels of the membership. Such empirical data is too limited in scope, too lacking in the all important element of 'self and others perception' of status position

contd.


For the attempted integration of aspects from both schools of thought see, Ralf Dahrendorf, Class and Class Conflict in Industrial Society, (Stanford, 1959), and T.B. Bottomore, Classes in Modern Society, (1965).
to justify the term class analysis. The more objectively empirical orientated terminology of 'socio-economic composition' is therefore employed in this section.

We can employ a mosaic of fragmentary evidential facts and little bits of information to construct an outline illustration of the occupational composition of the ISDL membership.

Several items in the Irish Exile indicate that there were some relatively 'well-to-do' members in the ISDL such as the organization held a St Patrick's Day Dinner in the Cecil Hotel, London, with ticket prices at £1, which in terms of average wages was more than the equivalent of £20 today. At the wedding of one member, other members gave presents which included a "magnificent cut glass silver salad bowl" and a "solid oak and bevelled drawing room mirror". Yet one could also select contrary evidence from the Irish Exile to show that there were few rich people within the ISDL. For example the report of the Pontypridd no 4 Branch which "decided for the time being to canvass the 'better off class' outside our organization for the Irish National Aid Fund" due to the high unemployment level among its membership. This same exercise can be undertaken by the selective use of Intelligence reports, the blunt

1 See E.J. Webb et al., Unobtrusive Measures, (Chicago, 1965).
2 Irish Exile, Mar., 1921.
3 Ibid., June, 1921.
3 Ibid., April, 1921.
observation that the Sinn Fein/ISDL movement in Birmingham is confined to the working class: "the more prosperous Irish people in Birmingham care little for Sinn Fein"\(^1\) is at least partly contradicted by the more thoughtful evaluation that:

"Recent arrests are causing the more responsible Irish people to hold aloof from the ISDL although they continue to contribute to its funds".\(^2\)

Hence one should always be careful of attaching undue importance to any single piece of evidence of this type and of comparing like with like. Bessel and Jamin\(^4\) have criticized fellow Nazi Movement researchers\(^5\) for using 'heterogenous data'. They argue that statistical analysis requires the use of purely 'homogenous data' of a sufficiently large and random sample size.\(^6\) While agreeing with much of their argument I still believe that heterogenous data can be very usefully employed, while exercising of course due care, in place of non-available homogenous data. And I certainly would not go as far as Rogowsk who claiming that there is insufficient records for a socio-economic study of the Nazi Party rank and file has opted

\(^1\) ROR 45. CP 840. CAB 24/100. 10 Mar., 1920.

\(^2\) ROR 92. CP 2574. CAB 24/119. 10 Feb., 1921.


merely to analyze the much better documented Gauleiter cadre.¹

The material employed to analyze the socio-economic composition of the ISDL does not fulfill Bessel and Jamin's criteria for 'homogeneous data'. The ISDL 'Occupational Census' - a phenomenon probably unique in the history of Irish exile organizations, certainly in Britain, is not frankly admit a randomly selected sample and as it covers only about 1½ percent of the total membership it cannot be assumed to be totally representative of the organization. But the much smaller number of deportees whose occupations were given as part of their applications for compensation constitute what we can reasonably regard as the leadership cadre of the ISDL.

The 'ISDL Occupational Census' was,

"compiled with a view to giving Irish exiles a chance to go back to their own country and work at their own trades and give of their Motherland their best".²

Branch secretaries were instructed to record members age, sex, occupation and whether they had "any special training or experience in Engineering, Chemical works, Glass and Pottery manufacture, Textiles, Shipbuilding also in Banking, Shipping and Insurance, Patent agent office and fluency in


² Irish Exile, April, 1922.
any of the following languages, Irish, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Norwegian". Unfortunately, for our purpose, the ISDL Executive did not undertake this 'Occupational Census' until January 1922, when following the Treaty serious tensions were emerging within the organization and some branches were no longer obeying instructions from head office. Even when a Branch Occupational Census was undertaken, many Secretaries did not follow their instructions to the letter. Some only included those with special skills, an extreme case being the North Staffs No 1 Branch which listed the occupation of only one member, a Head teacher. Others only listed the skilled workers. Many ignored the unemployed and most did not include non-working women in their list of members. It has not been possible to ascertain to what extent the total membership of the ISDL was occupationally classified in this manner, for all that remains of this census is a number of forms, I discovered scattered among the contents of a steel box in the Art O'Brien collection. These contain the returns of some 28 branches listing the occupations of 561 members. The census returns of these branches geographically distributed from London to Yorkshire, Ashton in Makerfield to

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1 O'Brien Ms 8432.
2 Irish Exile, Jan., 1922.
3 Classified as Ms 8432.
4 These branch census forms were not in a suitable condition to permit photo copying and so I have reproduced them in typescript as Appendix One.
Swansea, undoubtedly constitutes the best available source of information on the occupational pattern of the Irish born population in England and Wales in 1922, as the 1921 Census unfortunately does not provide any data on this issue. The Irish in Scotland were however occupationally classified in that country's separate 1921 Census report and Table 4 gives some of their main occupations.

**Table 4. Some Occupations of the Irish Born in Scotland, 1921.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male Occupations</th>
<th>As % of Irish working Males</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metal Workers</td>
<td>24.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport and Communications</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>10.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miners</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Labourers</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Female Occupations</th>
<th>As % of Irish working Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Clerks (non-public sector)</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charwoman</td>
<td>5.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laundry</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shop asst.</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile workers</td>
<td>20.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 Based on Table 8, 1921 Census of Scotland, (Edinburgh, 1924).
The ISDL Occupational Census

The average age of the ISDL branch members in this census was 31.7 (551 individuals) but women members with an average age of 29.6 years (166 individuals) tended to be somewhat younger than the men who had an average age of 32.5 years (385 individuals). The nature of the ISDL Occupational Census material does not facilitate a detailed industrial occupational classification, so we shall simply analyze it in terms of (a) employed and non-employed, (b) manual and non-manual workers, and (c) further divide manual workers into skilled/supervisory and unskilled workers in the case of male workers, and for women further distinguish factory workers and servants from other manual occupations.

96% of ISDL male members were employed at the time of this census but only 67% of the women. A few schoolboys are included in the non-employed male category but the female non-employed was very considerably boosted by housewives, as under 10% of married women were in employment at the time.¹

Table 5. ISDL Membership by Sex and Occupation (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual Occupation</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-manual Occupation</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional workers as % of non-manual</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N (377)</td>
<td>(113)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ N. Branson, op. cit., 212.
Table 5 shows that the ISDL membership was predominantly concentrated in manual occupations and most were unskilled workers. For only 24% of the male manual workers were skilled or supervisory workers. The type of industrial employment varied considerably according to the region's industrial structure. In Lancashire many of the members, both men and women were employed in the textile industry. In Yorkshire and South Wales the branches had a strong miners contingent. No fewer than 24 of the 31 manual workers in the Pontypridd No 2 Branch were miners. The Earlstown No 1 Branch reported the death of one of its members in a colliery accident while the Tonypandy No 5 Branch claimed that, "signs are not wanting that this branch will soon regain its activity, lost through the coal strike". The Victoria Garsfield Durham Miners Lodge indignantly rejected an invitation to be present when Lloyd George opened a home for retired miners; they informed their Prime Minister, "We have not forgotten the deaths of Lord Mayors, MacCurtain and MacSwiney of Cork". And in Lancashire the police discovered that Irish miners had in 1914 followed the example of their American counterparts and formed a Molly Maguire lodge. Kornhauser suggests that homogeneous work groups, particularly when they form

1 Irish Exile, Mar., 1921.
2 Irish Exile, Nov., 1921.
3 Catholic Herald, 8 Oct., 1921.
4 See H. Fiftch, op. cit., 205.
5 W. Kornhauser, Politics of Mass Society, (1960)
isolated residential communities, have a propensity towards political radicalism. This might explain the definite radicalism of ISDL miners though Newton rejects a similar explanation in his study of the British Communist Party.¹

Dockers were well represented in the ISDL's East London and Liverpool branches. Many of the mid-18th century Irish immigrants in London had become dockers² and there was a strong Irish presence in the late 19th century dockers' Labour Protection League.³ A similar situation occurred in Liverpool where we have already observed Irish dockers struck in sympathy with hunger striking Irish political prisoners in Britain. Irish dockers in Liverpool played a very important role in the IRA's logistical network, a participation testified to by Special Branch officers who complained that trade union officials frequently used their position to 'place' IRA members as dockers and sailors.⁴

The 4% of ISDL male members listed as unemployed is undoubtedly an underestimate for it is certain that many branch secretaries did not list the unemployed in their

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¹ K. Newton, op. cit., 47.
³ See Paul Thompson, op. cit., 270.
⁴ ROR 34. 18 Dec., 1919. CP 319. CAB 24/95 and Special, undated, ROR. CAB 24/122.
occupational census. In 1921 Britain was in the grip of the post war recession. With over two million unemployed by the end of that year, exports in 1921 were under 50% of the 1914 level and so the export orientated industries were particularly badly affected. 25% of all engineering workers, 34% of shipbuilding and 38% of steel workers were unemployed.\(^1\) The miners living in largely self-contained small communities were, when short time working is considered, probably the worst affected industrial group in Britain in 1921 and branch reports in the *Irish Exile* refer to this. Maestag No 1 Branch reported that:

"In common with many other branches in this area, work on behalf of the cause has been greatly handicapped owing to the disturbed state of industry",\(^2\)

while the Darwen No 25 Branch was even more explicit:

"present abnormal conditions of industry are having a very adverse effect on the branch".\(^4\)

These reports would appear to substantiate Pelling's\(^4\) hypothesis that unemployment tends to produce a withdrawal from political activity and a growing sense of political alienation, yet Hall\(^5\) has claimed that unemployment can generate increased growth in some political organizations. Some branch reports in the *Irish Exile* tend to support Hall's

\(^1\) Branson, op. cit., 69-70.

\(^2\) *Irish Exile*, Nov. 1921.

\(^3\) *Irish Exile*, Mar., 1922.


\(^5\) Tom Hall, 'Attitudes and Unemployment', *Archives of Psychology*, 25, No. 165, (1934), 1-65.
hypothesis, Mid Durham No 3 Branch reported that, "in spite of the great unemployment in this district, the branch is increasing its membership weekly."\(^1\) Other branches also appeared to be overcoming the effects of high unemployment in their areas. Thus East Ham reported "a very credible balance sheet was submitted in spite of the hardship caused by much unemployment among the members",\(^2\) while Swansea No 4 Branch admitted to a "high level of unemployment but good work being done".\(^3\) Newton in his study of the Communist Party in Britain\(^4\) shows a correlation between high levels of unemployment and the rapid growth of the party. But it would appear that overall there is no simple causal relationship between unemployment and the size of a political organization. Eisenberg\(^5\) has illustrated the non-static nature of the unemployment process by formulating seven stages in the psychological response to unemployment - the earlier stages are conducive to political involvement while the later tend to be alienative.

Most women members of the ISDL who were manual workers were employed in factories; 60% of the female manual ISDL workers were so employed. But domestic servants accounted for the next largest category of female manual workers

\(^1\) Irish Exile, Jan., 1922.  
\(^2\) Ibid., Aug., 1921.  
\(^3\) Ibid., Mar., 1922.  
\(^4\) Newton, op. cit.  
with 16.7%. "This was however proportionately considerable less than the ratio for the total female working population as the million plus servants constituted by far the largest single category of female employment in 1921.¹

Only 8% of males in the ISDL census were in non-manual occupations but almost one third of the female manuals were in this category. With the exception of such oddities as the Private and Trade Status Enquiry Agent in the Hulme Branch most of these non-manual workers were engaged in the more customary white collar occupations. Female Professionals proportionately outnumbered males by two to one in this category. There were several members of the legal profession in the ISDL, notably the barrister Martin O'Connor who advocated that the Irish should "be prepared to fight on for another 25 years rather than accept any humiliating measure from the British Government",² and James MacDonnell who spent much of his time to the detriment of his legal practice - on defending Irish political prisoners. But the majority of these ISDL professionals were teachers who accounted for all the male and all but two of the female professional workers listed in this census. The ISDL occupational census unfortunately did not distinguish between the different categories of membership that is, between office holders and rank and file members. One might formulate the hypothesis that a middle class

¹ Branson, op. cit., 212.
² Irish Exile, Aug., 1921.
white collar worker or teacher was more likely to become a branch officer than an unskilled labourer. Brady a clerk with a middle class background states that, "a Secretaryship was thrust upon me within five minutes of becoming a member".\(^1\) We have observed that the majority of the ISDL membership were manual unskilled workers but that does not necessarily imply that its leadership, both at national and local level, was drawn from this category. A party with a high proportion of working class members and primarily working class orientation will still tend to have a middle class leadership at all levels of organizational hierarchy. Berry\(^2\) and Hindess\(^3\) show that this is true for the British Labour Party, while Barnes\(^4\) has demonstrated a similar relationship within the Italian Socialist Party.

We can attempt to illustrate such a pattern in the ISDL if we turn to another source of information. In 1923 110 persons active in the Irish movement in Britain were deported to Ireland. Most of the deportees were members of the ISDL and most held some position at either branch, district or national level. We can, I think, reasonably

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1 E. Brady, op. cit., 55.
classify this group as the 'ISDL leadership'; following a High Court ruling that their deportation had been illegal the Government was forced to establish the Irish Deportees Compensation Claims Tribunal. This Tribunal awarded compensation basically on the grounds of income lost, and even loss of job, during the period of internment in Ireland. Thus it was in the applicants' interest to give a full description of their employment and account of their income to the Tribunal. Despite a detailed search in the Public Records office the files of the separate Scottish Tribunal were not discovered. While such information would have been useful in a general sense its absence does not affect our attempted assessment of the socio-economic composition of the ISDL leadership for that organization did not function in Scotland. I have however been able to examine the files of 73 claimants in England,¹ - 57 men and 16 women, and it is from these that the tables below have been constructed. In all respects, save for the non-recording of many ages,² they afford a more detailed analysis than the previous Table 5 and figures obtained from the Occupational Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual Worker</td>
<td>29 (50.9%)</td>
<td>5 (31.25%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non Manual Worker</td>
<td>28 (49.1%)</td>
<td>10 (62.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed/Housewife</td>
<td>1 (6.25%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>57</strong></td>
<td><strong>16</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹ TS 27/182. Reproduced in typescript as Appendix Two

² Only the ages of nine claimants are given which is not sufficient for tabulation purposes.
We immediately observe when we compare Tables 5 and 6 that the respective classifications of occupations are very dissimilar. In particular there are significant differences in the ratios of manual/non-manual workers. This differential distribution is, if anything, more discernible in the different ratios between skilled and unskilled manual workers.

Table 7. Skilled and Unskilled Male Manual Workers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Skilled/Supervisory</td>
<td>17 (58.6%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled</td>
<td>12 (41.4%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whereas the manual workers in the ISDL 'Occupational Census' were largely unskilled, the Deportees were mainly skilled or in supervisory grades.

Table 8 further breaks down the Non Manual category of the Deportees into three sub-groups – White Collar, Professional and Business/Commerce.

Table 8. Classification of Non-Manual Deportees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Collar</td>
<td>11 (39.3%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>8 (28.6%)</td>
<td>8 (80%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business/Commerce</td>
<td>9 (32.1%)</td>
<td>1 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the above male white collar workers, six of them can be classified as routine clerical workers/civil servants
but another two had a primary supervisory role: John King was an Insurance Officer Manager while Patrick O'Hart with a salary of £615 as the Private Secretary to the Managing Director of one of the largest companies in Britain can hardly be classified as a clerk. The category of Business /Commerce encompasses a wide range of entrepreneurial activity: a Liverpool newsagent, a Manchester dealer with a profit of £6 a week, two publicans, one a woman. Three were also however more substantial businessmen. Martin Maloney a member of the ISDL Executive and of the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club was a London Silk Trader who stated that in 1920, which was a below-average business year, his income (profit) was £1800. He claimed £1,820 for loss of profits and damages and was awarded £1,500. It must be remembered in considering these awards that the Tribunal was under substantial Government pressure to keep them minimal; the Treasury in fact had hoped to settle Maloney's case for £900.

There were also three Manchester Merchants among the Deportees. George Clancy who owned two large provision shops and a haulage firm claimed £6,110 and was awarded £1,300, while Joseph O'Dowd a hardware merchant claimed

1 See TS27/182, claim of James Barrett.
2 See TS27/183, transcript of the 9th day.
3 See letter from Treasury Solicitor to the Tribunal, 27 Dec., 1923. TS27/179.
4 See TS27/182.
£1,500 and received an award of £405.1 William McMahon, the first Treasurer of the ISDL and a merchant had just prior to his internment in Ireland been requested by the Irish Free State Government to establish a large scale marketing scheme for Irish dairy produce in Britain. He claimed £5,900 but only received £836 damages probably because of his known position within the Sinn Fein movement.2 The largest claim for loss of profits and damages totalling £20,000 was submitted by Sean O'Mahony a manufacturer's agent but as he was the Republican TD for Fermanagh, a member of De Valera's 'Council of State', and had been tried in 1924 on Sedition charges at the Old Bailey he received only £1,000. 3 Art O'Brien though an engineer by profession owned his own publishing business. We could also perhaps include the six tradesmen who made up the self employed manual worker category of the deportees in the Business section. One woman also owned her own dressmakers shop.4

Eight men and eight women among the deportees can be classified as professionals. Thomas O'Sullivan the London editor of the Freeman's Journal was a member of both the ISDL London District Committee and the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club. He claimed £5,760 but was only awarded £905.5

1 TS27/182.
2 TS27/182 and TS27/183.
3 TS27/182.
4 See the claim of Eileen Cullanhan, TS27/182.
5 See Transcript of the Fifth Day TS27/182 and 183.
Richard Purcell, another journalist ISDL member had earlier been jailed for arms smuggling. 6 men and 12 women of the 600 members in the ISDL occupational census were teachers but there were 7 men and 8 women teachers among the 73 deportees. The importance of teachers, particularly female teachers in the ISDL was recognized by an Intelligence evaluator who referred to the fact that many local branches were led by "Spitfire women of the school teacher type". The Occupational Census listed two female teachers in the Stockton ISDL Branch, Battersea had the same number, while Ashton in Makefield had three. There were no less than four women teachers and one male teacher in the London No 4 Branch. The presence of a considerable number of teachers in the ISDL, or at least among its supporters is indicated by an appeal in the Irish Exile from the Dail Eireann Minister of Education for Irish speaking teachers to return to Ireland.

Teachers in the 1920's were public service employees at a time when many local authorities regarded any participation in political activity by their employees very unfavourably, never mind membership of an organization aiding Britain's enemies. The Attorney General told the Deportees Compensation Claims Tribunal that Mr Quirke, the Chairman of the Management Committee in London which employed John Harvey as a teacher, was, "a perfectly loyal British

1 ROR 205, 10 May, 1923. CP 239(23). CAB 24/160.
2 Irish Exile, April, 1922.
subject with no sympathy for traitors, either English or Irish".\textsuperscript{1} Harvey was dismissed as a result of his deportation as was Michael Galvin another London teacher.\textsuperscript{2} Mrs Leonard submitted a claim for compensation based on her inability, during her internment, to attend an interview for a teaching position in Liverpool but the Tribunal was given a Special Branch report of an interview with her prospective employer that stated,

"a thoroughly loyal subject of English birth has informed me that if the management of the school knew of Mrs Leonard's rebel or republican tendencies her application would not have been considered for a moment".\textsuperscript{3}

Another Liverpool teacher Frank Smyth was dismissed from his position.\textsuperscript{4}

A few teacher members of the ISDL, particularly those employed by the Labour controlled boroughs in London, had more sympathetic employers. Kathleen Brooks retained her teaching position but claimed that her absence from school during her internment had adversely affected her promotion prospects and sought compensation for this. The Attorney General endeavoured to have her claim rejected and suggested to the Tribunal that West Ham "is not a Borough in which the fact of being an Irish internee would seriously hurt

\textsuperscript{1} See the transcript of the Fourth Days Hearing TS27/183.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., of the Seventh Day.
\textsuperscript{3} Liverpool Special Branch Reports, 3 Jan., 1924. Filed in TS24/181.
\textsuperscript{4} Transcript of the Eight Day Hearing, TS27/183.
Teachers were also prominently involved in the revolutionary movement in Ireland forming 23% of the membership of the First Dail. In an economically underdeveloped Ireland the occupation of teacher was, if the Church is excluded, virtually the only avenue open to the children of workers and small farmers desiring even limited higher education. The religious beliefs and practices of the Irish immigrants in Britain and their descendants necessitated a denominational education system which in many areas involved the provision of Irish Catholic schools rather than just Catholic educational facilities staffed from within the Irish community, with the teachers in many cases becoming the lay leaders of the local Irish community.

Newton observed that in the British Communist Party teachers had a party membership rate in relation to their proportion in the labour force, of almost three times greater than the miners who were the next largest group.

The involvement of teachers in radical political organizations has been attributed by some sociologists, notably by Lenski to status inconsistency. This sociological school of thought regards 'status incongruence', the non match of objective factors like income and life-style with

1 Transcript of the First Day Hearing.


3 For a detailed account of the position of the teacher within Irish society see Patrick Duffy, The Lay Teacher, (Dublin, 1968).

4 Newton, op. cit., 44.


contd.
the self perceived location of the individual within the class structure, as possessing potential radicalizing features. Landecker suggests a positive correlation between high status crystalization and class consciousness. Allardt claimed that this situation considerably increased the propensity towards political radicalism. Associated with the low status crystalization theory is the concept of 'Marginality'. Newton suggests that both these concepts operate most effectively when they are associated with ethnic, rather than class, boundaries. Fuchs in a study of Jewish liberalism in America correlated Jewish radicalism with specific features of Judaism; the emphasis on learning and social justice within an overall materialist orientated religious world perspective. But one could argue that these features were the precise elements that traditional Irish Catholicism did not emphasise so this hypothesis would hardly seem to be relevant in the case of the teacher members of the ISDL.

cont'd.


3 Quoted in K. Newton, op. cit., 125.

4 Golovensky, 'The Marginal Man Cometh - An Analysis and a Critique', Social Forces 32(1952)

The objective social position of teachers in Britain in the early 1920's when their wages had drastically failed to keep up with inflation averaging 23% a year, with professional morale so low that its members actually decreased would seem to support the 'low crystalized status' hypothesis but militancy in the profession did not really materialize until a decade later.

Banks asks why some intellectuals become revolutionaries and others do not. He concludes that there is no simple answer to this very complex problem and the same must apply to any attempt to explain the involvement of teachers in the ISDL or indeed in the Republican Movement as a whole.

The Church as an ISDL recruitment sphere

A police report in 1917 observed that the Catholic clergy

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2 For a detailed article on the position of teachers see the Manchester Guardian, 21 Feb., 1922. Also see S.J. Curtis, Education in Britain since 1900, and Asher Tropp, The School Teachers, (1956).

3 N. Branson and M. Heineman, Britain in the Nineteen Thirties, (1973), 27.

4 J. Banks, op. cit., 47.

5 According to a Free State Minister 20% of the school teachers in Southern Ireland were opposed to his Government in 1922 and favoured a Republican victory in the Civil War, Catholic Herald, 6 Jan., 1923.
in Ireland,

"exercise an immense influence over the youth in their parishes and unless some means can be used to make them abstain from interference in politics, I fear that disaffection will be dangerously spread".1

The clergy were strongly involved in the Irish Nationalist Movement, Blunt claimed "their parish priest is in 4 cases out of 5 President of the local branch"2 in Ireland and O'Day calculates that in 1886 almost half of the Irish National League branch meetings in Britain were chaired by priests.3 The participation of the clergy in constitutional and sometimes in insurrectionary movements4 was a well established Irish political tradition. Fitzpatrick puts forward the intriguing suggestion that Irish political organizations encouraged the participation of priests because as celibates they could not create or more accurately procreate a political dynasty.5

The non presence of priests in both the occupational census and the deportees list should not be interpreted as indicating that the ISDL had, unlike the UIL6, failed to attract

1 CO 904/102, (PRO).
2 William Blunt, The Land War in Ireland, (1912), 44.
3 A. O'Day, op. cit., 123.
5 Fitzpatrick, op. cit., 88.
the support of the clergy. For priests played an important role in the ISDL from the formation of the ISDL in London when Fr Campbell of Forrest Gate formally proposed the establishment of the first branch in the metropolis, to the immediate post-deportation period when the Cabinet was informed "a few militant priests have stepped into the breach left by the deported in London". Irish Exile branch reports reveal that at least six had priests as their Presidents: Fr Grogan (Bradford No 5), Fr McEnery (Bradford No 14), Fr Farrell (Hackney), Fr McCormack (Hanley No 2), Fr Lawton (Lewisham) and as only a small proportion of ISDL branches were ever featured in the Irish Exile it is a reasonable presumption that this is not an exhaustive list of priests who were ISDL branch Presidents.

The participation of the clergy within the ISDL no doubt facilitated the recruitment of the 'innocents' for it conferred a degree of respectability upon the organization. The Cabinet were particularly annoyed that the Bishop of Middlesborough sent a letter to an ISDL branch supporting its objectives. The publication in the Irish Exile, of an interview with Archbishop Mannix of Australia in which

1 O'Brien Ms 8435.
2 ROR 203. 25 April, 1923. CP 219(23). CAB 24/160.
3 ROR 66. 5 Aug., 1920. CP 1743. CAB 24/110.
4 Irish Exile, April 1921.
he expressed his support for the aims of the ISDL and his subsequent meeting with the Southwark ISDL Branch Committee\(^1\) was also no doubt of considerable publicity value to the ISDL. Clerical participation within the ISDL was generally confined to branch level activity, though Fr McNiff was a member of the Sheffield District Committee. Priests were especially involved in the organization of the educational aspect of the branches activities. The promotion of the Irish language was a theme continuously stressed by many of the ISDL's clerical members. When Fr O'Connor of Poplar joined his local branch he stated that he would "like to hear everyone in that room conversing in the Irish language".\(^2\) While at Hanwell, where a Fr Walsh ran a Gaelic class for his ISDL branch, Fr McCormac "stressed the need to speak Irish".\(^3\)

Clerical support in some parishes enabled the ISDL, often banned from using public facilities, to use church premises for meetings, as in the case of the Poplar ISDL Branch which met in the local Catholic Institute, and for the holding of socials for fund raising purposes. Bolton ISDL publicly thanked Fr Farley for permitting local schools to be used for whist drives.\(^4\) Many ISDL branches

\(^1\) Irish Exile, June, 1921.

\(^2\) Ibid., Sept., 1921.

\(^3\) Ibid., Dec., 1921.

\(^4\) Ibid., Mar., 1922.
specifically invited the local clergy as 'guests of honour' to their socials. At one typical event, an East Ham concert, the audience included Frs Clay, Grey, Brady and McMahon of the local parishes while Fr Glaghan sent a donation with his apology for absence. Priests, as members of the lower middle class, were often a relatively important source of local branch revenue. When Fr O'Connor joined the Poplar ISDL Branch he paid a subscription of one pound instead of the customary two shillings. Clerical permission to sell the *Irish Exile* outside churches considerably aided the circulation of that publication, while in Liverpool the clergy were thanked for facilitating church door collections which raised a considerable proportion of that city's contribution of £10,000 to the 'Irish Railwaymen's Fund'.

The presence of priests within the membership of the ISDL branches afforded considerable administration help but more importantly it reduced the level of political tension particularly when a priest took the chair at meetings. Traditional Irish 'respect for the cloth' and the generally non-partisan political attitude of the ISDL clerical members combined to play an important role in the maintenance of a relatively high level of internal branch

1 *Irish Exile*, Nov., 1921.

2 Patrick Cusack Papers, Ms 10,972, (NLI) - The fund was to aid Irish Railway workers suspended from work for their refusal to transport British military supplies.
consensus at least until the Treaty was signed. After this, however, inherent political tensions could no longer be contained. The ISDL was not the only Irish organization of a Republican character in Britain that obtained clerical support. The Home Office Intelligence Department reported that in Scotland the "Priests are taking a prominent part in Sinn Fein deliberations," particularly so in Glasgow where the local clergy organized a fair to raise funds for the Irish Prisoners Defendants Fund with 35,000 people paying £1,000 in admission charges alone.

I have already observed that while the presence in, and support for, Irish Republican organizations in Britain by some members of the clergy may have been functional, in that it counteracted the hostility of some members of the Irish community towards Church leaders of the Cardinal Bourne school of thought, it was dysfunctional with respect to the overall relationship between the Catholic Church and British society. The participation of some priests in Irish military activities in Britain would, if it had been known then, have caused considerable turmoil in the already troubled relations between Irish and British Catholics and the wider society. Ned Kerr wrote to Michael

2 ROR 110, 6 June, 1921. CP 3055. CAB 24/125.
Collins that he had been offered "some good gear" by a Fr McCormick of Sheffield, while another Collins's agent convalesced from a bullet wound, in a St Helens hospital run by nuns. I have mentioned that the Occupational Census and Deportation List contained no references to any clerical participation. In the case of the Deportees list, this omission was simply the result of British Government policy. The names of those selected in 1923 for deportation appears to have been compiled substantially from information supplied by the Free State Army Intelligence Department, one of whose reports on the supply of munitions from Liverpool to the Republicans in Ireland named five local priests as being prominently involved.

After the conclusion of the Civil War the IRA was reorganized and a detailed list of sympathisers in Britain (containing the names of seventeen priests) who were prepared to act as couriers, and furnish safe houses and arms dumps was compiled by its Headquarters.

As in the section on the Catholic Church in Britain, no


2 Letter from P. Daly to Michael Collins, P7/A/5, ibid.

3 Dept. of Intelligence Reports - Intelligence in Britain, 'List of Irregulars in Liverpool', P17a/182 and P17a/130, O'Malley.

4 O'Malley P17a/130.
attempt will be made here to argue that this clerical participation in both the military and political movements was anything other than the involvement of a minority. Nevertheless it was on a scale sufficiently large as not to be so easily dismissed and of a nature serious enough to have further endangered the Church-State relationship in Britain in the 1919-23 period. T.P. O'Connor arguing that the Irish in Britain needed a strong organization claimed they "had made less advance than the Irish in any other country".¹ Our available evidence strongly indicates that the vast majority of ISDL members were unskilled manual workers. It is interesting that not a single ISDL member was listed, or at least identified as such, in the 1921 Catholics Who's Who which contained the biographies of 5,000, mainly British resident Catholics.² And only four individuals were identified as UIL members. We have already considered in some detail the issue of structural assimilation or perhaps more accurately non structural assimilation. It would seem from our admittedly limited evidence that large sections of the Irish Catholic community in England and Wales during the first quarter of the 20th century were not structurally assimilated and did constitute an 'ethni-class'.³

¹ Glasgow Herald, 21 Nov., 1921.
² A small number lived outside Britain.
³ See P. Gallo, op. cit., 22.
According to Newton, the,

"lower socio-economic status of the unskilled working class typically produces a combination of alienation and political apathy and fatalism, the high socio-economic status of the middle class tends to produce a combination of non-alienation and political activity".1

While Berry bluntly states, "it is beyond dispute that the level of working class participation is very low".2

Both Newton and Berry were reaffirming the findings of earlier classical research on the correlation of low socio-economic status and low political participation rates.3

It is of course possible that the recruitment patterns of ethnic movements differ significantly from non-ethnic organizations, though Pinard4 and Orum's5 study of the black Civil Rights activists in the United States reveals they too were essentially middle class based.

Lack of sufficient evidence prevents us from doing no more than noting that the ISDL succeeded in mobilizing a large section of the population who according to most sociologists

1 Newton, op. cit., 122.
2 D. Berry, op. cit., 116.
are extremely difficult to mobilize and they did this at a time when their country of residence was effectively engaged in a war with their country of birth or patria.
CHAPTER 12

The Interorganizational Field of the ISDL

In previous chapters we have investigated the emergence of the Irish Self Determination League and its growth up to its first conference. We have observed the extent to which the ISDL successfully 'mobilized' recruits by channelling the new upsurge in national sentiment, among many of the Irish in England and Wales, into a political organizational format. Mobilization is a multi-causal, interactional process, involving personal ideological receptiveness, and interpersonal contacts. It is usually facilitated by the prior existence of organizations not unsympathetic to the objectives of the new political organization. These organizations constitute what Zald and Ash call the "broader social movement environment", forming a potential reservoir of recruits. Few organizations operate in an isolated manner without linkages to others and so most organizations operate in what Warren calls the "Interorganizational Field" or Curtis and Zurcher's the "Multi-Organizational Field" whereby the activities of one organization usually exercise an effect on others. The Irish Nationalist/Republican milieu in Britain during the 1916-22 period is best

1 Zald and Ash, op. cit.


3 See, Russell Curtis and Louis Zurcher, 'Stable Resources of Protest Movements': The Multi-Organizational Field', Social Forces 52(1973/74), 53-61. The authors however are evidently unaware of Warren's work, ibid., as they mistakenly claim that no one previously has evaluated this topic.
visualized as consisting of a series of concentric circles comprising an 'interorganizational or multi-organizational field'. The circle, radii, and circumference, being determined by the respective degrees of commitment required for membership in the different organizations. So the innermost circle was composed of the IRA and IRB membership and the outer circles of the Sinn Fein, ISDL, UIL and Gaelic League membership. Babchuck and Booth have empirically analysed the common pattern of multiple memberships in American voluntary organizations¹ and my research shows that it was not uncommon for an IRA member to also be a member of the IRB, Sinn Fein, the ISDL and the Gaelic League (though UIL members did join the ISDL and Gaelic League; they were unlikely to join Sinn Fein and the IRA, unless of course they were already IRB members). We will examine the IRA and IRB organizations in Britain, in a later chapter, and so in this section we shall only observe the interaction of the Gaelic League and Sinn Fein on the ISDL's inter or multi-organizational field.

The Gaelic League and the ISDL

It has become a maxim of Irish history that the 'Gaelic Revival' of the late 19th century was the spearhead of the 20th century Irish Revolutionary Movement. To a considerable extent it provided the ideological locomotive

of Republicanism, though this was contrary to the wishes of its early pioneers, notably Douglas Hyde. 1 The irony of the Gaelic Revival is that a movement based not merely on a-political foundations, but explicitly intended to be non political, completely eschewing the political, for the cultural, and the material, for the spiritual, should have played such an important role in Irish political life. The Gaelic Revival was, at least in the vision of pioneers like Hyde, a rejection of the emerging industrial society in Southern Ireland, a harkening back to a romanticized 'Gemeinschaft' clearly seen in its idealization of the Irish peasantry. The Gaelic Revival refutes Shils' conceptualization of ethnicity as a "primordial sentiment", declining in intensity with industrialization, 2 though it at least partially substantiates Hechter's 'internal colonialism model'. 3

The early pioneers of the Gaelic Revival originally envisaged a movement emphasizing 'Kulturnation' (psychological nationalism) rather than 'Staatsnation' (political identity) 4 but in Ireland as in Algeria 5 and Czechoslovakia 6,

1 See Michael Lennon, 'Douglas Hyde', The Bell, March 1957, for Hyde's efforts to prevent the Gaelic League from becoming politicized.

2 E. Shils, op. cit.

3 M. Hechter, op. cit., but also see Sloan's, op. cit., observations on the particular position of Ireland.

4 See, Meinecke, op. cit.


6 Smetana's music like Chopin's was highly nationalistic and hence banned during the Nazi occupation.
the cultural revival became inevitably politicized. The growth in the United States of the separatist Black Power political movement, which rejected, if not absolutely, repudiated the earlier Civil Rights coalition of Blacks and White liberals was also preceded by an upsurge of interest in Black culture.¹ In Ireland the Gaelic Revival coincided with the crippling split in the Irish Nationalist (ie) constitutional movement that followed the fall of Parnell. The early pioneers of the Gaelic Revival had hoped that the 'Fall of Parnell' marked the end of the Irish preoccupation with politics; but instead the discrediting of constitutional politics, produced a revival in the fortunes of the revolutionaries, notably the IRB which was symbolically illustrated following the death of Parnell; when his position as the Patron of the Cork Gaelic Athletic Association passed to James Stephens the founder of the IRB.²

From the moment in 1884 when seven men came together in Thurles to form the GAA,³ the new organization was infiltrated by the IRB and six years later, it was estimated that the IRB controlled well over half of the 800 clubs

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¹ For the rise of Black Culture/Power in the USA see, Carmichael and Hamilton, op. cit. G.L. Watson, op. cit., H. Burns, op. cit., and M. Parenti, 'Black Muslims', op. cit.


³ For the formation of the GAA see, Patrick Purcell, 'Seven Men in an Inn - the origins of the GAA', The Bell, XII(1946), 217-29 and Marcus de Burca, The History of the GAA, (Dublin, 1980).
then in existence.\textsuperscript{1} The constitution of the GAA, while professing the organization's a-political character, was extremely amenable to the IRB's ultimate goal of an Independent Irish Republic, as it expressly excluded from membership those serving in the British Forces, including the Royal Irish Constabulary, and prohibited members from playing English games like soccer, rugby and cricket. It was thus an extremely nationalist organization, refusing to acknowledge the legitimacy of the instruments on which British Rule in Ireland ultimately depended upon. Gaelic Football and Hurling are very fast field sports played only by fit young men, precisely the sort of recruits that most interested an organization like the IRB, ultimately preparing for a military insurrection, while the caman or hurley stick also provided a reasonable substitute for rifle drilling.

The Gaelic League, Conradh na Gaedhilge, was founded in 1893 to preserve and promote the Irish language, and thus had a somewhat wider activist appeal, in terms of age, than the GAA. But it undoubtedly played an even more important role in the formation of a new nationalist, separatist ideology, by emphasizing the historical, cultural differences between Ireland and England and once again the

\textsuperscript{1} See W.F. Nandle, 'The IRB and the Beginnings of the GAA', \textit{Irish Historical Studies}, XX(1976/77), 418-38, who claims that the IRB controlled 497 of the 810 clubs in 1890.

IRB were extremely active and influential in the new organization. Opponents of the Gaelic movement claim that reviving the language and culture, and emphasizing the differences between Ireland and England, alienated the Northern Irish pro-British section and contributed towards the Partition of the island; but O'Snodaigh has shown that many Protestants, particularly, the clergy were Irish language enthusiasts.¹ Indeed the very prophetic observation,

"we have now a literary movement, it is not very important, it will be followed by a political movement, that will not be very important, then must come a military movement, that will be important indeed".² was made in 1899 by James Standish O'Grady, the leading Gaelic scholar of the period, and a Protestant and lifelong Unionist.

The influence of the IRB was resented by some of the Gaelic League leaders, appalled that in some areas IRB controlled branches had appointed members as paid organizers "who did not even speak Irish".³ One influential Gaelic League founder, Eoin MacNeill⁴ unconsciously greatly aided the IRB when he proposed the formation in 1913 of the Irish Volunteers to counteract the influence of the Ulster

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3 See, Leoin O'Broin, op. cit., 165.

Volunteer Force. While not necessarily supporting the political objectives of Sinn Fein, Gaelic enthusiasts welcomed that organization's practical commitment to the language revival by adopting a Gaelic title and using only the Irish terms, cumann and comhairle for its branches and committees. According to Eoin Neeson,

"Both organizations (GAA and GL), subsequent to 1916, were the cohesive element which brought together the diffuse interests and activities of individuals belonging to other political, cultural and social bodies and helped to fuse and direct their energies in a common direction".2

Following the 1916 Rising, a British Intelligence officer told the Royal Commission inquiring into the events that the IRB had "obtained practically full control of the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association" and so the Gaelic League was also banned in 1918 when Sinn Fein was outlawed.

GAA clubs are known to have existed in Britain since 1890 though hardly any details survive. The Gaelic League was established in 1896 in London, largely under the auspices of


2 Eoin Neeson, The Life and Death of Michael Collins, (Cork, 1968), 15. According to Al Cohan, The Irish Political Elite: Studies in Irish Political Culture, (Dublin, 1972), 60, no fewer than 69% of the TD's in the early Dail were members of the Gaelic league.

3 See Minutes of Evidence, op. cit., 58.

of the Irish Amnesty Association, an organization under
the influence of the IRB. The development of the new
organization was aided by the existence of the Irish Literary Society founded in 1882\(^1\) which allowed the Gaelic
League to use its premises. The IRB had also exercised a
strong influence in the formation of the earlier organization, as one of its founders the poet W.B. Yeats, was then
an IRB member.\(^2\) In its early years the Gaelic League in
London, organized in two branches, enjoyed a steady if modest
growth.\(^3\) In 1906 Paul Dubois in London enroute to write
a book on Ireland observed the enthusiasm among the London Irish for learning the language.\(^4\) The Irish language, even
before the banning of the Gaelic League in 1918, was consi-
dered to be itself somewhat 'subversive' and one Claude
Vasal Chavasse, a Christchurch don, and President of the
Oxford Gaelic League, was arrested on a visit to Ireland in
eyear 1916, merely for speaking in Irish to a police officer.\(^5\)
A few months later his branch was complaining to the

\(^1\) See transcript of (in my possession) Centenary Lecture
by Dr. John Kelly at the Irish Club, London, 29 Mar.,
1982.


\(^3\) For the early growth of the Gaelic League in London see,
correspondence for the 1902-1905 period in the Fionan
MacColuim Papers, Ms 24,393, (NLI) and for the 1893-1912
period there are some letters to and from Art O'Brien
in the Eoin MacNeill Papers Ms 10,897 (NLI). Patrick
Pearse spoke at an early London Gaelic League meeting,
see report in The Irish Commonwealth, Mar., 1919.

\(^4\) Paul Dubois, Contemporary Ireland, (1909), 410.

\(^5\) See the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Office, File 6592,
(S.P.O.).
Government about the conditions of the 1916 Rising prisoners. The London Gaelic League Head office was raided immediately after the Rising by British soldiers who evidently believed that other members had emulated Edward McCarthy's progress, from membership of the Gaelic League, and the same GAA club as Michael Collins, to Sinn Fein and then the IRA.

Fitzpatrick observes that there was a substantial rise in the Gaelic League membership in Clare after the Rising and while Cohen cautions that "the jump from cultural nationalism to revolutionary participation is very difficult to explain," there can be no doubt that the radical upsurge in Irish politics in England and Wales in 1919, as shown by the emergence and growth of the ISDL, was reflected in the dramatic growth of the Gaelic League. In 1919 the West London Gaelic League reported it had 101 new applicants to join its language class and with the other branches reporting similar influxes, it was soon found

1 See the Chief Secretary of Ireland, Office File 8081, (S.P.O.).

2 Ibid., File 25882.

3 See 'Statement by Edward McCarthy concerning His Part in the National Movement', Ms 22,246, (NLI).

4 D. Fitzpatrick, op. cit., 155.

5 A. Cohen, op. cit., 50. V.A. Walsh, op. cit., observes that the Irish immigrants from the Irish speaking Gaeltacht region showed very little interest in the Fenian movement in Pittsburgh though this may have been due to language problems.

necessary to run language classes in eleven different centres in London. But even with these new classes, there were frequent branch reports recording the difficulty of getting offices, teachers and classrooms, to cope with the new situation whereby the "enthusiasm for the learning of Irish is extraordinarily keen this year". ¹ With Art O'Brien, as the President of the London Gaelic League since 1914 - prior to this he had been Vice President for 25 years ² and Hugh Lee and Liam McMahon of the ISDL leadership as prominent members of the Manchester Gaelic League, ³ it is not surprising that, in its early period of existence, the new ISDL jointly advertised its functions and appealed for members along with the Gaelic League. The Head office premises of the ISDL were subsequently rented from the Gaelic League.

In some areas, like Bolton and particularly on the Tyneside, the Gaelic League was largely the creation of the ISDL, where a local branch reported that,

"At last, it seems to be realized that through its workings in close conjunction with the ISDL, it can become not only the most powerful instrument for resurrecting the Gaelic League, but also something which if properly manipulated will build up in the land of the Sassanach within his very doors, a Gaelic state". ⁴

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¹ Irish Exile, Nov., 1921.
² O'Brien, Ms 8419.
³ See resolution by the Manchester Coiste Ceantair of the Gaelic League placing on record, "the support which the ISDL has given it", Irish Exile, Feb., 1922.
⁴ Irish Exile, Feb., 1922.
This statement and the ISDL's emphasis on fostering the Irish language, culture, music and sports, to the extent that many branches in their activities reports, referred to their purely "Irish/Ireland atmosphere", is reminiscent of the post 1905 Russian Bund's emphasis on fostering Yiddish culture. This cultural issue caused deep divisions within the Bund which had originally evolved as an anti-zionist Jewish socialist party, advocating the full integration of Jewish workers into the Russian state. Subsequently however after the 1905 defeat and the ensuing anti-semitic pogroms the Bund switched its emphasis away from integration. The United Irish League never really supported the Gaelic Revival movement in Britain, a tactical error later acknowledged in 1922 by John Dillon when he suggested to T.P. O'Connor that the proposed replacement for the UIL should "make a bold effort to capture the Gaelic revival movement". The Catholic Herald committed to the assimilation of the Irish in Britain and resolutely opposed to Irish political organizations in Britain, repeatedly condemned the growth of the Gaelic Revival movement in Britain.

Bierstedt has, we have already observed, suggested that

1 See, Charles Woodhouse and Henry Tobias, 'Primordial Ties and Political Process in Pre-Revolutionary Russia: The Case of the Jewish Bund', Comparative Studies in Society and History, 8(1965), 331-60.

2 Quoted in F.S.L. Lyons, John Dillon, (1968), 473.
assimilation is synonymous with acculturation and no doubt Charles Diamond recognized, in a less theoretical manner, that the promotion of Gaelic culture substantially retarded the assimilationist process of the Irish in Britain. The existence of Irish societies often served as mediating structures between the newly arrived immigrants and their new country of residence, and by functioning as a transitional half way house, ultimately facilitated integration into the pluralistic multi-ethnic 'melting pot' society of 19th century America. But, as we have already observed, Irish emigration to Britain was running at a very low level in the 1919-21 period and so this American example is not very relevant to the impact of the Gaelic Revival movement on a relatively well established Irish community in Britain. Art O'Brien suggested that "in some ways perhaps that sentiment (the language revival) was more keen among the exiled Irish", and perhaps most interestingly of all was the effect of the Gaelic Revival on the non-Irish born in Britain. Greeley and Novak have commented at length, on the emergence of a

1 See R. Bierstedt, op. cit., and also N.R. White, op. cit.


3 Said by Art O'Brien at the 1935 London Gaelic League Easter Commemoration, Ms 8417.


new ethnic self consciousness among the American born offspring of immigrants, but this has not weakened their fundamental Americanism. In Britain however an interest in Irish step dancing led London born John 'Blimey' O'Connor to joining an Irish language class. He subsequently became a fluent speaker, though with a pronounced cockney accent and then enlistment in the IRA and ultimately service in a Republican flying column in the Civil War.¹

Ireland was of course not the only country where a language revival was closely associated with a political movement. In India for example the growth of the Congress Movement sparked off renewed interest in the Sanskrit language and literature.² During the traumatic post-Treaty period leading up to the disintegration of the ISDL the Irish Exile recounting the achievements of the organization, commented that,

"the League has rescued thousands of our people from Anglicization and given them a healthy Irish outlook".

and exhorted that the,

"Irish should keep up the Gaelic cultural influences developed from the struggle".³

There were however those who opposed the ' politicization' of the Gaelic Revival. The early Zionist Congresses were marked by bitter splits between those advocating a primarily cultural orientation and the advocates of political

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¹ See, Harry O'Brien Memoir, 16, and 31-33.

² See, Bruce T. McCully, English Education and the Origins of Indian Nationalism, (New York, 1940), 242-54.

³ Irish Exile, June 1922.
Zionism. Similar disputes arose within the Gaelic organizations in Britain. Some were worried that police and even military raids on Gaelic organization premises, and the deportation of prominent Gaelic League officials, like C.B. Dutton, might alienate potential Gaelic enthusiasts who either, like James Standish O'Grady believed in the continued political union of Britain and Ireland or were simply frightened of becoming involved in organizations that so interested the police. And certainly with all the London GAA clubs adopting the names of the executed 1916 leaders, membership of these could be reasonably inferred by the Special Branch, as indicating sympathy with the ideas of the executed men. The Gaelic League officer who believed that "the officers of the Gaelic League should not be officers of other organizations" no doubt had Art O'Brien, Liam MacMahon and Hugh Lee particularly in mind.

Other Gaelic League enthusiasts regarded participation in the political organizations as diverting resources away from the cultural movement. Some of the language purists were very sceptical about this upsurge in 'situational ethnicity' particularly when it manifested itself more in the form of social entertainment, Irish dancing etc., rather than the more intellectual pursuit of language

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1 See, Ben-Sasson, op. cit., 899-902.
2 Quoted in the Irish Exile, June 1921.
3 As used by A. Etzioni, 'The Ghetto', op. cit.
learning. One London Gaelic League officer complained that "thousands of graceful dancers had been turned out in the last twenty five years, but how many speakers of the language had been produced?"¹ But the language classes certainly experienced an unrivalled boom during the 1919-21 period, partly because of the new enthusiasm for all things Irish, stemming from the heightened political atmosphere and also for more instrumental reasons. Many of the leaders of the Irish Republican Movement were, like the later Israeli leaders, determined to have a new national language to symbolize the break with colonialism² and after the signing of the Treaty the Irish Exile claimed that,

"As the Irish Government has made Irish compulsory for Civil servants, so many firms insist on their staff knowing it, within a year or two, commercial houses in England will be faced with the necessity of dealing with correspondence in Gaelic and they will look to Irish exiles with a knowledge of their own tongue to carry on business with Irish houses".³

Some were already hoping to benefit from their knowledge of Irish like the civil servant who wanted to become an interpreter during the Anglo-Irish negotiations.⁴

¹ Quoted in the Irish Exile, June 1921.
² De Valera even declared, "it's my opinion that Ireland with its language and without its freedom is preferable to Ireland with freedom and without its language", Ibid. Ironically his subsequent economic policies, which led to half the children born in the 1940s, emigrating from Ireland and depopulated the Gaeltacht, effectively destroyed Irish as a living language.
³ Irish Exile, May 1922.
⁴ See, Tom Jones, op. cit., 114.
The dialectical relationship between the Gaelic League and the varying fortunes of the Irish political milieu, can be seen from the fully paid up membership figures, (apparently many who attended language and dancing classes were not actually members) of the London Gaelic League. In 1919 there were 466 members; by 1920 1,100 but in 1924 the membership declined to its lowest figure for twenty years.  

When the ISDL begun to break up, its Cardiff Branch proposed that ISDL branches should form part of the Gaelic League" but this does not seem to have happened to any significant extent. The Gaelic organizations suffered further reverses during the Civil War and its aftermath when Pro and Anti-Treaty supporters sought to use them for their own purposes. The London GAA clubs were particularly badly affected by these divisions and the efforts of Republicans to prevent British GAA contingents from participating in the 1924 Tailteann Games in Dublin, which were regarded by the Free State Government, as an opportunity of demonstrating to the overseas Irish, their control of the country.  

1 Figures for 1919-20 from Irish Exile and for 1924 - from a Gaelic League Report in O'Brien Ms 8434.  

2 Irish Exile, Mar., 1922.  

3 The Tailteann Games, the only real lasting product of the Paris Congress were to have been held in 1922, but had to be postponed due to the Civil War. The Games first held in 1924 were therefore seen as a sign of Free State power and hence opposed by Republicans, see Irish Times, 22 June, 1924, Catholic Herald, 28 June, 1924 and S 1592. (S.P.O.).
In many areas of Britain the Gaelic organizations either ceased to exist or survived as a mere shadow of their former strength. The mass immigration of the Second World War and immediate post war periods did little to revive the near dormant Gaelic organizations but with the upsurge of political interest in the late 1940s and early 1950s, when the Anti-Partition League seemed to be following in the footsteps trodden by the ISDL some thirty years earlier the Gaelic organizations in Britain underwent a considerable revival and new branches appeared in areas where the organizations had long been defunct.

Sinn Fein in Britain, 1908-1921.

The Irish Self Determination League effectively owed its existence to Sinn Fein which however laid down a number of stipulations, regulating the League's relations with other organizations and restricting its activities so that it would not interfere with the older organization. Many Sinn Fein members in England resented the decision to form the ISDL and only reluctantly approved its formation after considerable pressure from their leadership in Ireland. Throughout the League's existence these Sinn Fein members continually scrutinized the League's activities to prevent

1 See O'Brien, 'Gaelic League', op. cit., for the fortunes of the London Branch during this period.

2 The Irish Democrat, Nov., 1947 referred to a "Great revival of the Gaelic Movement in Newcastle with the strong possibility of the Gaelic League being once more established on Tyneside".
any violation of its original formation pact with Sinn Fein; and eventually after the Civil War, they finally succeeded in persuading the surviving Sinn Fein leadership in Ireland, to revoke their recognition of the ISDL in favour of an attempt to revive Sinn Fein in England and Wales. As Sinn Fein played such an important role in the birth, life and death of the ISDL, it is appropriate to examine Sinn Fein in somewhat more detail than we have done so far.

We have already observed that the relationship between the ISDL and Sinn Fein resembled that of the American Clan na Gael and the Friends of Irish Freedom. Both of these smaller political organizations sought to create a much larger mass organization, utilizing the new national consciousness, in a manner similar to the role of the Communist Party of South Africa in the creation of the African National Congress. Inevitably tensions arose between these parent organizations and their offspring. The German Workers Party, (the original name for the Nazi Party) owed its origins to an initiative by the secret Thule Society which wanted to create an anti-communist workers organization. Thule Society money ensured that this tiny party was not stillborn or doomed like many others to a fringe existence. Thule Society members in the Police and Armed Forces, particularly the Navy, protected the fledgling party even when it violated the law.

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Yet ultimately the Thule Society was unable to control its offspring.¹ Sinn Fein, unlike the Thule Society, was unable to provide either finance, or legal protection for its ISDL offspring.

Moreover Sinn Fein itself was at the time of the birth of the ISDL an uneasy coalition of differing interests. Founded in 1905 by Arthur Griffith² Sinn Fein originally aspired to no more than the creation of an Irish Parliament, owing allegiance to the British Monarchy in a manner similar to the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy.³ It was essentially the product of a pragmatic coalition of old Fenians who, had, at least temporarily, despaired of sparking off a new insurrection, and disenchanted members of the Nationalist Party.⁴ During its early existence the principle

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¹ The Thule Society was a very influential extreme right wing organization, masquerading under the guise of a patriotic cultural body. It had members occupying high positions in the Aristocracy, business, the Civil Service, the Armed Forces, and the Police. See Reginald H. Phelps, 'Before Hitler Came: The Thule Society and German Order', Journal of Modern History, 35(1963), 250. The Nazi swastika and interest in the occult were derived from the Thule Society, see, Louis Pauwels and Jacques Bergie, The Morning of the Magicians, (New York, 1963), 190-4.


difference between Sinn Fein and the Nationalist Party centred on the former's advocacy that the elected Irish representatives should withdraw from Westminster and constitute their own assembly in Dublin. If anything the Nationalist Party was possibly to the left of Griffith, on economic affairs who as an enthusiastic supporter of List's economic protectionist policies, bitterly condemned the 1913 Dublin lockout workers for destroying the Irish capitalism he believed was vital to secure Irish Independence.

But even after Griffith resigned from the IRB, that organization maintained their interest in Sinn Fein and with their aid some 20 branches (cumanns) had been established in Britain by 1908. The fact that this British offshoot represented almost 20 percent of the total number of cumanns indicates the very relative success Sinn Fein had encountered in Ireland until 1916. Sinn Fein's opposition to Irish involvement in the war and the journalist talents of Griffith employed in a series of short lived, banned newspapers, had brought the party much more into the public eye than its actual size warranted. So when rebellion

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1 See Robert Henry The Evolution of Sinn Fein (Dublin, 1920) and Robert Kee, op. cit. 438-60. Also See Patrick Colum Arthur Griffith (Dublin, 1959).


3 Report by Colonel Chamberlain. Royal Commission Minutes op. cit, 44 and also see Edward McCarthy, a London Sinn Fein member, Ms. 22,246 (U.C.I).
broke out in Dublin in 1916, the press, public, and authorities alike, knowing little of the real forces behind the Rising, promptly dubbed it the 'Sinn Fein Rebellion' for want of a better name. Arthur Griffith had not known in advance of the plans for the 1916 Rising. He had disagreed with the IRB's advocacy of armed insurrection and even when he found himself the Acting President of the Irish Republic, was never very happy about defending the actions of the IRA volunteers, nominally under his authority. Griffith however, fortunately for his later political career, found himself and many of his party's members swept up in the Post Rising internment wave.

Mr Shortt, the Chief Secretary for Ireland speaking after the Rising of the 'take over of Sinn Fein' by 'extremists' observed "they might as well have taken over any other society because Sinn Fein in itself is a harmless literary


2 The Home Office Intelligence Department, Reports on Revolutionary Organizations, recorded the activities of Irish organizations in Britain under the generic title of 'Sinn Fein' even though most of the reports actually referred to the ISDL and the IRA.

3 See Sean O'Luing 'Arthur Griffith and Sinn Fein', in F.X. Martin (edt.), 1916, op. cit.

society which if left alone would do no harm to anyone".¹ But the surviving Republican leaders had no intention of leaving Sinn Fein alone. Finding themselves with considerable popular support, particularly for the release of the prisoners, but with no political organization of their own with experience of fighting elections, they co-opted Sinn Fein. In a series of by-elections, four prisoners on a 'nominal Sinn Fein' ticket were elected to Westminster on the highly emotional "Put him in to get him out" platform.² Sinn Fein was totally reorganized in 1917,³ with the aid of the IRB who often selected cumann delegates, and election candidates.⁴ The different political views of the old Sinn Fein and the new 1916 activists were reconciled, at least temporarily, by the adoption of an ambiguously worded Constitution, which was very open to variable interpretation.⁵ De Valera, symbolizing the new orientation replaced Griffith as President of Sinn Fein, but even De Valera realized the tactical benefits of hedging on the thorny issue of the

¹ 107 H.C. Deb. 5. Col 906.
² Words on an election poster reproduced in Kee, op. cit., 625.
³ See Thomas Dillon's unpublished typescript, 'Arthur Griffith and the Reorganization of Sinn Fein, 1917', Misc. Box IX (T.C.D) and for a particularly detailed but erudite account, see Michael Laffan, 'The Unification of Sinn Fein in 1917', Irish Historical Studies, 18, (1971), 353-79.
⁴ According to Leoin O'Broin op. cit., 181, the IRB appointed Sinn Fein delegates "who didn't know until they were told what areas they were representing".
'Republic', declaring that the Sinn Fein electoral victory in the 1918 election was "not for a form of government as such, because we are not Republican doctrinaires but for Irish freedom and Irish independence."\(^2\)

As President of Sinn Fein, De Valera consequently became President of the newly declared Irish Republic and the most important member of the Dail Cabinet. So Art O'Brien, acting on instructions from De Valera to form a new mass Irish organization in England and Wales, was able to convince his reluctant colleagues to agree to the establishment of the Irish Self Determination League. However Sinn Fein opposition to the new organization was still so strong that O'Brien felt obliged even with De Valera's aid to 'sell' his proposal in terms of the new members it would bring into Sinn Fein. "The vast majority of our people here are not effective or active supporters of Sinn Fein ................. Get them through the medium of the Self Determination League and soon they become Sinn Fein supporters".\(^3\) Sinn Fein members determined the choice of the new organization's name and imposed restrictions on the type of activities it could engage in. Three of the four members of the ISDL's Provisional Executive

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1 Sinn Fein with 47 percent of the poll won 73 seats in 1918. See Joseph Sweeney, 'Why Sinn Fein', *Eire-Ireland*, 6(1976), 33-40.


3 Letter from O'Brien to J. Faughan, 5 May, 1919. Ms. 8435.
Committee were Sinn Fein members, and in 1921 Sinn Fein members still occupied half of the positions on the expanded elected Executive. In London, the proportion of Sinn Fein members holding District Committee positions was even higher, with three out of the four London delegates to the Central Executive Committee being party members. Art O'Brien the League's Vice President, Sean McGrath its General Secretary, Michael McGrath the National Organizer, Brian O'Kennedy the first editor of the Irish Exile, Fintan Murphy and Thomas O'Sullivan, both also involved in the production of the paper, Elizabeth Eadie, employed as a League clerk, and Martin Moloney, P.D. O'Hart, and George Mortimer, all belonged to the Roger Casement Cumann of London Sinn Fein.¹

Yet Art O'Brien's predictions that the ISDL would bring members into Sinn Fein were never realized.² Most of the twenty or so ISDL members deported before the Truce were members of Sinn Fein, including Sean and Michael McGrath, Thomas Faughan the League's Treasurer, Brian O'Kennedy and C.B. Dutton the London Gaelic League Treasurer. Many of the deported members were of course involved in IRA activities but many Sinn Fein members were not involved in

¹ See 'Extracts from the Minute Book of the Roger Casement Club', presented to the Deportees Compensation Tribunal, TS 27/179 and hereafter cited as 'Casement Minutes'.

military activities and some pointedly refused to become so involved when requested. ¹ Some potential members were probably frightened away from joining Sinn Fein, as a result of these arrests and deportations. But in a September 1921 Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club discussion on its failure to attract many new recruits, Fintan Murphy declared he "did not believe that the small membership was as much attributable to fear as to the fact of so many of our people being taken up in the ISDL and other branches of work". ² Fintan Murphy was a particularly strident critic of the ISDL and passed up no opportunity of attacking the League, even requesting the return of a letter to Fine Geadheal because it had been sent through ISDL channels to the Club. ³

Some of the most influential members of Sinn Fein, like Sean McGrath were also IRB members and as long as the IRB was prepared to support the ISDL, the anti-league forces in Sinn Fein were contained. The anti-league forces within Sinn Fein were strongest in the cumanns outside London. Of the thirteen delegates present, at the April 1920 meeting of the Ard Comhairle of Sinn Fein in England, representing

¹ See for example, the case of Minnie Kennedy a Roger Casement member who refused to keep some arms for a short period in an emergency declaring she "was only engaged in propaganda work" - O'Brien Ms. 8427.

² Casement Minutes. 1 Sept., 1921, but another member Paddy O'Hart claimed that "in the Sinn Fein Club, quantity was not so essential as quality", ibid.

³ Ibid.
eight cumanns in Liverpool, Birkenhead, St. Helens and London, the seven Liverpool cumann representatives were most opposed to the ISDL, claiming that its existence impeded the expansion of Sinn Fein and pointed to Scotland where in the absence of an ISDL type organization Sinn Fein continued to grow, with forty cumanns in 1920 and sixty-five in 1921. One British Intelligence Officer reported that in Glasgow "nine out of ten Irishmen appear to be Sinn Feiners or supporters in one form or another of the movement which is the most active of all the revolutionary societies". As 'Red Clydeside' was considered by the Government to be potentially, the most revolutionary dangerous area in Britain; the Intelligence agencies were particularly concerned by Sinn Fein's close connections with left wingers, notably John Maclean. Art O'Brien himself was also worried by these relations, particularly when one Glasgow Sinn Fein cumann actively discouraged the participation of middle class individuals in its affairs but he was bluntly told to "mind his own business" when he tried to intervene.

1 ROR 141. 2 Feb., 1922. CP 3687. CAB 24/131.
2 ROR 50. 1 April, 1920. CP 1086. CAB 24/101, but compare this with the claims in the Glasgow Observer, (A Diamond owned paper), 28 April. 1916 that 99 percent of Irish and Catholic people in Scotland regard the Rising as "needless, foolish, wicked and unjustifiable".
3 ROR 64. 22 July, 1920. CP 1673. CAB 24/109.
4 ROR 120. 25 Aug., 1921. CP 3261. CAB 24/127.
If Sinn Fein in Scotland, jealously guarded its independent position from the organization in England, the situation there, was little better, for with the Ard Comhairle - England not meeting between November 1920 and April 1922; the English organization became so decentralized, it was essentially reduced to little more than a collection of autonomous cumanns. At the Ard Comhairle meeting held on the orders of the Dublin Sinn Fein Head office to select delegates for the Ard Fheis convened to discuss the Treaty; Art O'Brien condemned the representation structure of the English Ard Comhairle , which gave Liverpool an inbuilt majority, even though the Roger Casement London cumann with over two hundred members, was larger than any other cumann. In retaliation, the Liverpool representatives used their votes to ensure that no delegates from London were selected to attend the Ard Fheis, a decision subsequently overruled by the Sinn Fein Head office which observed; not for the first or last time, "there is a lot of bickering going on amongst the Sinn Fein cumainn in England". An earlier circular to all the English cumainn had further infuriated the Liverpool Sinn Feiners by observing that, "if all the Sinn Fein cumainn in England did as well as the Roger Casement Club, there would be no cause for complaint. Unfortunately the other cumainn have done nothing for the past twelve months".

1 Casement Minutes, 16.
2 Ibid., 14-15..
3 Letter from Secretary Sinn Fein Head Office, 13 Feb., 1922. O'Brien Ms. 8423.
4 Ibid., 3 May, 1921.
This was a reference to financial contributions sent to the Dublin Head Office. The following extracts from the 1921 Sinn Fein Financial Report\(^1\) clearly indicate the important role of the Scottish and English Sinn Fein cumainn in financing Headquarters activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>No. of cumainn</th>
<th>Remittances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1920</td>
<td>1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ireland</td>
<td>not given</td>
<td>£3,485</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ultimately however the pressing financial need to rebuild Sinn Fein after the Civil War led to a decision by its Irish leadership to dissolve the ISDL, in the hope that a reorganized Sinn Fein in England could raise the desperately needed funds. But by this time Art O'Brien had ceased to be the Dáil Éireann Envoy in Britain and even a member of Sinn Fein itself. These events will however be examined in a later chapter.

\(^{1}\) Preserved in O'Brien, Ms. 8431.
CHAPTER 13

The Irish Self Determination League and the Labour Movement

The 'isolationist/exclusivist' principles on which the ISDL Constitution was based can be clearly seen in this statement by the Newcastle on Tyne No. 3 Branch,

"Of course we clearly understand that it is entirely out of the question to make any appeal to any English body either political or social as it would be unworthy of the cause we represent and acceptable least of all to the men over whose fate we are all so concerned".¹

The "men concerned" were the Irish Political Prisoners whose release the branch was demanding yet apparently forsaking non-Irish support. Sinn Fein translates into English as 'Ourselves alone' and this isolationist philosophy permeated the ranks of the ISDL. The League's Constitution, on the specific instructions of Sinn Fein, precluded the ISDL from any electoral involvement in the British political system yet even a cursory reading of the Irish Exile reveals the extent to which the membership, and often the local officers, were involved in Local Government politics. In London alone, Aldermen Mortimer, Scurr and Councillors Sexton, Mahoney and Hart, were all Presidents of their local League branches. While Councillors Raphail, Turner, Adams, McGiff, Alyward, Hubbart, and Purcell were all active in their local London branches. And outside London, the Irish Exile (which for a period only recorded London activities) refers to the involvement of Councillors Smith in Hartlepool, Ayles in Bristol, Miller in Chorley,

¹ Irish Exile, Aug. 1921.
Butler in Bradford and Ludlow in Oxford.

All of these Councillors were members of the Labour Party. The official attitude of the ISDL towards the Labour Party was expressed at its Second Annual Conference by the League's President, P. Kelly, himself a Liverpool Nationalist Party Councillor,

"Our attitude towards British Labour is the same today as when I addressed you at Manchester, whilst grateful to British Labour and other English organizations for their sympathy, we must still maintain our attitude of complete and absolute independence of English organizations". ¹

The presence of Labour Party Councillors in prominent local leadership positions in League branches indicated that the local branches were determined to interpret in a very flexible manner organizational directives particularly when the participation of local political leaders conferred a certain degree of prestige or respectability on their activities with all that implied for recruitment. Branches also found it easier to use municipal premises for meetings etc., in areas where their membership included local Councillors. Art O'Brien was himself requested by Desmond Fitzgerald the English born Dail Publicity Director to organize the leafletting of a Cooperative Conference in Preston. Fitzgerald also suggested "employing such a man as Brian O'Kennedy to speak to specialized

¹ Irish Exile, Aug., 1921.
gatherings such as Labour, and Cooperative bodies etc.\(^1\)
The Leagues's Head office itself subsequently produced
leaflets calling for "direct action in sympathy with
Ireland" by the Labour Movement.\(^2\) Art O'Brien with his
business background was personally rather unsympathetic to
the socio-economic programme of the Labour Party, parti-
cularly the left wing radicals like Jack Jones the
Tipperary born MP for Silvertown.\(^3\) In response to a sug-
gestion by Father Campbell that Jack Jones should speak
at the inaugural meeting of the Forest Gate ISDL Branch
O'Brien replied they should have "only our own speakers".\(^4\)

This Sinn Fein (ourselves alone) philosophy was by no means
unique to the ISDL. This type of attitude towards other
groups is particularly common in anti colonial wars where

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1 Letter, 10 Sept., 1920. O'Brien Ms 8427. Some
British Cooperatives subsequently protested against the
destruction of Irish Coops by British Forces. Cf.
Burslem Coop resolutions in FIN 18/1/130 (P.R.O.N.I).
The East Ham ISDL Branch recommended to other branches
one of their members, "Alderman McGiff of the local
council, a great asset to the movement, he is especially
strong on Labour and Co-operative principles", Irish
Exile, Sept., 1921. McGiff became the Borough Mayor
in 1928. Old Ireland, 13 Nov. 1920, (an Irish Sinn
Fein paper) reminded its readers that they "must realize
that there are groups throughout the labour ranks across
the water which if small at present are genuine and
ardent workers in the cause of freedom".

2 ROR 92. 10 Feb., 1921. CP 2574. CAB 24/119.

3 See Jack Jones, My Lively Life, (1929), 13. Unfort-
unately this autobiography contains very few revelant
details on his Irish political involvement.

4 Letter, 27 Nov., 1919. O'Brien Ms. 8427
the liberation forces are extremely wary of association with partners in the Metropolitan country. Thus the Algerian FLN refused to permit the Algerian Communist Party to affiliate en masse and instead insisted on recruitment on an individual basis. It is also often present in countries where historically oppressed racial or ethnic minorities are struggling to assert their rights as in the United States where the more militant wing of the Civil Rights movement actively discouraged 'white help' after 1966. And in Britain the Campaign Against Racial Discrimination was deeply divided as to whether it should cooperate with white left groups.

There were other, more pertinent reasons to account for the ISDL's aloofness from the British Labour Party. Labour's short history on the issue of Ireland's relationship with Britain was not of a type calculated to inspire much fraternal feeling on the part of the ISDL. The Irish in Britain during the mid-19th century had provided the Chartists with some of their most militant and radical

1 The small separate Algerian Communist guerrilla unit was wiped out by the French Army in circumstances strongly suggesting that their location had been 'betrayed' by the ALN (military wing of the FLN). Subsequently the individual Communist recruits to the ALN tended to be selected for 'suicide missions'. See Edward Behr, The Algerian Problem, (1961), 232-35.


3 See Heineman, op. cit., 20
support. But the growth of the United Irish League had absorbed the political interest of many in the subsequent generations. As Wollaston has shown there can be no doubt that the existence of the UIL prevented the nascent Labour political movement from successfully challenging the Liberals for control of the working class vote for years, perhaps even for an entire generation.¹ Even Michael Davitt, the former Fenian leader, who in 1890 founded the Irish Democratic Labour Federation, as the radical wing of the Irish Nationalist Movement in Britain, and who constantly advocated cooperation between Irish and British workers,² was only prepared to publicly support Labour candidates when they appeared to have a reasonable chance of winning.³ Davitt however argued for a 'principled' alliance with Labour as opposed to the tactical unofficial agreements negotiated on a local basis favoured by most UIL leaders.

It was not that the Nationalists were opposed as such to the socio-economic policies of the Labour candidates. According the Stephen Walsh, a Labour MP, "The Irish Nationalist Party did more for the workers of Britain than

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² See A.L. Morton and George Tate, The British Labour Movement, (1979), 158.
³ Wollaston, op. cit., 200. Davitt edited the publication Labour World in the 1890's.
they did for their own in Ireland." But simply that the primary emphasis of the Nationalists was on securing Home Rule and for most of the 19th century this required — with brief tactical exceptions when a pro-Tory vote was advocated — the mobilization of the Irish vote in Britain in favour of the Liberals. Up until 1895 the UIL and its predecessors regarded the nascent Labour political movement as a divisive element but following the retirement of Gladstone and the subsequent decline of Home Rule sentiment among Liberals, the Nationalists were more prepared to favourably consider the claims of Labour particularly when it became apparent that it was a growing political force. Local UIL branches began increasingly to support Labour candidates pledged to support Home Rule and in 1905 the UIL leadership formally advocated the Irish should vote for Labour Home Rule supporters unless a sitting Home Rule MP was involved or if voting Labour would ensure a Tory victory. By 1907 the Irish Nationalists were claiming that they held the balance of power in 24 of the 28 Labour Parliamentary seats in Britain. But if this was so, the Nationalists received very few dividends from their electoral

1 United Ireland, Sept., 1949.
3 Wollaston, op. cit., 197.
investment in Labour. ¹ Harry Twist, the first Labour MP elected in Wigan, in 1910, (calling his win an 'Irish Victory') and who told Redmond "he could count on him as one of his party"², was very much the exception. Leading figures in the Labour Movement, like James Sexton, McCarthy, Curran, J.R. Clynes, John Wheatley may have first cut their political teeth in the UIL but most of them subsequently did little to advance the cause of the movement they had once belonged to. And so when the 1914 Home Rule Act was finally passed it was largely due to the Nationalist pressure on the Liberal Government and not to Labour's efforts. The cautious attitude of the Labour MPs towards Irish Home Rule was indeed symbolically illustrated after the passing of the Act when William Crooks MP requested the permission of the Speaker to sing "God Save the King" to celebrate its enactment.³ Shortly afterwards the Labour MPs voted to suspend the implementation of the Home Rule Act for the duration of the war.

With the constitutional path blocked, the IRB, who for years had stood waiting in the wings while the Parliamentary Party occupied the centre of the stage, launched their

² United Ireland, Sept, 1949.
³ D. Gwynn, Redmond, op. cit., 383.
1916 Rising. It was condemned by the Daily Herald,\(^1\) denounced by Labour MPs in Parliament\(^2\) while a Labour Cabinet Minister, Arthur Henderson was part of the Government that sanctioned the executions, including that of the badly wounded James Connolly the only Marxist revolutionary of world stature ever to appear in these islands. Many of the Irish in Britain never forgot or forgave Henderson's participation in that coalition Government. The Parliamentary Labour Party did oppose the proposal to extend conscription to Ireland but more because of the number of troops it would have required to enforce rather than for any principled reasons. The importance for the British war effort of a conciliatory policy towards Ireland was clearly very much in the thoughts of one MP who complained to the 1918 Labour Party Conference that the failure to implement Home Rule "had meant the loss of many divisions in the fight against Germany".\(^3\) This 1918 Labour Party Conference "recognized the claim of the people of Ireland to Home Rule and to self-determination in all exclusively Irish affairs".\(^4\) A resolution incorporated in the Party's 1918 Election Manifesto as "Freedom for Ireland and India .......... and the right of self determination

\(^1\) For the attitude of the Labour Press to the 1916 Rising see P. Beresford Ellis, A History of the Irish Working Class, (1972), 232.

\(^2\) Less than half of the Parliamentary Labour Party were even prepared to support the Nationalist MPs' censure motion on martial law.

\(^3\) Times, 31 June, 1918.

\(^4\) 1918 Labour Party Conference Report, 69.
within the British Commonwealth of Free Nations".\(^1\)

Labour was offering the Irish people virtually an unchanged 1914 Home Rule Act, yet in that 1918 Election the Irish electorate swept the Nationalist Party, which had so reluctantly accepted its Partitionist clause, into oblivion. The Sinn Fein members who replaced the Nationalists refused to call themselves MPs, preferring instead the Irish term TDs, turned their backs on the Westminster Parliament; set up their own assembly in Dublin, the Dail, and proclaimed an Irish Republic. Yet Labour's offer rigidly restricted a future Irish assembly to internal Irish affairs and by incorporating Ireland within the British Commonwealth, precluded any attempt to democratically establish an Irish Republic in accordance with the wishes of the electorate. Right from the dramatic entry of Sinn Fein in 1918 on to the political stage there was an almost total failure by the Labour MPs to understand this new Irish political phenomenon or even comprehend the underlying reasons behind its electoral triumph. This ignorance partly stemmed from a misunderstanding of what Sinn Fein really represented together with a failure to distinguish between the pre-1917 and 1918 Sinn Fein. Even Jack Jones told Parliament "I hate Sinn Fein as much as any on the Government benches"\(^2\) yet Jones was a frequent

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2 114 H.C. Debs 5. Col 1545.
speaker at London ISDL demonstrations and so his outburst should be seen as an attack on the old Sinn Fein's conservative policies as represented by Griffith's denunciation of the Dublin 1913 workers' militancy. But probably the most incomprehensible aspect of Sinn Fein's policy to the Labour Party leadership and particularly its MPs was the conspicuous absence from Westminster. To a party firmly committed to the parliamentary road to socialism, it was inconceivable that such a potentially powerful bloc of 73 MPs - Labour itself had only 59 members - could refuse to take its seats and perhaps aid Labour. Until 1918 the small group of Labour MPs were often dependent on the Nationalists to mount any type of effective political challenge. Churchill however privately welcomed the Sinn Fein boycott of Westminster fearing that they, "might align themselves with the Labour Party and worst yet convert the United Kingdom into a Socialist State".¹

Churchill was being decidedly optimistic, or perhaps pessimistic is the appropriate word, about the Labour Party's determination to create a Socialist State but he was certainly correct that if Labour did create the envisaged Socialist State it would be based on the existing United Kingdom. In 1919 James Sexton, the dockers union leader and MP, told Parliament that the "Labour Party was very much opposed to the separation of Ireland from the United

Kingdom". The following year the NUR leader J.H. Thomas bluntly told the 1920 Labour conference that "the Labour Movement would not agree to the establishment of an Irish Republic". Some Labour Party branches did favour the establishment of an Irish Republic and the Independent Labour Party, affiliated to the Labour Party, but which unlike the latter had opposed involvement in the First World War, demanded the "Recognition of the Irish Republic" at its 1920 Conference. But majority British Labour Movement policy on Ireland never really envisaged an Ireland not part of the British political framework and certainly not an independent Republic; the very idea of which was bluntly ridiculed by Arthur Henderson as "simply fantastic nonsense".

1 115 H.C. Deb 5's. Col 1709. For Sexton's career see his autobiography, Sir James Sexton, Agitator, (1936).

2 1920 Labour Party Conference Report, 107. During the Irish Civil War Thomas complained "the Irish are rebelling against a Constitution that for the first time gave full liberty to the Irish people" and claimed that an Irish Republic was "something that no political party in this country will concede", quoted in Greaves, Mellowes, op. cit., 353.

3 See for example, the request by the Bermondsey and Rotherhithe Trades Council and Labour that if Mrs Sheehy Skeffington, the Irish widow of the executed 1916 pacifist, shared a platform with the Fellowship of Reconciliation, she should insist that "the only condition of reconciliation is the complete recognition of the Irish Republic" - Sheehy Skeffington Papers Ms 22,695 (III).

4 According to W. Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain: 1900-1921, (1969), the Independent Labour Party claimed a membership of 37,000 in 1920. But R.E. Dowse, Left in the Centre (1966), 70-72 argues these figures were very much overexaggerated.

5 Watchword of Labour, 6 June, 1920. The ILP supported an Irish republic even though its very strong pacifist contd.
Given this perspective of the future position of Ireland within the United Kingdom, the Labour Party delegates to the International Labour and Socialist Conference in Berne 1919, saw no incongruity in proclaiming to the assembly that "the British Labour Party has always supported Home Rule for Ireland and is recognized by the Irish people as a steady and reliable ally in their agitation for national self-government".\(^1\) This statement should have been made with the speaker's tongue in his cheek for even before the Conference commenced the British Labour Party had tried to prevent their Irish counterparts from receiving their credentials as an independent delegation. The very different perspectives of the two delegations\(^2\) can be seen from the Irish Delegates Official Report,

"In the discussion on Territorial Questions, Ireland featured prominently. The speaker for Ireland was Cathal O'Shannon. He spoke in both Irish and English and demanded free and absolute self determination for the Irish people and the recognition by the Powers and the Peace Conference at Paris of the Republican Declaration of Independence at Easter week, confirmed by the people at the General Election and stressing Ireland's determination to continue at war until her

contd.

section repudiated the means to achieving that Republic.

6 *Times*, 8 Aug., 1921.


2 One of the principle sources of division at Berne was the Congress delegation attitude to the Bolsheviks. The Irish supported the pro-Soviet Adler-Longuet resolution the British, the anti-Soviet Brantin resolution. See G.D.H. Cole, *A History of the Labour Party*, (1969), 99-100.
aspirations are fulfilled. His declaration almost immediately followed that made on behalf of the British delegation by Mr Ramsay MacDonald, and thus threw the Irish Labour and National demands into sharp contrast with the Home Rule under the government of England attitude of British Labour.¹

The Berne Conference however accepted the Irish delegates position and passed a resolution recognizing,

"the right of the Irish people to political independence...... without any military, political or economic pressure from outside, or any reservation or restriction imposed by any government".²

Despite this unambiguous call by the Second International, its British affiliate continued to advocate proposals that fundamentally conflicted with the Berne declaration. Early in 1920, five Labour MPs ³ travelled to Ireland on a fact finding mission; after observing that "every institution of which we as British citizens are so proud, a free press, freedom of speech, liberty of the subject, and trial by jury are things of the past in a large part of Ireland".⁴ Their Report argued that the solution "lies somewhere between the extremes of the 'no change policy' of Ulster and the 'clear out' policy of Sinn Fein".⁵ Ireland should, they argued, be given self-determination but within the

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¹ Reproduced in Irish Labour and its International Relations, (Cork, ND), 41.
³ The MPs were, Arthur Henderson, J. Allen Parkinson, Walter Smith, William Adamson and J.R. Clynes who because of illness did not actually go to Ireland but played a major role in drafting their subsequent Report.
⁴ Labour: Commission (1920), op. cit., 3. The MPs also observed that "these methods would drive any spirited nation into a state of deep seated and dangerous discontent", ibid., 1.
⁵ Ibid., 10.
British Empire\textsuperscript{1} and moreover recognizing the nature of the contemporary sentiment in Ireland towards the British Empire, the Report proposed, 

"that the constitution conferring self government in Ireland should not be subject to revision by the Irish people until after an agreed number of years, during which under self government they would have an opportunity to return to a more normal state of mind".\textsuperscript{2}

This recommendation, as the \textit{Daily Herald} pointed out\textsuperscript{3}, conflicted with the Berne resolution and made nonsense of the concept of self-determination. It certainly did not satisfy some of the Irish in Stockport for the following month they decided to nominate William O'Brien, the interned secretary of the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress\textsuperscript{4}, in a by-election. Local Irish Labour Parties had, we have already observed, existed for some time on the Clyde and Tyneside. Mostly created by dissatisfied former UIL members, these local Irish Labour Parties had usually worked in close association with the British Labour Party but some now began to ally themselves with the ISDL and Sinn Fein, a process not very effectively discouraged by

\textsuperscript{1} The Report suggested Dominion Self Government with Westminster still responsible for the "Protection of Minorities, Foreign Affairs and Defence", ibid., 11.

\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 10-11.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Daily Herald}, 26 Feb., 1920.

\textsuperscript{4} See DE 2/174 for the nomination arrangements. The Irish Labour Party and TUC leadership refused however officially to support O'Brien's candidature, see A. Clarkson, op. cit., 413.
the Labour Party in Ireland.\textsuperscript{1} O'Brien polled a respectable 2,336 votes,\textsuperscript{2} sufficient to cause concern even in the ranks of the Parliamentary Party\textsuperscript{3} which as a result decided to oppose the 1920 Government of Ireland Bill partitioning Ireland.

The following month, April 1920, the Independent Labour Party, strongly based in the industrial centres of Scotland Wales, Yorkshire and Lancashire\textsuperscript{4}, where the Irish political organizations were very active, openly declared at its Annual Conference in favour of an Irish Republic. Independent Labour Party delegates then played a key role in the June 1920 Labour Party Conference in mobilizing rank and file opposition to the Executive's attempt to limit Irish self determination to "exclusively Irish affairs".\textsuperscript{5}

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid., 414. Tom Johnson the Irish Labour Party leader advised Irish workers in Britain to remain within the British Labour Party and campaign for "a more militant policy".

\textsuperscript{2} According to the Times', 13 April. 1920, analysis of the poll, while there was a good deal of cross voting - the 45,000 voters cast 89,000 votes - 2,446 electors voted for only one candidate, "this number is curiously near the number of votes received by the Irish Republican candidate".

\textsuperscript{3} 129 HC Debs 5. Col 1328.

\textsuperscript{4} Kendall, op. cit., 276.

\textsuperscript{5} 1920 Labour Party Conference Report, 161. Until 1918 there was no organized Labour Party Constituency section and so the ILP until 1918 and for several years afterwards was effectively the Constituency section of the Labour Party.
Speaking on behalf of the Executive's resolutions, Sidney Webb attempted to sway the delegates emotions by asking if they wanted "Ireland to go spinning along the road like a motor hog without regard to anyone else on the road". But after rousing speeches in favour of unconditional self determination for Ireland by the veteran dockers union leader Ben Tillett and Emanuel Shinwell, then a young ILP firebrand, the Conference accepted their proposal by 1,191,000 to 945,000 votes. This resolution did not however greatly trouble Richard Dawson, the Unionist Political Agent in London, who informed his superiors that the conference did not really reflect Labour Party opinion on Ireland.

Most of the Labour Conference speakers opposing unconditional self determination were trade union delegates and their contributions were a rehearsal for the following month's Special TUC 'Irish' Conference. The Miners Federation had requested the TUC to convene a Special Conference in a bid to link the issue of munitions for Poland with the Irish crisis. In Scotland the regional TUC conference had demanded "the withdrawal of the 'Army of

2 Ibid., 167.
3 Ibid., 166. For Shinwell's early career see his Conflict without Malice, (1955).
5 Times, 16 June, 1920.
Occupation from Ireland\(^1\); but the Special TUC Conference in July 1920 while passing a somewhat softer motion on this issue refused to support the Labour Party Conference position on unconditional Irish Self Determination. Instead the TUC advocated a "single Irish parliament with full dominion powers in all Irish affairs, with adequate protection for minorities".\(^2\) The TUC did appear to recommend direct action on Ireland but in such a manner as to make it very unlikely that any effective strike action would actually occur for the proposal was to be implemented on an individual union basis after a ballot of their membership.\(^3\) The known eagerness of most English workers to "strike and loose your pay for the Irish"\(^4\) allowed the Cabinet's Intelligence Advisor to confidently assert that the "TUC 'direct action' proposal did not represent the general view of individual workers"\(^5\) and Dawson was equally certain that "Labour will never resort to direct action for the sake of Sinn Fein and is tired about being worried about it".\(^6\)

\(^1\) Irish Labour Party and TUC Report, (Dublin, 1920), 39.
\(^3\) Clarkson, op. cit., 421.
\(^4\) Wall slogan in Liverpool dock, quoted in ROR 55. 20 April, 1920. CP 1328. CAB 24/106.
\(^6\) Dawson, ibid., 17 July, 1920.
In the 1913 Dublin lock out,— the greatest and most bitter struggle for unionization ever seen in these islands,—the TUC had pledged "food for the duration of the strike"\(^1\) but sent only relatively small shipments and so the strikers were eventually forced back by hunger to work; if they could find it and were first prepared to resign from the Irish Transport and General Workers Union. Railwaymen in Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham attempted to take sympathetic strike action\(^2\) but were opposed by their own union leader J.H. Thomas who along with James Sexton of the dockers union played a crucial role in preventing unified trade union action in support of the Dubliners.\(^3\) The lack of British support in this dispute embittered Anglo-Irish trade union relations and left behind a legacy of deep suspicion. Relations between the two union movements did not improve during the ensuing war, especially when the engineering unions refused to discipline members who strenuously objected to Irish immigrant workers being given relatively well paid jobs in the munition works.\(^4\) The miners were however, as usual, the exceptions to British trade unionist lack of solidarity with Irish workers; their Federation gave large sums of money to the Dublin

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2 Ibid., 62.
3 See Morton and Tate, op. cit., 251.
4 See Munitions Ministry File 5-58-320/44
1913 workers\(^1\) and in South Wales there was even some industrial action after James Connolly's execution\(^2\) with a small group of miners even going over to Ireland to help in the Sinn Fein election campaign.\(^3\) Later on, in January 1921, 400 Scottish miners at the Griffnick colliery struck for a day in protest against the "Military Occupation of Ireland" and were subsequently locked out by the owners.\(^4\)

In general however the attitude of the British trade union movement towards their Government's policy in Ireland was symbolized by Sexton's warning to the Liverpool Irish dockers that their strike action, in solidarity with the hunger striking Wormwood Scrubs Irish internees, who included prominent trade union leaders like William O'Brien, did not have "authority from their union and (they) would receive no strike pay".\(^5\) The British unions were not even prepared to support the right of their Irish members to work without interference from the British Army. Following the killing of Irish railwaymen by British troops the Irish section of the NUR refused to convey military personnel or supplies in a bid to force an enquiry into the

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1 According to James O'Connor, History of Ireland, (1925), Vol. 2, 192, the Miners Federation voted a £1,000 a week for the Dublin lockout fund. The Miners Federation President Robert Smillie was born in Belfast.


3 Ibid. One of these miners, Arthur Horner a future NUM leader actually joined the Irish Citizens Army - Irish Democrat, Oct., 1968.

4 ROR 91 3 Feb., 1921. CP 2541. CAB 24/119.

5 Times, 29 April, 1920.
killings and were locked out by the companies. An Irish 'anti-militarism' general strike ensued but J.H. Thomas refused to support his Irish section's strike call declaring it "meant a declaration of war on the Government". He subsequently claimed that "not five percent of the men would strike in England on that issue". The Miners Federation call for unified strike action in solidarity with the Irish railwaymen was rejected by the TUC.

J.H. Thomas's action was in direct contrast to the NUR's instructions to its English members not to load munitions on the Jolly George for use by the Poles against the Soviet Union and this unfavourable comparison was the subject of considerable comment by ISDL members. Quoting one sailor as stating "we will ship all that is needed to blow hell out of the lot of them", meaning the Irish, an Intelligence Officer assured the Cabinet that a Jolly George situation would not arise over its Irish policy. To prevent British

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2 Times, 13 July, 1920.

3 Cardiff Western Mail, 18 Jan., 1921.

4 The Locomotive Drivers and Firemen's section did want to strike in solidarity with their Irish colleagues, see DE 2/48, O'Brien Memo, 14 Feb., 1921, and ROR 92, 10 Feb., 1921. CP 2574. CAB 24/119. The Central London Branch of the National Union of Clerks also condemned Thomas and called for a General Strike against the Military Occupation of Ireland - O'Brien ms 8427.

5 ROR 55, 20 April, 1920. CP 1328. CAB 24/106.
munitions being used against the Soviet Union, the TUC, and Labour Party leadership called for the establishment of Councils of Action.\(^1\) Some of the 350 local Councils of Action endeavoured to link the Irish and Russian situations and in areas like Merthyr Tydfil\(^2\) and Birmingham\(^3\) local ISDL branches held joint meetings with Labour parties and trades councils on this issue. Despite an editorial appeal by the Manchester Guardian\(^4\) the National Council of Action however refused to extend its mandate to Ireland and strongly urged local Councils to cease such agitation.\(^5\) Similar local joint ISDL-Trades Council meetings were held in protest against the wholesale expulsion of Catholic, and a few non-sectarian Protestant, trade unionists from Belfast engineering plants.\(^6\) The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners actually expelled the majority of its Belfast membership for refusing to strike in sympathy with the expelled workers but the TUC ordered them to be reinstated in the union.\(^7\) The ISDL


\(^{2}\) Merthyr Tydfil Pioneer, 4 Dec., 1920.

\(^{3}\) Stephen White, Britain and the Bolshevik Revolution, (1979), 47-60.

\(^{4}\) 22 Sept., 1920.

\(^{5}\) White, op. cit., 69.

\(^{6}\) See reports in O'Brien, Ms 8547.

\(^{7}\) See Michael Farrell, Northern Ireland The Orange State, (1976), 33. Val McEntee the Carpenters leader was born in Dublin and subsequently became an MP and Peer; See Kendall, op. cit., 347.
had good relations with the National Building Labourers Union whose General Secretary D. Haggarty was active in Irish politics in Britain and local branches provided meeting places for the ISDL. One South London Branch of this Union was known as the Shamrock Branch on account of its largely Irish membership and their premises were also used by the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club. Docker union branch premises were also used by the ISDL.

Despite the very cautious attitude of the ISDL Executive towards involvement with the Labour Party, some branches maintained very good relations with their local party. This was particularly noticeable in Poplar where Labour celebrated its taking control of the Borough, by marching en masse to the Town Hall, behind an Irish drum and fife band. Most of the Labour Councillors in Poplar were supporters if not actual members of the ISDL and Councillor John Scurr the former UIL London dockers leader, who became a Daily Herald journalist, was prominent in the London District ISDL Committee. Poplar Council due to its high poor law relief rates and municipal works scheme soon found itself in conflict with the Government especially when it refused to pay the Police Rate precept. After a

1 *Irish Democrat*, June, 1952.

2 The ISDL May Day demonstration was described as being "entirely distinct from any other gathering which may be held in Hyde Park on the same day, it will be Irish through and through", *Irish Exile*, April, 1921.

celebrated legal case all thirty councillors were jailed in September 1921 for six weeks, declaring it would be "an honour to be imprisoned in the place where MacSwiney had died".¹

The blatant defiance of the law by the Poplar Councillors, and the level of support their actions attracted seriously embarrassed the Labour Party leadership.² Equally embarrassing was the attitude of the Irish Labour Party; eventually in November 1920 the British Labour leadership 'persuaded' the Irish Party to accept conditional self determination in return for sending a Labour Party Commission of Inquiry to Ireland. The Commission was to have sat in the Cork City Hall but this was destroyed in a Black and Tan wave of arson shortly before and its destruction undoubtedly influenced the Commission's observation that "things are being done in the name of Britain which must make her name stink in the nostrils of the whole world".³ The Commission's Report denounced,

"the outrages committed in the name of Sinn Fein. These things have injured and disgraced a cause which would if a policy of violence had not been started have commanded the sympathy and respect of every honest and fairminded person in this country."⁴

¹ For the Poplar Rates strike and aftermath see Branson, op. cit. Charles Key, Red Poplar, (1925), Ministry of Health Inquiry, (1922) Guilty and Proud of It, (1922).
⁴ Ibid., 63.
A special Labour Party Conference was convened at the end of December 1920 to discuss the Commission's Report. Only one resolution was put to the 800 delegates, calling for an immediate election to elect a constitutional assembly to draft "without limitation or fetters, whatever constitution for Ireland, Irish people desire, subject to only two conditions, that it affords protection to minorities and that the constitution should prevent Ireland from becoming a military or naval menace to Great Britain".¹

Two years previously the Irish Labour Party had written "An Open letter to the Workers of Great Britain" comparing the attitude of British workers to Irish claims, to that of a liberal slaveowner.² And now the Commission Report showed how little change had occurred in Labour Party thinking on Ireland since 1914. Attempts to amend the Conference resolution and delete the "military or naval menace" section were brushed aside, as it had been inserted according to the Conference chairman "to meet public superstition and prejudice".³ This frank admission by the Conference chairman effectively exposed the real foundations of Labour's advocacy of Irish self government; it was a serious political disability..... an unpopular cause".⁴

And when the Anglo-Irish negotiations broke down in July

¹ Commission Report, op. cit., 118.
² Daily Herald, 16 Nov., 1918.
³ Commission Report, op. cit., 118.
⁴ 139 H C Debs 5. Col 2121.
1921, Ramsay MacDonald expressed his concern that Lloyd George would call a General Election which would be dominated "by the passionate prejudices that can be raised against an independent Ireland" and feared that Labour would lose seats. Yet the Labour Lord Mayor of Cardiff, who publicly welcomed the released local Irish political prisoners, defied such prejudices and no doubt the English born Councillor Ludlow, the only Labour representative on the Oxford City Council, hardly found his membership of the ISDL a decided electoral advantage. In 1921 the Labour Party launched a National Campaign for Peace in Ireland; in the first two months of the year they held 500 meetings and distributed over seven million leaflets. But as Captain Berkeley observed, the Labour Party had waited until the "Political atmosphere was entirely different" from the 1919-20 period. In the 1921 Kirkaldy by-election the chief issues were described as "unemployment and Ireland" with the Labour victor describing his win as "a measure of hope to the Irish people".

1 M. Venkataramani, 'Ramsay MacDonald and Britain's Domestic Politics and Foreign Relations 1919-1931', Political Studies, 8(1960), 231-40.
2 Irish Exile, Feb., 1922.
3 Ibid., Dec., 1921.
4 See The Labour Party and Ireland, (1921).
5 D. Williams, op. cit., 147.
6 D. Boyce, op. cit., 70.
7 Ibid., 30.
Ramsay MacDonald, during the 1914 Home Rule debate, declared Labour would not permit Ulster "to deny the rights of Ireland ever to speak and to act or to govern itself as an united nationality":¹ Between 1914 and 1921 Labour did little to prevent the partitioning of Ireland. It could perhaps be argued that it was powerless and in opposition during this period; yet Labour refused to mobilize the power of the Labour Movement, by resolutely opposing all suggestions of direct action. We shall subsequently observe how Labour, when it came to power, in 1924, refused to undertake a more equitable rearrangement of the partition boundaries and how in 1949 it erected a new defence line for the partitionists. Clarkson's observation on the "unwillingness of British Labour to let itself be put to either trouble or expense on behalf of Irish Labour"² goes a long way to explaining the isolationist/exclusivist spirit that permeated the ISDL's Constitution. Walter Hampson the Irish socialist journalist and a member of the ILP³ bitterly reproached Labour for its attitude to Ireland which he argued was driving Irish people out of the Party in Britain.⁴ A similar experience drove leading Indian nationalists into the arms of the communists in the

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¹ LIX HC Debs Col 937.
⁴ Labour Leader, May, 1921.
1920s\(^1\) and so we shall now consider the relationship between the ISDL and the communists or non Labour Party left.

**Addendum**

Part of this research was originally undertaken on behalf of the International Tribunal on Britain's Presence in Ireland\(^2\) and was presented in the format of a paper on the 'British Labour Party and Ireland 1919-1979' to the Paris Hearing of the Tribunal (January 1979). Unfortunately the seizure by C13 (Anti Terrorist Squad) officers of much of the Tribunal's documentation prevented the planned publication of a volume of evidence.\(^3\)

I only became aware after this chapter was written of two works dealing with the British Labour Party during this period. The first is a thesis by Barry Stubbs\(^4\) and the

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1 See Partha Gupta, 'British Labour and the Indian Question in B.R. Nanda, *Socialism In India*, (Dehli, 1972), 68-121.

2 The Tribunal, based on the format of the earlier 'Russell Tribunals' was sponsored by many prominent figures like Jean Paul Sartre and Jane Fonda. It held hearings in Paris and London during 1979.

3 This planned volume of evidence would have constituted probably the most important source of recent northern Irish political, social and economic research data yet collected.

second Geoffrey Bell's recently published book. Most of Stubbs' account for the 1914-23 period uses the sources I had already utilized in this chapter but I found his later section on the introduction of the 1949 Government of Ireland Act very informative. In general Stubbs has made only minimal use of the 1919-23 British Government records: an omission only partly rectified by Bell's admittedly highly committed, polemical account. I have personally found Bell's work to be somewhat of a disappointment, owing to his hap-hazard and superficial investigation of Cabinet records though I acknowledge that Bell has utilised a source - the recently catalogued Labour Party Archives - that I did not have access to.

Despite these reservations both works are small oases irrigating the desert of serious research on the British Labour Party and Ireland. It seems unbelievable that otherwise very competent researchers like Moore, McKibbin and MacKenzie could so totally ignore the attitude of the British Labour Movement to Ireland, particularly when so many Irish people were actively involved in the evolution of the British Labour Party.


CHAPTER 14

The Non-Labour Party Left and Ireland

The Irish struggle for national independence coincided with the Russian Revolution and the subsequent struggle for survival by the fledgling Soviet Union. The reverberations of that titanic clash echoed around the world, generating in Britain the impulse to unify the Non-Labour Party left wing organizations into a Communist Party at the time the Irish Self Determination League was evolving. We have already observed that some of the Councils of Action, organized by the Labour Party and TUC to prevent the export of munitions to anti-Soviet forces, attempted to link that cause with the Irish struggle. The issue of Ireland and Russia often featured at local ISDL public meetings but when, at the large November 1919 national ISDL Albert Hall meeting, some of the speakers pursued this relationship, Art O'Brien subsequently complained that the "speeches of Lansbury, Williams, Jack Jones and Dr Dunstan were extremely disappointing. Instead of keeping to the subject of the resolution they wandered off to Russia on every possible occasion and waxed a good deal more enthusiastic about Russia than they did with regard to Ireland". Yet we have already observed, that despite O'Brien's personal lack of sympathy with British Labour Party's socio-economic policies, he was instructed by the Dail leadership in Ireland to issue propaganda directly orientated towards the Labour

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1 O'Brien Ms. 8427.
Movement. As the Irish Diplomatic Representative in London, O'Brien was obliged to implement the policies of his Government. And the Irish Government had a very definite policy towards the Soviet Union; for its first diplomatic negotiations were conducted with the Soviet Union, initially with their representatives in New York who in return for an Irish loan handed over the Czar's Crown Jewels as surety and then directly in the Soviet Union, by Dr MacCartan the Dail Envoy to the United States.

According to the Draft Treaty negotiated between the Irish Republic and Russian Socialist Federation Soviet Republic, the two Governments pledged themselves to exert their "influence on all organizations and elements which are responsive" to them "in order to prevent the transportation of arms, munitions, and military supplies intended for use against" both countries. As Dr MacCartan observed, this Draft Treaty had practical implications for the Irish Movement in Britain, "they may be able to help us in England, the Treaty itself is bound to affect both

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1 25,000 dollars were lent to the Soviet representatives in New York. The Crown Jewels were finally returned in 1949 after featuring in 'Moscow Gold' allegations in the 1948 Election; see Michael McInerney, Irish Times, 14 Dec., 1976.

2 See DE 2/264 and DE 2/119 for the negotiations.

3 The Draft Treaty was due to subsequent events in Ireland never formally ratified by the Dail.

4 The Draft Treaty and captured correspondence relating to the negotiations was subsequently published as a White Paper by the British Government, see Intercourse Between Bolshevism and Sinn Fein, Cmd 1326 (1921), 3
of us in this respect on account of the germ noticeable in all labour organizations".¹ The Irish Labour Movement enthusiastically welcomed the Russian Revolution² and in a bid to assuage bourgeois Catholic fears the Soviet Union offered to entrust "to the accredited representative of the Republic of Ireland in Russia the interests of the Roman Catholic Church within the territory of the Russian Socialist Federal Soviet Republic".³

Lenin had vehemently criticized those, particularly in Britain, who had condemned the 1916 Rising arguing that "whoever describes this rebellion as a 'Putsch' is either the worst kind of reactionary, or so doctrinaire as to be hopelessly incapable of imagining a social revolution as a living phenomenon."⁴ Ireland was referred to, albeit rather briefly,⁵ in the anti-colonial section of the Manifesto of the Communist International to the Workers of the World, issued by the 1919 First World Congress of the Third International or Comintern. By the time of the Second World Congress, in mid 1920, the fighting in Ireland had reached such a level that the country's struggle for

¹ Ibid., 4.
freedom was getting much more publicity than the previous year. And this was reflected in the Congress's Manifesto which contained an explicit rebuke to British Socialists. Denouncing the Labour Party attitude it condemned "The British Socialist who fails to support by all possible means the uprisings in Ireland, Egypt and India..... such a Socialist deserves to be branded with infamy, if not a bullet".\(^1\) Lenin had always insisted that the "Social-Democrats of the oppressor nations must demand that the oppressed nations should have the right of secession\(^2\) and this requirement was constitutionally embodied in the Second Congress Manifesto which required all affiliated parties in countries with colonial possessions to render "direct assistance to the revolutionary movement in dependent or unequal countries".\(^3\) Such parties were instructed to adopt "a particularly explicit and clear attitude on this question, not merely words but deeds".\(^4\)

Even without these Comintern stipulations and financial pressures from the Soviet Union\(^5\), the emerging Communist Party of Great Britain and its associated groupings to the left of the Labour Party could not have been unaffected by

\(^1\) *Kommunistickeski International Vtovoi Komintern*, (Moscow, 1972), 492.


\(^3\) *Kommunisticheski International Vtovoi Kongress Komintern*, (Moscow, 1972 edt), 492-3.

\(^4\) Ibid.

\(^5\) W. Kendall, op. cit., 292-302 argued that the Communist contd.
the Irish struggle. Many of the leading British Communists had close personal connections with Ireland, W.B. Coates, a leading founder member of the Communist Party and Secretary of the Hands off Russia Committee, was Irish born, Arthur MacManus was the Glaswegian son of an Irish Fenian, William Gallacher's father was also Irish as was another prominent Communist, J.T. Murphy. Most of their Irish connections were not confined to family background, both Murphy and MacManus had been greatly influenced by James Connolly. Murphy went so far as to call Connolly "a Communist before there was a Communist Movement". Connolly had originally undergone his political socialization in the Edinburgh branch of the Social Democratic Federation - the pioneer of British Marxism - where his mentor was the old Fenian John Leslie, the author

contd.

The Communist Party of Great Britain was an external creation brought about largely through Soviet Union finance.

1 Coates had been a union organizer in Ireland, see James Klugman, History of the Communist Party of Great Britain, Vol. I (1968), 44. Hobsbawm has said of Klugman's official history "unfortunately he is paralysed by the impossibility of being a good historian and a loyal functionary", quoted in Henry Pelling, The British Communist Party, (1975 ed.). Klugman's work contains virtually nothing of consequence on his party's relationship with the Irish struggle.

2 Kendall, op. cit., 359.

3 See William Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde, (1978), 1. Gallacher unfortunately does not refer to the Scottish Sinn Fein or IRA in his autobiography.

4 See. J.T. Murphy, New Horizons, (1941), 16.

5 Kendall, op. cit., 162.

6 Murphy, ibid., 41.
of an early Marxist analysis of Ireland\(^1\), but who subsequently condemned '1916; although he was originally responsible for Connolly first going to Ireland as the organizer for the Dublin Socialist Club.\(^2\) The SDF was never a revolutionary organization in the Bolshevik tradition and as the 20th century progressed its line on supporting the Irish Revolutionary Movement steadily weakened with its remnants in 1922 calling for support for the Free State forces in the Civil War.\(^3\) Connolly despairing of the SDF's lack of interest in industrial agitation was in the forefront of the group of dissidents who broke away from the SDF in 1903 to form the Socialist Labour Party.\(^4\) Connolly even after he went to Ireland remained in close touch with his SLP comrades. His _Workers Republic_ was frequently used as a platform by them and the anti-Hyndman left of the SDF.\(^5\) When the _Workers Republic_ was banned by the British, its successors including the _Irish Worker_ were printed by the SLP and smuggled into Ireland.\(^6\) The SLP later also printed the _Sinn Fein_ publication _Dark Rosaleen_.\(^7\)

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1 The _Irish Question_ by John Leslie was first published serially in _Justice_ between 24 March and 5 May 1894 and republished as a pamphlet several times.

2 Ibid., (Cork, 1974, ed.), Introductory Note.

3 See SDF resolution in the _Manchester Evening News_, 24 Aug., 1922.

4 See J.T. Murphy, _Preparing For Power_, (1934), 87.

5 See Raymond Challinor, _The Origins of British Bolshevism_, (1977), 17-20. This work is essentially an account of the SLP.

6 Ibid., 127, 153-4.

7 Ibid., 268.
The Socialist Labour Party had a pronounced industrial orientation and viewed electoral participation at any level of the political system, whether national or local in the same way that Sinn Fein regarded Westminster. To the SLP, Ireland was the "Achilles heel of British Capitalism" and it devoted more of its energies to the Irish issue than most of the British left groupings. It sponsored a series of meetings by Sean McLoughlin of the Socialist Party of Ireland and later Secretary of the Irish Communist Party. 20,000 people heard McLoughlin speak at nine Yorkshire meetings in mid 1920. Several SLP members were jailed for advocating that British troops should refuse to serve in Ireland. John MacLean was only a member of the SLP for a short period but more than any other Scottish, English or Welsh socialist revolutionary, MacLean personified the Connolly tradition. Appointed Soviet consul for Scotland, Maclean strongly believed that a Bolshevik style revolution was possible in Britain in the near future. Kendall suggests that Maclean's belief in the possibility of armed revolution, a belief not shared by the leading English Communists, was largely based on his contact with the IRA in Scotland.

1 W. Kendall, op. cit., 71-2.
2 Challinor, ibid., 2661
3 Ibid., 267.
4 See trial reports in The Socialist, 6, 12 May, 1920 and 28 July, 1921.
6 Kendall, op. cit., 290.
post war period, Clydeside became known on account of its militancy as 'Red Clydeside' and Kendall¹ and Brown² and Wood³ all argue that the Irish immigrants with their tradition of insurrectionism were an important component in creating 'Red Clydeside'. We shall subsequently observe in our study of the IRA the extent to which John Maclean's links with the IRA and Sinn Fein in Scotland so worried the government. Maclean's paper the Vanguard constantly advocated support for Irish Republicanism: it graphically covered the Connaught Rangers Mutiny by a front page cover proclaiming it to be "The Greatest Deed in British History".⁴ His message of total support for Irish Republicanism was not without a following for his pamphlet The Irish Tragedy: Scotland's Disgrace sold 20,000 copies in a very short period.⁵

Maclean joined the SLP largely, because he disliked the intense sectarianism of the Communist Party of Great Britain; a sectarianism demonstrated by their call to their membership to boycott those of Sean McLoughlin's meetings organized by the SLP.⁶ Only some 540 of the

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¹ Kendall, op. cit., 107.
⁴ Vanguard, July, 1920.
⁵ John Maclean, op. cit., 238.
⁶ The Socialist, 14 April, 1921. For CPGB/Socialist Labour contd.
SLP 1200 members in 1920 had initially joined the new Communist Party; and Maclean apparently joined the Glasgow based SLP with the intention of converting it into the Scottish Communist Party, the CPGB leadership had consistently refused to sanction. Scotland was not the only country that the British Communists believed should come under the control of the CPGB for their representatives on the Comintern Executive initially sought to include their Irish counterparts in a federated CPGB. The Irish Communists refused this invitation and, as we shall subsequently observe, the relationship between the two neighbouring Parties was somewhat less than fraternal.

The West Indian Communist Claude McKay felt so strongly that some of his fellow CPGB members had little sympathy for the Irish and Indian independence movements, that he publicly accused them of favouring a "Socialist British Empire".

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contd.

Labour League sectarianism, see the rather partisan publication by a member, B. Pearce, Early History of the CPGB, (1966).

1 Kendall, op. cit., 303-5.

2 Ibid., 289-91.

3 Ibid., 232 and also see the memoirs of a Special Branch officer, Herbert Fitch, Traitors Within, (1933).

4 The CPGB publication, The Irish Crisis, (1921) officially expressed complete support for the Irish cause but the reality was rather different.

5 Workers Dreadnought, 31 Jan., 1920.
At the Communist Unity Convention of January 1921, which finally 'fused' most of the left groupings into the CPGB, the largest contingent present was from the British Socialist Party.¹ This Party had emerged from the mainstream of the SDF. John Scurr had served on the Executive of the British Socialist Party² but this Party was not nearly as active on the Irish issue as the SLP. Some ISDL branches and Sinn Fein cumanns maintained a working relationship, at the local level, with the Workers Socialist Federation, a group of about 600 members³ publishing the Workers Dreadnought and led by Sylvia Pankhurst.⁴ Ostensibly its rigid anti-parliamentarism and its refusal to affiliate to the Labour Party made this grouping, which changed its name to the CP(BSTI), before the CPGB was actually formed, rather attractive to those in the ISDL who refused to associate with organizations putting up candidates for Westminster. However, Maire O'Neill (Manning), Sylvia Pankhurst's secretary, had made herself very unpopular with the ISDL's leadership, owing to her tendency to grossly exaggerate her own earlier part in the Irish Movement.⁵ A few ISDL members belonged to the

¹ According to Kendall, op. cit., 303-5, the BSP claimed to have 10,000 members but this he argues is very much an inflated figure.

² See N. Branson, Poplarism, op. cit., 227.

³ See Kendall, op. cit., 303-5.

⁴ See E.S. Pankhurst, The Home Front, (1932), and The Suffragette Movement, (1931).

⁵ See letter from Markievicz to O'Brien repudiating O'Neill's claims to be a Cúmaine Bán officer, 16 May, 1919, Ms 8427.
small International Communist League but Art O'Brien briskly rejected their appeals for financial assistance to organize ICL demonstrations on Ireland.¹

Writing 35 years later, a Connolly Association member - a group closely connected with the CPGB; claimed that although the CPGB had organized a Hands Off Ireland movement,² many of the members in the leadership of the ISDL distrusted the CPGB front, "the fact that they were men who had said 'Hands off Russia' led them to hesitate about them".³ But while some ISDL leaders like J. McManus, the Leeds ISDL District President, who made a bitter anti-Soviet speech at his union conference,⁴ were fervently anti-communist, other leaders like John Scurr were radicals. Brian O'Kennedy the first editor of the Irish Exile wrote an article in which the basic Marxist concepts of alienation and false consciousness were clearly expressed, albeit in a non theoretical formulation. Referring to "the character of the English worker who still wears the shackles of feudalism, but because the little bunch of plutocrats and landed proprietors at the top persuade him that their freedom is also his, he choruses out stridently

¹ O'Brien, 30 Sept., 1920, Ms 8433.
² Irish Freedom, June, 1942.
⁴ McManus was a member of the Post Office Workers Union and was trying to prevent the affiliation of the equivalent Russian union to the International Postal Union Federation, Catholic Herald, 12 May, 1923.
'Britons, never, never shall be slaves'. In general, the most progressive elements in the ISDL were to be found, not unexpectedly, in the branches located in the coalfields, particularly in South Wales. The Pontypridd ISDL Branch's denunciation that,

"the relief given to the employed and unemployed by the Guardians is more of a curse than a blessing because they relieve slightly the pangs of hunger. If these pangs were not relieved then perhaps they might make an attempt to cast aside this accursed Government of England whose only aim is to enslave the world".

was no doubt one of the incidents that resulted in the Cabinet being informed that with regard to the Red International Trade Union sponsored Coalfield Conference the "strongest part of the movement here is composed of Irish people".

Several League branches were officially represented at this Conference much to the chagrin of the League's leadership who certainly did not share Richard Dawson's, their unionist opponent's, enthusiastic belief that "the appearance of Sinn Fein on the Bolshevist platforms in London is all to the good". Dawson was commissioned by the Irish Unionist Alliance to write a book 'exposing' the

1 Irish Exile, Feb., 1922.
2 Ibid.
3 R.I.L.U. known as the Profintern was effectively the Trade Union equivalent of the Comintern and was strongest in Britain in the small mining communities, see J.T. Murphy, Preparing for Power, (1934), 203-16.
4 ROR 94. 24 Feb., 1921. CP 2631. CAB 24/120.
5 Dawson, op. cit.
Sinn Féin-Bolshevik alliance and this 'relationship' formed a central part of the Unionist propaganda to British political parties and the general public against Irish independence. This propaganda campaign was greatly facilitated by the British Government's publication of a White paper, *Intercourse between Bolshevism and Sinn Féin*. But by the time this White Paper appeared in 1921, it was already considerably out of date as relations between the Irish and Soviet Governments had cooled somewhat; notably on the part of the Russians who were now reluctant to endanger their new Trade Agreement with the British, by permitting further contacts between Irish Republicans and Soviet Government officials in their London Trade Delegation. British Intelligence had


2 The Southern Irish Loyalists Defence Fund sent a deputation to meet the Parliamentary National Democratic Party (27 April, 1920) on this issue; see D 989 A/9/25 and all the members of the House of Commons were presented in May 1921 with the pamphlet, *The Conspiracy Against the British Empire, Ireland and The Revolution*, see D 989 C/1/41.

3 W.M. Jellet's pamphlet, *Home Rule and After, Ireland and the World Wide Conspiracy*, was widely distributed by the IUA's London Committee.

4 A set of speakers notes was drawn up by the IUA's London Committee, D 989 C/2/17.

5 Cmd 1326.

noted several such contacts in 1920\textsuperscript{1} but none were reported the following year. It is reasonable to assume that if such further contacts had been known to have occurred in 1921 they would certainly have been reported to the Cabinet. For intelligence reports concerning Soviet training and financial aid for Indian revolutionaries produced a Cabinet warning that resulted in the closure of the Indian Military Academy in Tashkent.\textsuperscript{2}

It does not of course necessarily follow from this that all contact between the Irish Republicans and the Soviet Government had actually ceased for the Comintern effectively controlled by the Russian Party functioned as a Soviet surrogate. So that while the Soviet Government was establishing formal diplomatic relations with Britain, the Comintern was constructing an elaborate underground network using non-Soviet citizens to prevent any embarrassment to the Soviet Government if they were arrested.

One such arrested Comintern agent, Erkki Veltheim, a Finn had been entrusted with establishing an underground military network.\textsuperscript{3} His arrest led to the imprisonment of Colonel Malone, the radical MP, believed to be behind an


3 See Times, 3 Nov., 1920 and also see Claude McKay, A long way From Home, (New York, 1937), 85-6.
attempt to create a Red Officer Corps in Britain.¹ Documents seized when Veltheim was arrested also indicated that his mission involved contact with the IRA², though it is not known whether this had in fact occurred before his arrest. Despite the British Cabinet's concern³ there is no substantive evidence that the IRA received arms or explosives from any Comintern/CPGB network. It would seem that while some mutual exchange of intelligence did occur and some Republicans obtained false passports through the Communist underground, that this very limited aid was the sum total of Lenin's demand that the CPGB should aid the Irish Republicans with "deeds not words". Detective Inspector Herbert Fitch of the Special Branch went so far as to give the CPGB a character reference with his observation that,

"British Communists, at least those whom I have met, look askance at murder and bloodshed as political tools..... it is a great pity that the foreign brand brings so much opprobrium to the home product".⁴

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² Kendall, op. cit., 255.
³ ROR 40. 5 Feb., 1920. CP 574. CAB 24/97.
⁴ Fitch, op. cit., 87.
A few incidents concerning the supply of munitions to the IRA by outsiders are recorded in Home Office files but significantly none involved members of the CPGB. Most involved supporters of the Wobblies, "Industrial Workers of the World," or a small independent left wing group working in the Woolwich Arsenal. But certainly nothing remotely approaching the Jeanson Reseau, (the French organization that provided arms and safehouses for the Algerian ALN and acted as its 'banker' in France) appeared in Britain to aid the Irish cause during the period under discussion. It cannot be argued that such activities were totally beyond the experience of the British left, for a British network, which included the prominent Irish born Fabian S.G. Hobhouse, smuggled at least 6,000 pistols to Russia for use in the 1905 Insurrection. Nor can it be convincingly argued that smuggling arms, even in 1920 was an unduly hazardous activity, involving severe penalties, for under the then existing legislation the illegal possession of arms carried prison sentences measured more in terms of months than years.

4 See S.G. Hobson, Pilgrim To The Left, (1938), 125-7, and Michael Futrell, Northern Underground, (1963), for a comprehensive account of this episode.
The extremely cautious attitude of the CPGB regarding practical assistance to Irish revolutionaries or even to stopping British arms shipments to Ireland and dissuading troops from service in Ireland was, like the subsequent French Communist vehement attack on the Jeanson Reseau, largely the result of their fear of being identified as acting in a treasonable manner. When this very fear was actually openly expressed by a British delegate to the Second Congress of the Comintern; an Irish delegate, who informed the assembly, that attitude to Ireland was the "barometer of social revolutionary feeling in Britain" scathingly remarked, "With regard to the statement that the British workers will regard as treason to England the support of the colonial revolutionary struggle against British Imperialism, the sooner the British workers get familiar with treason to the bourgeois state the better for the revolutionary movement". The Socialist, the organ of the SLP which, as we have already observed, had members jailed for anti recruiting activities succinctly, if bluntly, summed up the overall attitude of the British Labour movement towards the Irish war, "The old game goes merrily on. On the same boat as the resolutions of sympathy come 10,000 bombs, made by British Labour and fired by British Labour into Irish Towns to kill Irishmen and destroy Irish homes. Resolutions on paper won't do".

2 Kommunisticheski International Vtovoi Kongress Komintern (Moscow, 1972), 145-6.
3 The Socialist, 3 Jan, 1921.
In 1887, three people were killed and many wounded in fierce police and army charges when 80,000 English and Irish workers attempted to hold a London protest meeting against the arrest of a single Irish MP.\(^1\) A generation later not only the arrests of thousands, but a wholesale execution policy failed to evoke a British working class reaction on anything even approaching a fraction of this scale.

Art O'Brien's antipathy towards left wing organizations, even those actively supporting the Irish cause, was strengthened by incidents like the already observed habit of Maire O'Neill (Sylvia Pankhurst's secretary) to vastly exaggerate her relationship with the Republican Movement. Another such individual who incurred O'Brien's hostility was the prominent British left wing shop steward William Watson of the London Workers Committee. Speaking at a public meeting in 1918, Watson claimed that the London Sinn Feiners could supply him with several hundred men trained to use arms.\(^2\) As the London IRA had not been re-organized at this time this statement is very unlikely to have been true. Moreover Watson's testimony must be viewed in the light of his subsequent 1920 admission that he had been receiving payments for regular reports to the Special Branch. Despite Watson's claims that he had

\(^{1}\) Morton and Tate, op. cit., 175.

\(^{2}\) Dawson, op. cit..
deliberately submitted "nonsensical and misleading reports" in an effort to infiltrate the Special Branch,¹ most British revolutionaries regarded him as an agent provocateur. The publicity given to his case which included the raising of the matter in the House of Commons² almost certainly ensured that Art O'Brien was very familiar with this episode, and he probably saw in this incident further justification for his aloofness towards the left wing in general. The ISDL leadership for personal, political and tactical reasons held themselves and their organizations aloof from the Communist Party during the period when the ISDL was a mass membership organization. Yet we shall subsequently observe Art O'Brien entering into formal negotiations with the leadership of the Communist Party of Great Britain. But by then the Civil War had reduced the ISDL's membership to a mere fraction of its former strength. And with the new ISDL Constitution pledging the now small number of members to maintain an Irish Republic, dissolved by the Anglo-Irish Treaty, whose armed forces were facing certain defeat so the earlier isolationist strategy was now replaced by a desperate search for allies regardless of the ideology they propounded.


2 See 117 HC Deb. 5, Col. 530.
The British 'Liberal Conscience' and Ireland

Despite William McMahon's, the Manchester ISDL leader, claim that he voted Conservative\(^1\) few in the League maintained even a token relationships with the party traditionally regarded as the most resolute opponent of Irish independence. For the majority of the Conservative Party, any disagreement they had with Lloyd George's Coalition's Irish policy stemmed from a gut feeling that it was not being sufficiently tough enough.\(^2\) A few Conservatives did however protest about the reprisals policy and Oswald Mosley went so far as to cross the floor of the House of Commons, after accusing the Government of "obliterating in Ireland the narrow but very sacred line that divides justice from indiscriminate revenge".\(^3\) Mosley subsequently became the Honorary Secretary of the Peace with Ireland Council an organisation that very effectively mobilized what was left of the 19th Century British 'Liberal Conscience' which had so dominated the country's foreign policy in respect to non British colonial issues. In the words of one of its principal founders, the historian Arthur Williams, the Peace with Ireland Council was "a purely English movement, an English protest against the policy of the Government, with members who could not

\(^1\) Claim made at the Deportees Compensation Tribunal - TS 27/183, McMahon was a very successful businessman.

\(^2\) See D.G. Boyce 'British Conservative Opinion, the Ulster question and the Partition of Ireland, 1912-1921' Irish Historical Studies 17 (1970) 89-112.

\(^3\) Quoted in Colin Cross The Fascists in Britain (1961) 14-15.
be accused of working with Sinn Fein; though precisely this type of influential movement had earlier been envisaged by De Valera. Seeking a "Just and lasting settlement between the two countries" by advocating a Truce, Amnesty and negotiations to give Ireland self-government within the Empire, the Peace with Ireland Council was formally established in October 1920 at a meeting in the House of Commons.

With the Conservative Peer, Lord Cavendish-Bentinck as the Chairman of an organisation that included many Asquithian Liberals and Labour figures like Ramsay MacDonald the Council was a very influential political coalition. Particularly, as its membership extended beyond Westminster to embrace Anglican bishops, Nonconformist clergy, academics and leading media personnel. The Council held over 200 public meetings, ranging from local protests - some of which were physically attacked by pro-Government supporters - to large national meetings in the Albert Hall, attended by 8000

1 D.G. Boyce, Englishmen and Irish Troubles (1972) 65.
2 De Valera wrote to Art O'Brien suggesting this type of initiative, O'Brien MS 8429.
4 Ibid and see Peace with Ireland Council Objects (1920).
5 Boyce Englishmen op. cit. 65-6.
6 See membership list in Capt. Berkeley Papers, MS 10,924 (NLI), Berkeley was a member of the Irish Dominion League London Committee.
7 Ibid.
8 Boyce Englishmen op. cit. 70.
people. It also organized a very successful Westminster All Party Women's Meeting and either produced or sponsored the distribution of 30 well circulated pamphlets. By the time of the July 1921 Truce the Peace with Ireland Council had established 30 branches and was preparing to lead a highly influential fact finding mission to Ireland. During its short existence the Peace with Ireland Council undertook a very impressive number of activities and as Boyce rightly observes its actions compare very favourably to the trade unions, which with much greater resources did far less on the Irish issue.

The Pacifist Movement in Britain engaged in some activities on the Irish issue but to nothing like the extent of its intervention in the War or on the Russian issue. The Rev. Conrad Noel, the Thaxted Christian Socialist Pacifist Vicar, flew the Irish Tricolour from his church steeple in opposition to Government policy and had it torn down by an irate

1 Boyce, op. cit., 69 and Berkeley Ms. 10,920.
2 See Edith Stopford Papers, MS 11,426 (NLI) Edith was the Council's Secretary and the Times 19 Mar., 1921.
3 Stopford, Ibid.
4 Berkely MS 10,924.
5 Boyce Englishmen op. cit. 70.
6 Ibid, 69.
mob, largely composed of outsiders. The largest pacifist mobilization on the Irish issue was probably the 5000 audience at a 1921 Women's International League 'Peace with Ireland' Rally. This organization had earlier demanded the release of the Irish political prisoners and a Truce. But while the Irish Exile gave some publicity to this Women's organization, it does not appear that many ISDL members were involved in its activities. There was virtually no organized grouping of women within the ISDL, conscious of their own position as women, and a scrutiny of League branch reports and the Irish Exile reveals no examples of the existence of a separate feminist political perspective. In the words of Mrs Eadie, a League office clerk, subsequently jailed for possession of explosives, "there's plenty of work for the women, such as knitting socks for our Irish soldiers of the IRA."

In general the ISDL tended to ignore the activities of the Pacifist groups who condemned the IRA as strongly as they denounced the British Army. So much so that the quite influential Fellowship of Reconciliation asked Mrs Sheehy Skeffington to use her influence with the ISDL leadership to adopt a more favourable attitude towards their

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2 ROR 113.7 July, 1921. CP 3115. CAB 24/126.
3 Sheehy Skeffington MS 22,695 (1).
4 Irish Exile July 1923.
5 Ibid, Aug., 1921.
organization. Their attitude towards another grouping in Britain, residents from other British colonies, was however very different. Art O'Brien warmly welcomed from the platform the presence of Indians and Egyptians in the crowded Albert Hall audience assembled to greet the Dail Eireann negotiators. And a representative of the Indian students studying in London spoke at the ISDL 1921 MayDay Rally in Hyde Park. Other Indian speakers addressed local ISDL branches on the parallel between the Indian and Irish struggles for national freedom. The ISDL and the Irish movement in Britain generally, benefitted repeatedly from the activity in Parliament of the Indian Communist MP for Battersea, Saklatvala. On several occasions the Dail Cabinet thought it sufficiently important to discuss its relations with other British colonial groups. This matter, particularly interested Michael Collins, and through O'Brien's office, he warned the visiting Cypriot Mission, led by its Archbishop, to be extremely wary of British promises but Collins was very ambiguous on the question of Enosis - union with Greece; no doubt seeing a parallel with Northern

1 See letter 23 Nov., 1920. Skefflington MS 22,695(IV). For other correspondence with the Fellowship for Reconciliation see Skefflington MS 22,695 (II and III). And also see report of an Irish Conciliation Group, in London, CP 825. CAB 24/100 and a South London Irish Freedom Committee, ROR 98, 23 March, 1921. CP 2765. CAB 24/121.

2 Irish Exile Nov. 1921.

3 Ibid. May, 1921.

4 Ibid.

5 Saklatvala addressed the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club, ibid., Nov. 1921.
Ireland and Partition. Collins was particularly interested in the Indian issue and instructed that all Dail communications with Indian Nationalists should be conducted through Art O'Brien, as some of the more progressive Indian leaders had been deported to Britain. The ISDL's natural interest in maintaining fraternal contacts with the Indian nationalists was further encouraged by John Scurr, who served as the honorary Secretary of the Indian Home Rule League: British Auxiliary and subsequently was a member of the Parliamentary Committee on India. Irish contacts with Indian Nationalists was a matter that particularly concerned successive British Governments. In the United States, British diplomats repeatedly filed reports on contacts between Clan na Gael and the Indian Nationalists, and were so concerned about the possibility of Irish American arms shipments to India, they even hired Pinkerton Agency detectives to maintain close surveillance on Irish and Indian suspects. An Intelligence report concerning Art O'Brien's negotiations with "Indian and Egyptian extremists" prompted the Home Office to consider his internment. The Government had earlier viewed with disfavour the aid given by

4 Cf. FO 371/563 and 783. British pressure resulted in the Americans arresting M.N. Roy, the Bengali guerrilla leader, see B.R. Nanda, op. cit., 30.
5 A. Ward, op. cit., 60.
6 ROR 85. 16 Dec., 1920. CAB 24/117.
Irish Nationalist MPs to the British Committee of the Indian Nationalist Congress;¹ and the India Office, which constantly sought to prevent the publication of unsavoury details relating to the British Administration in India, requested on several occasions the prosecution of Charles Diamond and his Catholic Herald². Scottish and Welsh Nationalists also participated in ISDL activities, sometimes giving talks on their own nationalist political objectives to local branches, a policy encouraged by Michael Collins.³ And a telegram of formal support from the Scottish National Committee was read at the ISDL Albert Hall meeting in February 1920.⁴


2 India Office Memo, 29 June 1921. In HO 45/11009/280126.

3 DE 2/435.

4 Daily Mirror 12 Feb., 1920.
CHAPTER 15

The Irish Exile: A Case Study of an Organizational Publication

The Irish Exile was part of a long tradition of Irish Revolutionary publications, some of which, notably those produced by Arthur Griffiths, kept the spark of nationality aglow during the periods when the revolutionary political organizations were unable to attract a sizeable following. Some of these papers gave birth to organizations, others like the Irish Exile were only born after the parent organization had reached maturity.

The mere presence, or conversely absence, of a regular organizational publication can in itself tell us much about the organization's state of health. When the Irish Self Determination League flourished it gave birth to the Irish Exile but when it went into inexorable decline the paper disappeared. Organizational publications can tell us much about the type of organization, particularly its degree of openness. The Connolly Association, who claim with very little justification, to have inherited the mantle of the

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2 Arthur Griffith produced a number of papers including An Faire while in Reading Jail and the Gloucester Diamond in the prison of the same name. See Arthur Griffith Papers, Ms 5942 and 5943 (NLI).

ISDL, have published their own paper for 44 years (*Irish Democrat/Freedom*). I have never yet read in all these issues one direct reference to the actual circulation figures as opposed to vague references to "sales up twenty per cent" etc. The Connolly Association was, and is, closely linked to the Communist Party of Great Britain. The ISDL constitutionally proclaimed its open character and so the *Irish Exile* regularly reported detailed circulation figures and recorded in much detail its branch activities. From these branch reports alone it is possible to construct a composite picture of the League during its heyday. So we shall now examine in some detail the functions of the *Irish Exile* as the organ of the ISDL and consider how successfully it performed these.

Shepard and Harrison have both amply illustrated the contribution made by organizational publications to the development of political movements in Britain. While Buzan has delineated the functions of a regular organizational publication:

(1) "The communication of propaganda to non members" - the analysis of this particular function centres on an investigation of circulation figures and the modes of distribution.


(2) "Reinforcing internal unity": Wilson particularly stresses this function which involves the maintenance of commitment levels as emphasized by Benewick.  

(3) "An overlap - as a general educational tool". These latter two functions will be considered under the heading - Content Analysis. We will commence our study of the Irish Exile by observing its genesis and then consider its circulation figures, mode of distribution and financial position.

Art O'Brien recorded in a memo, dated 27 May 1920, that when he heard Republicans in Scotland were planning to launch a publication he discussed with Sean Milroy the possibility of starting a similar publication in England. This move was backed by Sean McGrath who wrote to Michael Collins stating: "I have had in my mind for some time, the possibility of bringing out a weekly publication somewhat on the lines of the newsletter of the 'Friends of Irish Freedom' (the Republican support organization in America). The idea of a publication germinated for a considerable time until in March 1921 the London District ISDL Committee launched the Irish Exile as a monthly publication costing twopence. The Irish Exile appeared every month until it ceased.

1 John Wilson, op. cit., 321.
4 Art O'Brien, Ms 8427.
5 Letter dated 28 June 1920, ibid.
publication in June 1922, though for the issue of May 1921 the title of the Exile appeared in its Irish language translation as An Deoraide Gadrac. Though the Irish Exile appeared initially as a regional (i.e. London area) publication, it was intended from the outset to function as the national organ of the ISDL. It was edited by Brian O'Kennedy from the Head Office of the ISDL and in November 1921 the publication became the direct responsibility of the ISDL Central Executive Committee.¹ The paper was increased in size from sixteen to twenty-four pages to permit a wider national coverage of ISDL branch activities. From the issue of November 1921 the Irish Exile carried, until March 1922, an eight page section of extracts from the Irish Bulletin, a publication produced by the Dail Eireann Publicity Department and widely quoted in the world and (quality) British press.² The price of the Irish Exile was increased in November 1921 to threepence when the paper was expanded. The issues for the March 1921 - March 1922 period were printed by the National Labour Press but the final three issues were done by Leslie Smith Ltd. and from the issue of December 1921 the Irish Exile specifically mentioned that the publication only used newsprint manufactured in Ireland.

No information regarding the circulation figures of the

¹ The transfer of publication from a regional committee to the national leadership was discussed in a memo by Brian O'Kennedy (dated 4 April, 1922), O'Brien Ms 8456.
Irish Exile for its first six months of publication survive. The issue of June 1921 informed the readership that "We are glad to be in a position to state that 'The Exile' is now a sound commercial proposition", but an indication of its financial margins of operation is perhaps afforded in the appeal to readers in the same issue, that "the cost of production would be considerably reduced if our circulation were doubled". The first concrete details of the Irish Exile circulation were given in the issue of September 1921 when the readers were informed that "after six months working the journal had made a profit" and that the circulation was now 12,000 copies per issue. A further indication however that the profit was still only marginal was provided in a statement, in that same issue, that henceforth all announcements of coming activities - previously inserted free of charge - would now be published as advertisements at the rate of two shillings and six pence per fifty words or five shillings per column inch, if published as display ads. The financial position was next referred to in the issue of April 1922 when it was stated that in the period between March 1921 and March 1922 the paper had made an overall profit of £12 7s. 5d. An internal ISDL report, however, revealed that in the six months since the Central Executive Committee had assumed responsibility for the Exile the paper had lost twenty-three pounds and that the nation wide distribution of their first issue (November 1921) had resulted in 4,000 unsold copies, a figure which declined to 2,000 in December 1921 and was reduced to "very few unsold" copies for the January 1922 issue (which contained the terms of the Peace Settlement between Ireland
and Britain). But the number of unsold copies then rose to 2,000 for each of the subsequent February and March 1922 issues\(^1\) even though the print order for the March 1922 issue was only 10,000. This represents an effective circulation of only 8,000 for that month.\(^2\)

It would therefore be reasonable in the light of the information discussed to establish a maximum circulation of the *Irish Exile* as the 12,000 copies reported in the issue of September 1921 which represents only a sales figure of one third of a copy per member or forty sales per ISDL branch. Branches were first of all requested to order "sufficient copies of the Exile for their members and also a supply for the general public",\(^3\) an instruction which the next month was expanded into a positive figure of "at least two copies per affiliated member".\(^4\) The circulation figures show that most branches did not endeavour to implement this instruction though there were exceptions, like Tooting which held "the record for the number of *Irish Exiles* sold each month, some six hundred copies"\(^5\) or "about three copies per member".\(^6\) It would be erroneous simply to interpret a circulation rate of a third of a copy per member as

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1 *Irish Exile Management Committee Report, Dated 7 April 1922*, in O'Brien Ms 8456.

2 Letter from Art O'Brien to Brian Kennedy, 4 April, 1922, *ibid.*

3 *Irish Exile*, May 1921.

4 Ibid., June 1921.

5 Ibid., August 1921.

6 Ibid., July 1921.
indicating a very high percentage of purely nominal membership with little organizational participation other than the payment of a subscription. The Walworth Branch had one hundred and ninety members with an average branch meeting attendance of over ninety yet it sold only a hundred and eight copies of the Irish Exile per month.¹ The ISDL was not the only political organization to fail to sell a copy of its publication to each member. Communist parties by comparison to the ISDL exercise a much greater degree of organizational discipline over their membership but in Bologna Province (Italy) in the 1960s the party daily Unita sold only 15,000 copies though there was a party membership of 126,000². This represents a sale per member ratio of less than one third of that achieved by the ISDL. And in 1973 the Secretary of the British Communist Party launched a Morning Star circulation drive under the slogan - "Make every member a reader"³ with the implication that this had not been the case.

In Ireland in 1916 the Republican paper with the largest circulation sold only 4,615 copies while the next largest eight political publications all had circulations well under 4,000 with most of these selling under 2,000 copies.⁴

¹ Ibid., August 1921.

² Ian Burchall Workers Against the Monolith, 129. Bologna is known in Italy as 'Red Bologna'.

³ Ibid., 216.

⁴ Minutes of Evidence of the Royal Commission on the Rebellion, op. cit., 118.
County Clare was the first area in Ireland to be put under Martial Law in 1919, a fact which implies a considerable degree of Republican support in the area, but Fitzpatrick observed that the Republican publications had very low circulation figures in Clare. The ISDL's 'Exile's circulation in the light of this information is therefore not as surprising as it first appeared to be. Art O'Brien, when the issue of an organizational publication was first raised, stated that it will, "appeal I think mostly to the reading portion of our people", implying that not all members would purchase copies. His comments could perhaps be interpreted as indicating a high level of illiteracy among the ISDL membership, a hypothesis that might be supported by a reference in the O'Donovan Rossa Club's (Tooting) report that the "News of the week is read from the Irish papers to the members". The circulation figures of the Irish Exile and in particular the variable branch sales rates do perhaps indicate a relatively high degree of decentralization, with a reluctance to implement instructions from the National Head Office. This hypothesis is supported by evidence of branches selling other publications, sometimes to the detriment of the Irish Exile, as in the case of the Burnley ISDL Branch which sold seventy-two copies of the Irish Exile but ninety-six copies of Eire Ogh – a Dublin publication.

1 Fitzpatrick, op. cit., 134.
2 O'Brien Ms 8427.
3 Irish Exile, May 1921.
4 Irish Exile, Feb. 1922.
The Swansea No. 4 Branch however reported that it was discontinuing the sale of the Self Determinator\(^1\) (A Liverpool Sinn Fein paper) in favour of the Irish Exile.\(^2\) The sale of other political publications undoubtedly reduced the potential circulation of the Irish Exile, but by how much is not clear, for in other branches the ratio of other publications sold in contrast to Irish Exile sales was different from that of Burnley. Forrest Gate ISDL sold three hundred and sixty copies of the Exile and ninety-four copies of Eire Og.\(^3\)

The bulk of the external sales of the Irish Exile as opposed to internal branch sales to the membership were obtained by church door selling after Sunday Mass. Branches were instructed to sell outside the Churches "in order that those of our kith and kin who are not in our ranks may have an opportunity of appreciating the work of the League".\(^4\) Church door sales were regarded as potentially so valuable as to alter the printing schedule of the publication which was now made "available on the Friday afternoon preceding the first Sunday of the month. This will give branches an opportunity of selling each number of the Journal at church doors on four successive Sundays".\(^5\) Forrest Gate ISDL reported that they sold most of their papers at the

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1 Despite an intensive search I have not been able to find any copies of the Self Determinator but information relating to its production has been obtained from ROR 98 23 March, 1921, CP 2765. CAB 24/121.

2 Irish Exile, Feb. 1922.

3 Ibid., Aug. 1921.

4 Ibid., June 1921.

5 Ibid..
church door\(^1\) but once again there were complaints that some branches did not organize such sales.\(^2\) The circulation of the *Irish Exile* was sufficiently large to attract some commercial advertizing though it never amounted to more than three quarters of a page per issue and usually averaged only half a page. The first issue carried advertisements from an automobile dealer, a sports clothes shop and a grocer while subsequent issues contained advertisements from the Irish National Assurance Company who took a half page in the paper.\(^3\) The Dublin based Exile Employment Bureau sought architectural draughtsmen and heating engineers.\(^4\)

Throughout its sixteen issues existence\(^5\) the *Irish Exile* teetered on the brink of very narrow financial margins but most political organizations run their publications at a loss relying on donations. The *Morning Star* and *Newsline*\(^6\) even employ a monthly donation deadline to keep their publications in existence, to generate a dynamic tension among the membership.

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1 *Irish Exile*, August, 1921.
2 Ibid., September 1921.
3 Ibid., February 1922.
4 Ibid., January 1922.
5 Jackson erroneously states that the "Irish Exile had a short-lived history of less than a year", op. cit., 124.
6 *Newsline* is published by the Workers Revolutionary Party (WRP) as a party daily.
The content of the Irish Exile

A researcher can analyse the content of a publication from several different perspectives according to his professional training, academic discipline or even political inclination. One can investigate publication content from the perspective of the journalist who wrote the story, from the socio-linguistic perspective, or from a psychologist's viewpoint as exemplified by Lindsey and White. Valuable research has also been done by the more politically committed investigators like Cohen and Young, Hartman and Husband, and the Glasgow University Media Group.


3 See the section on Content Analysis in G. Lindsey Hand Book of Social Psychology (Massachusetts, 1968).

4 Amber White, the New Propaganda (1939). An exploration of Fascist publications from the perspective of Freudian psychology.


7 Glasgow University Media Group Bad News (1976) - An investigation of Television News Coverage.
There is a large number of general sociological studies of the media and the sociological investigation of content analysis has resulted in useful studies by Gerner and Holsti.

In any primarily politically orientated publication content is determined by "Structured ideological biases". The Irish Exile was the official publication of the Irish Self Determination League whose object was to promote the Irish political cause in Britain. Therefore the Irish Exile frequently carried stories intended to portray the British Forces in an unfavourable image. Articles such as "Abuse of Women" (April 1921), "Failure of Terrorism" [(sic British) August 1921] appeared regularly. The successful communication of propaganda/news is dependent on the "consonance and expectations" of its content. Investigators in the field of the psychology of perception have shown that a newspaper reader classifies and codes information according to its content, amount and channel of communication—a process which Wilkins suggests involves a virtually instantaneous assessment of its reliability or unreliability.

1 For a good selection of readings and a useful bibliography see Jeremy Tunstall (ed.) Media Sociology (1970).
3 P.R. Holsti Content Analysis for the Social Sciences and Humanities (Massachusetts, 1968).
4 As used by Cohen and Young, op. cit., 15.
5 Jeremy Tunstall, Journalists, op. cit., 18.
This assessment, based in part on experience and individual inclination, of the content and channel communication determines the level of reception. Galtung and Ruge\(^1\) utilize the radio frequency analogy of dial tuning to demonstrate that there is a correlation between the meaningfulness and relevance of the news content and the channel of communication and the level of reception. Berelson and Steiner\(^2\) suggest that the concreteness of the content determines the level of reception and that ambiguous news is less effectively absorbed.

The production staff of the *Irish Exile* were sufficiently aware of the importance of source credibility to adopt, as a regular practice, the policy of reprinting articles from other publications regarded by the *Irish Exile* readership as being reliable channels of news communication. Articles particularly relating to British illegal actions in Ireland were reprinted from liberal press organs like the *Daily News* and the *Daily Herald*. Many of these articles had originally been placed in the British press, by the Republicans whose "propaganda was well organized, thoughtfully prepared and diligently distributed in Great Britain".\(^3\)

When the *Irish Exile* became the official national organ of


3 D.G. Boyce, op. cit., 84. Much of the content of this work centres around the use of propaganda.
the ISDL the paper was expanded to include eight pages of extracts from the Irish Bulletin. The frequency with which some organs such as the Manchester Guardian and even the Times used stories based on information from the Irish Bulletin infuriated the Government and in particular the military leadership.¹ British Intelligence even attempted to forge several issues of a spoof Irish Bulletin until this tactic was exposed in Parliament.²

Communication researchers have shown that people interpret news through certain key words or emotive symbols. White³ suggests that these function as "Gatekeepers" which open up the channels of news perception while Wilkins has formulated the conceptual term of a "Bridge" to explain the process by which the general news is translated into the particular and conversely.⁴ The Irish Exile, on emotion generating issues like prisoners and executions, utilized short captions embodying emotive language in articles like "The Glory of Martyrdom" (May 1921) and "They died for Ireland" (June 1921). In a society whose culture was so permeated by religious influences at all levels the employment of the term Martyr to the executed appeared to confer some form of religious sanctification on the struggle they

¹ General Macready was the British GOC in Ireland see his Annals of an Active Life, op. cit., Vol. 2, 494.
² 140 H.C. Debs. 5, col. 2038.
had died for. The June 1921 issue listed those executed to date under the caption of the "Martyrs Crown". Photographs - "intelligent representations enhancing, locating and specifying the ideological theme"¹ of the executed were deliberately chosen to emphasize their ordinariness so as to promote a degree of reader identification with the executed prisoners - the personification of news.

The general standard of reportage in the Irish Exile was quite high as the publication had the services of two professional journalists, Sean Milroy and J.P. O'Connolly. Political education was regarded as an important task of the Irish Exile. Factual articles sought to prove Ireland's claim to self determination. One article in particular used European comparative economic and demographic statistics to repudiate the British claims that Ireland was too small a country to be economically self sufficient.² After the Dail ratification of the Treaty the pro and anti-Treaty ISDL factions were given equal space to discuss their respective viewpoints.

The columns of the Irish Exile were utilized to defend the ISDL from the repeated attacks on it by the Catholic Herald both general and specific allegations about financial irregularities within the ISDL. To allay the possible fears

¹ Stuart Hall, 'The Determination of News Photography', Cultural Studies No. 3 (Centre for Cultural Studies Brimingham University). Also see R. Barthes, Rhetoric of the Image (Working Papers on Cultural Studies No. 1 (ibid.)) as to how photographs are utilized as a propaganda source.

² Irish Exile, March 1921.
of that category of potential members we have termed the 'innocents' the Irish Exile launched particularly strong attacks on the history of the Catholic Herald and the character of Charles Diamond in particular,\(^1\) while the attitude of the majority of the Catholic Hierarchy in Britain was condemned in a series of articles with an increasingly bitter tone culminating in "The Contemptible Clique" in the issue of August 1921. Particular editorial stress was laid on the economic campaign, initiated in Ireland, to boycott British manufactures in favour of Irish goods. The Irish Exile declared that it was printed on Irish paper and later requested readers that "Irish paper should be used for communication in this paper",\(^2\) while ISDL branches were encouraged to buy goods like cigarettes from Ireland in bulk for sale to the membership.\(^3\) The Exile also carried a series of articles on the future of Ireland after independence which permitted a wide range of opinions, not necessarily reflecting the official viewpoint of the ISDL. These included the radical suggestion of extensive land redistribution free legal aid, a populist demand that TDs (Dail MPs) should have their salaries deducted for non-attendance and most interestingly, in an organization with a very high percentage of Catholic members, including a considerable number of priests, there was a suggestion that euthanasia should be permitted.

\(^1\) Irish Exile, March and May, 1922.
\(^2\) Ibid., December 1921.
\(^3\) Ibid., April 1922.
The primary function of the Irish Exile was to mobilize support for the Irish cause in general and the recruitment of members to the ISDL in particular. The first issue, in March 1921, listed twelve reasons for joining the ISDL.

"Twelve Reasons Why You Should Join the ISDL

(1) Because you are Irish.
(2) Because you want to know the truth about Ireland and the League tells the facts.
(3) Because Ireland needs your help - needs it now.
(4) Because Ireland is calling to her children throughout the World and she is calling to you.
(5) Because the ISDL helps Ireland in her heroic struggle and gives you an opportunity to help.
(6) Because the Irish in Great Britain can help Ireland to endure until Victory is won.
(7) Because to stand aside now is treachery to Ireland.
(8) Because your apathy is delaying the international recognition of Ireland's just claims.
(9) Because the Irish are the only white race in bondage today and Ireland is the only small nation in Europe under oppression.
(10) Because the Irish people have settled the 'Irish Problem' and it is only necessary for other nations that enjoy freedom to respect hers.
(11) Because the spirit of Ireland's martyred dead, the heroism of Ireland's tortured living and the hope of Ireland's future calls to you.
(12) Because you are Irish - 'DO YOUR DUTY NOW'."

Once the readers were persuaded that they should play their own part in the campaign to aid Ireland they then had to be convinced that the ISDL was the appropriate organization to channel their support. The Exile's function was to convey an image of a large widely distributed vibrant organization. It carried out this task by giving considerable coverage to reports of individual branch activity; no fewer than forty-five branches reported their activities in the December 1921 issue alone. Branches frequently reported increasing membership and their successful fund raising
campaigns, such as Woolwich which reported that its branch "quota for the Ulster Election Fund - £51 3s 0d was raised within five minutes". A very wide range of successful activities were reported, Halifax claimed

"a continuous stream of new members is ever flowing, Irish nationality is certainly aroused to a very high pitch in Halifax certainly without parallel in the local annals of Irish activities, all due to the unswerving determination and continuous perseverance of the local members of the ISDL branch".  

Richmond ISDL reported an attendance of over two hundred people on its cruise trip up the River Thames on the "steamer The Royal Thames flying a Republican Flag".  

The problems of a hostile public reaction which many branches faced were not ignored. Ashton in Makerfield reported that "from its inauguration this branch has encountered strong opposition from the opponents of the League" while the Central London Branch reported "Gratifying progress in the branch despite the exceptional difficulty of obtaining hall accommodation". Other problems faced by the branches concerning the growing economic depression were frequently recorded in the Exile. For example Erith reported "This branch after having felt the strain of local depression is now showing great improvement" and Newton Heath stated that they were functioning "successfully.

1 Irish Exile, June 1921.
2 Ibid., Feb. 1922.
3 Ibid., September 1921.
4 Ibid., Nov. 1921
5 Ibid., Aug. 1921.
6 Ibid., March 1922.
notwithstanding the unemployment affecting the members".\textsuperscript{1} Not all the branch reports were as favourable as these. Some criticized their members' laxity. Southampton Branch for example stated that "it is to be hoped that some of the members who have of late been exhibiting a deplorable amount of slackness in the discharge of their branch duties will speedily amend their ways".\textsuperscript{2} Some branches submitted resolutions they themselves had passed for the consideration of other branches, the most interesting resolution was probably the one passed by the Terence McSwiney Branch to "Pledge ourselves not to use any intoxicating liquor or tobacco until such time as this country withdraws her Armed Forces from Ireland".\textsuperscript{3} There were resolutions criticising the ISDL leadership and the ISDL editorial board. The Mid-Durham Branch "unanimously resented the (Support the Republic Fund) back page advertisement of the March Exile as contrary to the official (neutrality on the Treaty) policy of the ISDL".\textsuperscript{4}

The branch reports usually gave the names of their officers and often their occupations. Particular coverage was given to the formation meetings of new branches. In the December 1921 issue the inauguration of the Oxford ISDL Branch was reported. Its President was a Frederick Ludlow "the only Labour representative in the Oxford City Council", its Secretary was Mrs Weaver (the wife of a proctor) and its

\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{1} Irish Exile, March 1922.
\item\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., Sept., 1921.
\item\textsuperscript{3} Ibid., May 1921.
\item\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., April 1922.
\end{itemize}
membership included the Earl of Longford, the Rev. Cox who was the Anglican Vicar of St. Peters and two college students. While the Irish Exile was the official publication of the ISDL it did not confine itself to merely reporting the activities of that organization. The choice of the publication's title; "The Irish Exile - An Organ of Irish Movements in and around London" and the post November 1921 modification to "The Irish Exile - The Official Organ of the ISDL of Great Britain and the Monthly Record of Irish/Ireland Movements" indicated an intention to report the activities of all the organizations embracing the concept of an Irish/Ireland. So considerable coverage was given to the activities of the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association.

The publication of a mass political organization of necessity must be orientated towards the lowest common denominator readership yet, the Irish Exile while devoting the majority of its space to branch reports and propagandist articles, still managed to print a number of substantial literary articles. Robert Lynd wrote a very informative survey of Modern Poetry while Liam O'Rain contributed a very erudite philological series on the "Scholarship of European investigators into the origins of the Irish language". The Irish Exile of necessity was often forced to argue on a simplistic, emotional, even sensationalistic

1 Irish Exile May 1921, Robert Lynd a member of the Irish Literary Society was a professional critic and a reporter on the Daily News staff.

2 Ibid., Dec. 1921, Jan. 1922, and Feb. 1922.
level yet it never degenerated to mere sloganizing. While it could be argued that a publication with a somewhat different format might have attracted new readers, this might well have been at the expense of the existing readership and though the content of the Irish Exile when it appeared to support IRA activity went far beyond the constitutional aims of the ISDL, I can find no correspondence complaining about this breach within the surviving ISDL records. The production staff of the Irish Exile faced considerable problems after the first two issues, the editor Brian O'Kennedy and another member Fintan Murphy were deported to Ireland, while Sean Milroy operated 'on the run' after his escape from Lincoln Prison. A police raid on the editorial office resulted in the April 1921 issue appearing without any branch reports which were seized and subsequent raids resulted in the confiscation of copy and the all important circulation records which may account for at least a proportion of the unsold copies already noted.

If we reconsider the functions of an organizational publication as outlined by Buzan: propaganda communication, reinforcement of internal unity and serving as a general educational tool, then we may conclude that the Irish Exile performed these tasks quite successfully considering the problems we have mentioned. The Irish Exile undoubtedly mobilized a considerable number of recruits and channelled them into the ISDL. The circulation of the Irish Exile could have been higher - though relative to the other publications we have considered it was not that low. The

1 For example the Red International of Labour Unions (Prointern) which claimed a British affiliation of 300,000 workers only sold 12,000 copies of its Journal contd...
paper could certainly have been better distributed and if the Head Office had not had so many of its organizers deported, sales levels in many branches would have probably increased considerably. It is perhaps an indication of the high regard held by the leadership of the Sinn Fein in Ireland for the ISDL's *Irish Exile* that, in the event of British activities rendering the publication of the *Irish Exile* impossible in Ireland, the ISDL were to assume the responsibility of producing the *Bulletin*.1
Part IV: The Diaspora Irish and the War of Independence

In Volume One we charted the growth of the ISDL up to the Treaty and now in Volume Two we will chart its inexorable decline. In Chapter 16 we will explore the initial reactions of the Irish in Britain to the Treaty; but for one particular interest group - those imprisoned for military activities in this country - the immediate Post-Treaty period did not bring freedom and so Pro and Anti-Treaty ISDL leaders found common ground in an amnesty campaign. The Treaty cast its dark shadow far beyond the shores of Ireland and Britain, penetrating the furthest corner of the far flung Irish Diaspora blighting the Paris World Congress of the Irish Race. In Chapter 17 we will observe this abortive attempt to form an umbrella organization linking the Irish Diaspora to the Homeland. The Congress delegates heatedly debated the vexed question of the relationship between Homeland and Exile movement and expressed very diverse opinions on the position of the Diaspora Irish - exiles or citizens? And so in Chapter 18 we will employ this Paris debate as a forum to explore the different forms Irish nationalism assumed throughout the Diaspora.
CHAPTER 16

The Treaty: Jubilation and Misgivings

William Gallacher, (the future Scottish Communist MP), arrived in Dublin early on the morning of the 6th. December, 1921, with news that the Treaty had been signed. He urged Cathal Brugha, the Minister of Defence, to arrest the Plenipotentaries on their arrival but Brugha refused, stating, "Irishmen won't arrest Irishmen", to which Gallacher retorted, "if you don't arrest them it will not be long before they are arresting you".  

Gallacher then met the members of the IRA GHQ staff with whom he had been in contact with on matters relating to the intelligence and logistical operations in Britain but Rory O'Connor, the OC of the British Command and Liam Mellows, the Director of Purchases, both refused to arrest the delegates, while Oscar Traynor, the OC of the Dublin Brigade prevented some of his junior officers from carrying out Gallacher's wishes.  

De Valera and the members of the Cabinet who were not in London, only learned about the Treaty when they read the evening newspapers but De Valera refused publicly to repudiate the Treaty until the plenipotentaries returned and a full Cabinet meeting had been held with the result that "the Treaty and all the propaganda in its favour had had three days start and we never made up the handicap".  

1 Greaves, Mellowes, op. cit., 268. Gallacher's father was Irish born.  

2 Bower Bell, op. cit., 45.  

3 Austin Stack, quoted in Longford, op. cit., 265.
had no such reservations about waiting for the Cabinet meeting and subsequent Dail Eireann debate. The principal organs of the media in Ireland without exception welcomed the Treaty as did the major commercial concerns. The Irish Hierarchy who had pressurized the Dail Cabinet to accept the earlier British proposals acclaime the Treaty as "God's Gift". For most of the people in Ireland acceptance of the Treaty was virtually an automatic process. The alternative appeared to be war and the six months of the Truce had been a long enough period to defuse any latent militancy but short enough for people to remember the horrors of the war, that would recommence if the Treaty was rejected.

The *Irish Exile* in its December 1921 issue responded to the Treaty announcement, and its commitment to the Partition of Ireland, with a banner headline "No Man has the right to fix the boundary of the march of a Nation" (this modification of Parnell's dictum was also employed by the Times in support of the Treaty) and a front page "Important letter from Art O'Brien the Dail Eireann Representative in Great Britain". Art O'Brien writing in this capacity rather than as the Vice President of the Irish Self Determination League cautioned the readership of the *Irish Exile*:

1 In a report to Lloyd George, the Under Secretary at Dublin Castle, Alfred Cope, wrote "things are humming, the Bishops are especially busy" and Tom Jones commented that Cope, in early November, was intriguing with the Bishops and Irish media to get the British terms accepted. T. Jones, op. cit., 174-5.


3 Parnell had claimed "No man can set a boundary to the march of a nation" but the Times (9 Jan., 1922) commented "it is nevertheless, reserved to some to influence the direction of its progress".
"Be not misled into rejoicing and thanksgiving without cause or reason.... If under the threat of renewed and intensified war and as an alternative to seeing their country ravished and laid waste by fire and sword and their race exterminated, five Irishmen have been compelled to sign their names to a document published yesterday. This is not an occasion for us to rejoice."

The Irish Exile devoted three pages without comment to the full text of the Treaty, for the League leadership had decided to refrain from any observations on the Treaty until it had been discussed in Dail Eireann.¹ Others however in Britain very publicly declared for the Treaty. The Catholic Herald which also carried the full text of the Treaty declared in large print "Irish Peace Attained at Last, Hail to the Irish Free State" and in its editorial proclaimed that "Pearse, Plunkett, MacDonagh, Connolly, O'Raibhily and their comperes deserve the tribute of a nation's grateful regard";² a rather interesting pronouncement considering that at the time the Catholic Herald had violently denounced the 1916 Rising and urged the British Government to execute James Connolly. Perhaps this editorial illustrates the Catholic Herald's rather remarkable facility to switch its editorial line whenever the opinions of its readership altered significantly. The British Hierarchy unanimously welcomed, or at least implied they did not reject, the ending of seven centuries of British rule in Southern Ireland. Bishop Amigo praised those who have "won for Ireland a place among the nations of the world as a Free State".³ Archbishop

1 Catholic Herald, 24 Dec., 1921.
2 Catholic Herald, 10 Dec., 1921; Irish Exile, December, 1921.
3 Catholic Herald, 17 Dec., 1921.
Mostyn of Menevia (Wales) indicated his support for the Treaty but then banned League branches from using Catholic halls in his area. Bishop Cowgill of Leeds was "sure that the bulk of the twenty or thirty thousand Irish people in Leeds will join with me in the earnest hope that nothing will now arise to interfere with the due ratification of the Treaty". The Irish Nationalist Party Councillors in Liverpool attended a Treaty Thanksgiving Mass in the Pro-Cathedral while the old Irish Parliamentary leadership and the United Irish League in London persuaded Cardinal Bourne to say a special Mass in honour of the Treaty. The Salesian Fathers gave the boys at their Farnborough School an extra week's Christmas holiday to celebrate "the Irish Settlement" but some Catholic priests and teachers commented soberly on one particular implication of the Treaty for the future of Catholic interests in Britain.

A new Education Bill which threatened to significantly curtail State expenditure on denominational schools had been introduced in Parliament. Previous Bills had been defeated largely through the effort of the Catholic Nationalist members from the Southern Irish constituencies but as a priest now observed "we have only got a handful of Catholic members to fight our cause" for the Treaty brought to an end

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1 Catholic Herald, 17 Dec., 1921.
2 Ibid.
3 Roberts, op. cit., 89. Archbishop Keating also ordered the 'Exposition of the Sacrament' in every church in Liverpool Archdiocese in "thanksgiving" for the Treaty, Catholic Herald, 21 Jan., 1922.
4 Times, 9 Dec., 1921.
5 Catholic Herald, 17 Dec., 1921.
the large Catholic Southern Irish bloc vote in Parliament. Some Irish Self Determination League branches ignored Art O'Brien's request to refrain from celebrations. Cardiff Branch planned a banquet when the Treaty was ratified,\(^{1}\) Brother Thomas of St. Bede's Monastery urged the Halifax Branch to support the Treaty and Leicester also voted to accept it.\(^{2}\) A very influential statement was issued by Thomas Faughan, a member of the Standing Committee of the League, who on his release from Internment called on "the Irishmen and women of England and Wales who have stood faithful to the Republican cause to endorse the great Treaty of freedom",\(^{3}\) a speech which the other members of the Standing Committee were unable to comment on until the Dail debate was concluded. The toast of the "Irish Free State" proposed by General Gough, who in 1914 had refused to move his Cavalry Brigade from Curragh into Ulster to prevent the Unionists from resisting the introduction of Home Rule,\(^{4}\) at a National Liberal Club Society of St. Patrick dinner, at which Michael Collins' sister was the guest of honour

\(^{1}\) Catholic Herald, 17 Dec., 1921.

\(^{2}\) Ibid.

\(^{3}\) Ibid.

\(^{4}\) For this incident in which a large number of the British Officer Corps bluntly refused to obey the orders of the Government and which has become known as the Curragh Mutiny see James Ferguson, The Curragh Incident (1964), A.P.Ryan Mutiny at Curragh (1956). As well as refusing to implement Government policy, senior Army officers bluntly warned the Cabinet that in the event of Civil War breaking out in Northern Ireland, the entire British Expeditionary Force and troops from Egypt and India would be required. See CAB 37/120 (81). Gough subsequently refused a Unionist nomination to stand for Parliament and changing his opinions on Irish Home Rule became an Asquithian Liberal MP in 1921. Ref. Kinnear, op. cit., 53.
was somewhat premature, for the Irish Free State had legally not yet come into existence.

The gestation period for the birth of the Irish Free State was a considerably complicated matter. The Treaty had to be ratified by the Parliament of Southern Ireland which was elected in May 1921 but which had only the four Trinity College members at its first and only session to date. All the other members elected had taken their seats in Dáil Éireann. So as a first step Dáil Éireann had to vote the Republic, proclaimed by it in 1919, out of existence and then, minus its one member who represented a Northern Ireland constituency, meet as the Parliament of Southern Ireland together with the four Unionists. Dáil Éireann commenced discussing the Treaty on the 14th. December, 1921 and concluded the debate on the 7th. January, 1922 after a ten day adjournment for Christmas. The ten days of the Treaty Debate required almost three hundred, double columned, pages in the Official Report. Field Marshal Smuts when he had recommended Lloyd George to negotiate with Sinn Fein had stated "let them talk themselves to death" and it appeared at times during the Treaty debate that Sinn Fein was doing precisely that in a very complex and convoluted series of discussions. (There was even a dispute between the Treaty signatories, Collins and Griffith, as to whether the Treaty in fact required ratification at all). Old animosities,

1 Debate on the Treaty Between Great Britain and Ireland, (Dublin, N.D.)

2 T. Jones, op. cit., 85.
particularly between Brugha and Collins, Griffith and Childers, flared up during the often heated, heavily emotional discussion in what was aptly termed "Ireland's Days of Anguish" (Catholic Herald, 24th. December, 1921).

The debate seldom left the metaphysical plane to descend to the practical realities of the state of Ireland in 1921. Most of the TD's contributions took the form of public soul searching on the issue as to whether the Oath to the Republic was binding for all time. The issue of oaths dominated the proceedings, the existing Oath to the Republic or the proposed new Oath of loyalty to the British Monarchy. The discussions were primarily of an abstract nature, the much more tangible issue of the North of Ireland and Partition only occupied some nine pages in the Official Report: two thirds of that were the contributions of three members whose constituencies were on the new border. It is quite possible that had the vote for the ratification of the Treaty been taken before the Christmas recess, the Treaty might have been rejected but the holiday afforded many TDs the opportunity of discovering that most of their constituents were not concerned about abstract principles of freedom or moralistic soul searching on the durability of oaths but simply, if in many cases with

1 Cathal Brugha, the Minister of Defence, stated that Michael Collins was very much his subordinate but that the Press for some reason had decided to publicize his activities more than any other officers. See Debate on the Treaty, 326-8.

2 Erskine Childers, the former Clerk to the House of Commons, was interrupted in the course of a speech on Parliamentary procedure by Griffith who declared he would not listen to a "damned Englishman", ibid., 416.

3 Calton Younger, op. cit., 223.
Reluctance supported the Treaty as the only realistic alternative to a renewed war. Deputies, uncertain as to whether their primary obligation was to their own conscience, or their constituents, were harangued by the commercial interests that their failure to ratify the Treaty would lead to economic suicide and were subject to intense pressure from the Hierarchy. The pressure on the TDs to ratify the Treaty was almost overwhelming as virtually all the varied groups and organizations that functioned in early 20th century Irish society, met especially to discuss the Treaty and almost invariably supported it. Under the banner headline, "Voice of the Country. The Demand for Acceptance of Anglo-Irish Treaty", the Catholic Herald (7th. January, 1922) listed the score cards: out of one hundred and twenty major local government bodies only four opposed the Treaty. All the commercial organizations and Farmers Associations that discussed the Treaty favoured it, but only six trade union branches (less than one per cent of all the branches in Southern Ireland) came out publicly in favour of the Treaty. It is perhaps an indication of how far the revolutionary elite can in the course of a struggle distance themselves from the masses, from whom they claim their

1 Bishop Browne (Cloyne) stated the "Dail must ratify the Treaty" and Bishop Fogarty (Kilhaloe) declared its failure to do so would be an "Act of national madness" Catholic Herald, 31 Dec., 1921, while Bishop MacRory, whose Down and Connor Diocese was now politically cut off from the South of Ireland, argued that the alternative to the Treaty was "a swelling tide of emigration of young men all over the country", Times, 28 Dec., 1921.

2 Mitchell, op. cit., 146, and see William O'Brien, 'The Irish Free State. (The) Secret History of its Foundation' Ms 4210 (NLI).
mandate of action, that after the TDs' holiday in their constituencies, the debate should still have continued for another five days: and that right up to the last day of the discussion some contemporary political observers believed that the Treaty would be rejected. The Treaty was ratified by a sixty four to fifty seven vote but an indication of how reluctantly some of the Pro-Treaty TDs had voted came when the proposal to re-elect De Valera as President of the Irish Republic was narrowly defeated by sixty to fifty eight.

There were now three Governments functioning in Ireland, the Northern Government, the Dail Government and the Provisional Government of the Irish Free State. Sinn Fein was divided into two opposing factions. The Irish Republican Brotherhood which rather ironically had remained in existence after the formation of Dail Eireann in 1919 "to prevent the politicians from surrendering the Republic", debated the Treaty before the Dail's sessions. Their Supreme Council voted eleven to four in favour of the Treaty but members who were Dail TDs were given a free choice as to their vote on the ratification and the IRB organization as such was to remain neutral on the issue until the new Free State Constitution was drafted. It was the dominating presence

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1 A political correspondent even believed that it was only Cathal Brugha's attack on Michael Collins that swung several uncommitted TDs to vote for the Treaty, see Manchester Guardian, 9 Jan., 1922.

2 Collins to Dan Breen quoted in Calton Younger, op. cit., 216.

3 O'Broin, op. cit., 196.

4 The Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Treaty : A Statement (NLI) and also see J. O'Beirne Raneleagh, op. cit.
of Michael Collins as Chairman of the Supreme Council that secured the Treaty's acceptance but Collins still owed his membership of the Council to the fact that he had originally been elected to represent Southern England and there were unsuccessful moves by the London IRB to have Sam Maguire substituted for Collins as their representative.¹

The IRB controlled the IRA GHQ Staff and so the IRA Headquarters supported the Treaty on a nine to four basis but many of the senior field officers opposed the Treaty: eight of the fourteen Divisions and three of the five Independent Brigades², incorporating a very large majority of volunteers, declared against the Treaty. During the Dail debate Seamus Robinson, a former Glasgow IRA volunteer, and now a senior field commander speaking on behalf of these units, ominously referred to "certain terrible action that will be necessary if the Treaty is forced on us".³ Robinson argued against those IRA leaders who claimed they could not continue the war against England and suggested that they could bring the war into England: "one thousand effective shots and one thousand effective fires in Britain would ruin England",⁴ he claimed. The Sinn Fein factions might engage in theological disputes over which of the two 'Governments' had the right to use specific titles and the tricolour flag but it was the majority of the IRA's request for an Army Convention to repudiate all allegiance to political

¹ See report of Sean McGrath, O'Brien MS 8427.
³ Dail Debates, op. cit., 290.
⁴ Ibid., 290-1.
institutions that showed where the real power in Ireland lay and the likely course of future developments, irrespective of how the electorate voted on the Treaty issue.

The Scottish Sinn Fein Executive voted against the Treaty even before the Dail debate was concluded. (At the other end of the political spectrum the Glasgow Orange Order decided to break its historical link with the Conservative Party in protest against the creation of the Irish Free State). The Sinn Fein organization in England did not formally discuss the Treaty until February but the Special Branch expected that most of the members would oppose the Treaty while estimating that eighty five per cent of the Irish in Scotland would however support the Treaty. It did not, at this point of time, indicate the degree of support for the Treaty in the Irish community in England and Wales. The individual branches of the Irish Self Determination League who decided on the Treaty, before the Central Executive Council had discussed the Dail decision, tended to favour the Treaty, but with different degrees of enthusiasm.

Gosforth "hailed with joy the ratification of the Treaty" but to Wallasey the Treaty was "only a temporary agreement, to be developed and expanded". Newport arranged a

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1 ROR 136, 22 Dec., 1921. CP 3659. CAB 24/131.
2 Times, 12 Jan., 1922.
3 Irish Exile, Feb., 1922.
4 ROR 139, 19 Jan., 1922. CP 3639. CAB 24/132.
5 ROR 138, 12 Jan., 1922. CP 3609. CAB 24/132.
6 Catholic Herald, 14 Jan., 1922.
7 Ibid.
"celebration luncheon". Neath had "Masses offered in thanksgiving" but Tonypandy believed that the Treaty was only the "foundation stone of Ireland's ultimate independence".

The January 1922 issue of the Irish Exile though it contained the details of the Dail vote on the Treaty, went to press before the leadership of the League could discuss the matter, so it was not until the February issue that the membership learned officially of the Central Executive Committee's response to the Treaty. Their statement was cautious in content and ambiguous in tone, declaring that the Central Executive Council: "while regretting that Dail Eireann has felt itself compelled to agree to a settlement which is less that the complete claim of Ireland to absolute independence, pledges support to the Government of the Irish Free State if and when established". It subsequently emerged that this resolution was a compromise drawn up to satisfy Art O'Brien who had proposed that the League should openly repudiate the Treaty and P.J. Kelly, the President, who had sought a favourable recognition of the Treaty's merits. However the extent to which the Central Executive Council divided on the issue is impossible to ascertain owing to the lack

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1 Catholic Herald, 28 Jan., 1922.
2 Ibid., 7 Jan., 1922.
3 Ibid., 14 Jan., 1922.
4 See letter from P.J. Kelly to the Catholic Herald, 18 March, 1922.
of detailed voting records\(^1\) and the volatility of some members who changed their opinions later on.\(^2\) The Catholic Herald, which believed the Treaty had produced a new situation whereby there was no further need for Irish political organizations in Britain,\(^3\) violently denounced the "Junta of Irresponsibles" and their "insolent dictation and impertinent criticism on a matter of which the Irish people and Dail Eireann are the sole judge".\(^4\)

The Catholic Herald was rather premature in its implied criticism that the League leadership was trying to dictate to the Irish people how they should vote in the forthcoming elections, for the anti-Treatyites were confident that given a sufficient period of delay the Irish people after the evacuation of British troops would repudiate the Treaty in the forthcoming elections. The Irish Exile stated that "it would be invidious for this League to tell the Irish people how they should vote"\(^5\) but argued that the League

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1 Gaughan, Stack, op. cit., 186, claims that the Central Executive Council was practically unanimous for acceptance of the Treaty but my impression of the attendance at the meeting, as reported in the Irish Exile (Feb. 1922) was that on the basis of their record to date and afterwards that the voting was much closer than Gaughan suggests.

2 For example — Sean McGrath as a member of the IRB and a close personal friend of Collins originally supported the Treaty, see ROR 138, 12 Jan. 1922, CP 3609. CAB 24/132 but later changed his view on this issue; source — personal interview with his widow.

3 "Irish political organizations outside Ireland have had their roots and justification in Ireland's political enslavement, that is over" Catholic Herald, 24 Dec., 1921.

4 Catholic Herald, 28 Jan., 1922.

5 Irish Exile, Feb., 1922.
could play a constructive role in the reconstruction of the shattered Irish economic fabric in many areas and for this purpose the branches were recommended to undertake an 'occupational census' of their membership to establish the extent of the skilled labour pool the League could offer to the new Irish Government.\(^1\) The Central Executive Council called for an intensive recruitment policy by the branches. New branches were established in Northfleet, Whitwick and perhaps the most interesting branch of all, Oxford, whose diverse membership included the only Labour Party Councillor in that city, the Earl of Longford and the Rev. Cox, an Anglican vicar who was described as an ardent Sinn Feiner.\(^2\) The Halifax Branch with over five hundred members recorded that "a continuous stream of new members is ever flowing"\(^3\) and the Ashtown in Makersfield, Erdington, Haslingden, Mid-Durham,\(^4\) and Stepney\(^5\) Branches all reported substantial increases in their membership.

One of the main reasons why the anti and pro-Treatyites in the leadership of the Irish Self Determination League were still able to maintain such a relatively good working relationship was the British Government's policy on the release of prisoners. All those people, including the League members who had been interned in Ireland were released

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1. *Irish Exile*, Jan., 1922.
2. Ibid., Dec. 1921.
3. Ibid., Feb. 1922.
4. Ibid., Jan. 1922.
5. Ibid., Dec. 1921.
immediately the Treaty was signed but problems arose over the release of the Irish political prisoners in Britain. There were several categories of Irish prisoners in Britain, the first and largest consisted of those who had been arrested in Ireland and transferred to prisons in Britain to serve their sentences and these were released soon after the Dail ratified the Treaty. The League made a grant of five hundred pounds available from its central funds to aid local branches in arranging receptions for these men upon their release and large crowds greeted them. Problems, however, arose over the Irish people arrested and convicted for offenses committed in Britain itself and following the release of the prisoners transferred from Ireland the Irish Office firmly declared "the exclusion of Irishmen convicted and sentenced in England is final and definite". The British Government were resolutely determined that there should be no Amnesty for those who had waged war within Britain itself. Leaders of the League, like Thomas Faughan who had supported the Treaty, now declared that they would reverse their opinions and recommended the Dail and Provisional Governments to cease all work on implementing the provisions of the Treaty until there was a full Amnesty

1 "There were about four hundred male prisoners in Local Prisons and three hundred in Convict Prisons who had been transferred from Ireland" - Commissioners of Prisons Report, 1921, Cmd. 1761 (1922), 4.


3 Catholic Herald, 21 Jan. 1922.
for all the Irish, political, prisoners in Britain.\footnote{See the correspondence between League leaders, branches and the Irish Government in DE 2/339, S1795, S659, and S1878.}

Branches organized local meetings on the issue\footnote{Irish Exile, Feb. 1922.} and held a large meeting in Trafalgar Square. The Catholic Herald, which since the Treaty had ceased its previous policy of confining its criticism of the Irish Self Determination League to a few specific leaders, in favour of an all out virulent offensive against the League itself, stridently declared that in all its forty years experience of Irish organizations in Britain "none of them has ever been under such unsound, unhealthy auspices and so corruptly and scandalously mishandled as the Irish Self Determination League... it has done little good and a lot of harm".\footnote{Catholic Herald, 11 February, 1922.}

The Catholic Herald ridiculed the League's statement that the prisoners were "part and parcel of the Irish Army operating here",\footnote{Ibid., 21 Jan., 1922.} tartly replying that if that was so they would have been shot for treason. However, the Catholic Herald, recognizing the degree of support among the Irish community for the release of these prisoners declared that it supported the demand purely on humanitarian grounds.\footnote{Ibid., 4 Feb., 1922.}

It firmly believed that the matter should be left to the Provisional Government to negotiate and when the prisoners were released carried the headline: "Negotiations Succeed, Provisional Government's Triumph".\footnote{Ibid., 18 Feb., 1922.} The Prisoners' release\footnote{Times, 13 Feb., 1922.} was only achieved
after the Provisional Government threatened to withdraw their General Amnesty for all illegal actions committed by the British forces in Ireland during the recent conflict.¹ It is an indication of how reluctantly the British Cabinet released these prisoners that it required almost two weeks of discussions by the Ministers before a compromise was formulated: those convicted of actions before the Truce (i.e. July 11th., 1921) were to be amnestied and the Home Office was to review, individually, the cases of those convicted of actions after the Truce.² Feelings in the Cabinet ran so high on the issue of IRA activity in Britain that Ministers were evidently prepared to incur the hostility of the Provisional Government, whose Minister for Agriculture (Patrick Hogan) had a brother still in prison. Another three men were sentenced for Post-Truce arms purchases during February and the League continued to campaign for a total amnesty irrespective of conviction dates.

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¹ Calton Younger, op. cit., 218.
Chapter 17
The Paris Congress of the World Conference of the Irish Race

During the Prisoners controversy the Irish Self Determination League was left virtually leaderless at both national and regional level when twenty four officers went to Paris for a week to represent England and Wales at the Irish Race Congress which the League had played a prominent part in organizing. In February 1921 the Irish Republican Association of South Africa passed a resolution calling for the convening of a World Conference of the Irish Race for the purpose of "stopping British excesses in Ireland, to secure the International Recognition of the Irish Republic, to aid the development of the Irish export trade and establish a Permanent Secretariat in Geneva or the Hague". South Africa, being somewhat geographically isolated, the Association requested the Irish Self Determination League in general and Art O'Brien in particular to organize the proposed congress. Art O'Brien informed De Valera who had earlier (February 1920) received a proposal from the Australian Self Determination for Ireland League that Self Determination Leagues should be organized with a central Secretariat in London. De Valera now saw the opportunity of creating a centrally controlled World Self Determination for Ireland League as a federal structure with national League

1 The Proceedings of the Irish Race Congress - Fine Ghaedeal (Dublin 1922) and hereafter cited as Congress Proceedings.
2 Irish Exile, July, 1921.
3 Art O'Brien Report on World Congress to Dr. MacCartan (O'Brien Ms 8456) hereafter cited as MacCartan.
membership. He requested Catherine Hughes (who had earlier helped to organize the Irish communities in Canada, New Zealand, Australia and Newfoundland) to undertake the preliminary organization of the proposed Congress but afterwards the Dail Department of Foreign Affairs took responsibility for the organization and so their London representative, Art O'Brien, was deeply involved in the organization of the Congress.

The Irish Race Congress opened in Paris on the 21st. January 1922: the third anniversary of the first session of Dail Eireann and of the Declaration of Irish Independence. As the political situation in Ireland had changed substantially since the Congress was first proposed an effort was made to give it a cultural rather than a political image, with exhibitions of Irish art, musical recitals organised that week in Paris by the leading Irish artists. In keeping with the cultural image, the organizers suggested that the Congress was a modern revival of the ancient Hill of Tara Assemblies (held one thousand years previously) and in accordance with this historical image and in deference to the contributions made to European countries by the earlier generations of Irish exiles the Congress was officially opened by its Honorary President, The O'Donnell, Duke of Tetua

1 Catherine Hughes, Report of World Conference (O'Brien Ms 8456) and also see DE 1/3 for relevant correspondence.

(a descendant of the Wild Geese)\textsuperscript{1} who spoke in French. Dail Eireann was represented by a 'non-political'\textsuperscript{2} delegation of ten (five pro and five anti-Treatyites) but as it was only two weeks since that crucial vote on the Treaty, the category of non-political could not have been expected to be water tight. De Valera reluctant to recognize the new Provisional Government by applying for a passport obtained one through the devious channels of a Republican network in London, aided by communist sympathizers.\textsuperscript{3}

The Treaty cast a long dark shadow over the Paris Congress: the original intention to select delegates on a basis proportional to the Irish population in their countries was frustrated when only a minority of United States delegates\textsuperscript{4} arrived. The Friends of Ireland and the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic were deeply divided on the Treaty issue, and none of the Canadian Self...

\textsuperscript{1} The 'Wild Geese' were Irishmen who having been defeated in the wars with England, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, left Ireland to enlist in the armies of France and Spain to fight against the English in the continental wars.

\textsuperscript{2} The new Provisional Government requested De Valera to join the Irish Delegation on a "non-party political basis", see DE 1/4.

\textsuperscript{3} Greaves, op. cit., 288.

\textsuperscript{4} There were conflicting reports concerning the actual attendance from the United States. The official records show that six out of the sixty invited actually attended, see Congress Proceedings (O'Brien Ms 8456); Hughes claimed that fifty four American delegates were invited but only five attended, see Hughes (O'Brien Ms 8456) while An Poblacht 28 February, 1922, stated that twenty one members of the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic attended in a semi-official capacity.
Determination League members attended believing that the Congress would be so preoccupied and split on the Treaty issue that no useful business could be transacted. The twenty four Irish Self Determination League delegates, representing England and Wales, together with the six Sinn Fein members representing Scotland, constituted the largest grouping though they were by no means united on policy issues. The Scottish delegates fought with the League members over representation and one of the most bitter disputes of the Congress was the interminable series of arguments between Art O'Brien and P.J. Kelly. After the ten delegates representing Dail Eireann, the Australians had the next largest delegation and probably the next most prestigious as their seven man delegation was led by P.J. Dillion, the official Queensland Government Representative in London, and Rev. Dr. O'Reilly, the President of Sydney University College. The remaining delegates of the eighty odd attendance came mostly from South America, Europe, South Africa, New

1 See Art O'Brien, Report on Paris Congress and Fine Ghaedheal to the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club, 17 July, 1922 (O'Brien, Ms 8456) hereafter cited as O'Brien 17 July, 1922. It is however quite possible that the Canadians were annoyed that Dail Eireann had prevented the holding of a proposed 'Montreal World Convention', see DE 1/3.


3 There were seven from Argentina, three from Brazil and one each from Mexico and Chile.

4 Three each from Spain and Italy and two from France.

5 Brian Farrington of the South African Irish Republican Association.
Zealand and Newfoundland. The Congress was nowhere near as representative as originally envisaged and some of those attending did not represent any sizeable Irish communities. This was particularly the case with the French, Spanish, and Italian delegations, who were either Dail Eireann Envoys or Consuls to these countries, token representatives of the Wild Geese to illustrate the old historical exile connection, or the Rectors of the Irish Colleges (Seminaries established during the prohibition of the Catholic Church in Ireland during the Penal Laws period) of Salamanca, Rome and Paris. No one was ever quite sure how a representative of the Irish community in Java, consisting of only seven people, had been invited.

The Congress commenced its discussion sessions by passing a resolution condemning "the vindictiveness of the British Government in refusing an Amnesty" to the Irish prisoners convicted in Britain. It was probably the only unanimous resolution of the whole proceedings. After lengthy and sometimes heated discussion the Congress decided to set up a world wide Fine Ghaedeal (literally 'Family of Ireland') to unite the Irish organizations throughout the world in a common umbrella organization. It was envisaged by the congress that Fine Ghaedeal would aid the Irish exile communities by establishing Chairs of Irish Studies in the

1 Three delegates.

2 One delegate representing the Self Determination League in that state.

3 Congress Proceedings, 175.

4 Catholic Herald, 28 Jan., 1922.
universities of countries with major Irish communities and provide bursaries for the children of exiles to study in Ireland. It was also proposed to compile a world wide Who's Who of Irish exiles and financially aid the reconstruction of the Irish economy directly by donations and indirectly through the promotion of Irish exports. Last but not least was the proposal that Fine Ghaedheal would actively foster a 'back to Ireland' movement, comparable to the 'Aliyiah' or 'Return to Palestine' of the Zionists. Although the proceedings report does not contain any direct references to the Zionist Congress there was no doubt an unspoken objective of organizing the Irish abroad in a manner similar to the Jewish Diaspora. Indeed the Irish/Zionist comparison is very apt for had not Lloyd George referred to the "Irish as the Jews of the World"1 and the factional disputes of the Paris Congress were reminiscent of the abortive attempt, also in Paris, to form a world wide Jewish organization in 18942, while the unrepresentative character of some of the Irish delegates echoed the composition of many of the Jewish delegations at the early Zionist Congresses.3

The Congress decided that Fine Ghaedheal should be a

1 T. Jones, op. cit., 145.


3 At the First and Second Zionist Congresses in 1897 and 1898, participation was restricted to organizations with a membership of at least a hundred so some of the smaller French Jewish organizations 'represented' groups in Poland that they had never met! See Nelly Wilson Bernard Lazare: 'Anti-Semitism and the Problem of Jewish Identity in Late 19th. Century France (Cambridge, 1978), 239-41.
federally structured organization with a Central Council of seven members and a representative from each national section. De Valera and Eoin MacNeill, the Provisional Government Minister for Education, were elected President and Vice President respectively and all the others were elected without a contest except Art O'Brien, who had to defeat P.J. Kelly for the last seat on the Council. Fine Gheadeal never achieved any of its lofty objectives. The organization was quickly repudiated by a number of the delegates who believed it had a definite anti-Treaty orientation.

A Dail Eireann inquiry was subsequently established to review the proceedings, and only a few Council meetings were held in Dublin, while the proposed Tailteann Games (Olympics of the Irish exiles to be held in Dublin) were cancelled because of the Civil War which prevented Council members from meeting. And so the organization faded into history, but

1 One of these was H. Hutchinson the Scottish Sinn Fein leader.

2 See letter from the Australian, Argentinian, New Zealand and South African delegates to De Valera (30 Jan., 1922) informing him that they were boycotting Fine Gheadeal until the organization replaced Robert Brennan, a leading anti-Treatyite, as its paid secretary. (O'Brien Ms 8456) and also see ROR 142, 9 Feb., 1922. CP 3725, CAB 24/133.

3 See Eoin MacNeill Report on the World Conference to Dail Eireann, 3 Feb., 1922 (O'Brien Ms 8456) and DE 2/206, 2/437, 2/439 for relevant correspondence. Also see MacCartan, op. cit..

4 See for example a report of a meeting in An Poblacht, 22 March, 1922.

5 Art O'Brien was arrested in Dublin when he crossed over to attend a Council meeting. See the Times, 6 July, 1922.
not into the history books;\textsuperscript{1} for the first and last attempt to organize the Irish communities scattered throughout the world ended in failure, with nothing substantial left to indicate it had ever occurred.

The Irish Self Determination League, which had spent considerable time and effort in organizing the Congress that had turned into such a "hot bed of intrigue\textsuperscript{2} gained little from its participation in Paris. P. McManus an Executive Council member resigned from the League in protest against the expenditure on expenses in Paris, of over two hundred and fifty pounds by the Standing Committee delegates: an episode gleeefully recorded by the \textit{Catholic Herald} which determinedly catalogued all the 'wrong doings' of the League and though it gave considerable space to the coverage of the Paris Congress it did not think much for the concept of Fine Gheadheal at all.\textsuperscript{3} The deep rooted nature of the personal antagonism between the President, P.J. Kelly, and the Vice President, Art O'Brien, of the League, had been very publicly exposed and Art O'Brien was singled out by some delegates as the person who had effectively 'wrecked' the Congress by insisting on introducing the issue of the Treaty

\textsuperscript{1} With the exception of Robert Brennan's (a participant) brief details), op. cit., 335, and R. Davis Tasmanian, op. cit., who mostly concentrates on the Australian aspect, I believe that my article on the Paris Congress in the \textit{Irish Post},\textsuperscript{13} F e b , 1982 is the only detailed account of the proceedings, other than contemporary newspapers, ever published.

\textsuperscript{2} Robert Brennan, ibid.

\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Catholic Herald}, 11 March, 1922.
into the discussions.\textsuperscript{1} The Provisional Government Ministers who were present in Paris noted that while De Valera had generally conducted himself in a statemanslike "non-party political" manner, Art O'Brien had effectively spearheaded the attack on the Treaty and as the Provisional Government (under another hat) were now also the Dail Eireann Government, O'Brien's days as the Dail Eireann Envoy in London were clearly numbered.\textsuperscript{2}

\textsuperscript{1} See letter from Brian Farrington (South Africa) to De Valera (31 January, 1922), O'Brien Ms 8456.

\textsuperscript{2} MacNeill wrote from Paris, 3 February, 1922, to his Government colleagues recommending that Sean T. O'Kelly (the Irish Representative in Paris) and Art O'Brien "be replaced as Irish Representatives as they were doing everything in their power to work against the Government" DE 1/4.
Chapter 18

The Diaspora Irish: Citizens or Exiles?

The Paris Congress provides a very valuable focal point to observe the position of the Irish in Britain vis a vis that of the Irish Diaspora in general and also to consider the potentially troublesome issue of the nature of the relationship between exile and homeland political movements: who controls who?

Art O'Brien's attempts to circumvent the veto of the official 'non party' Dail delegation, on any discussion of the Treaty at Paris, by seeking to confine the proposed debate to the overseas delegates was opposed not only by the Pro-Treaty overseas delegates but significantly by the Lord Mayor of Cork who though he was personally strongly opposed to the Treaty, roundly condemned this attempted exile intervention into Irish domestic politics. "The people in Ireland", he said, "may decide to accept a Free State, they may not. Whether they do or not is the concern of the people of Ireland". Redmond twenty-one years previously had foreseen this problem of exile intervention when he bluntly warned the New York Irish that:

"when Ireland is united she is entitled to decide for herself what is best in her interests. No Irishman in America living 3000 miles away from the homeland ought to think he has a right to dictate to Ireland."

1 Congress Proceedings, op. cit. 81.
2 Ibid 102.
This problem of external intervention also plagued the world Zionist movement when following the emergence of a strong Jewish presence in Palestine, the Yishuv (Jewish leadership in Palestine) firmly resisted external Zionist attempts to control their colony. Jabotinsky as a result of this dispute formed a rival Federation of Revised Zionists.¹

In both cases the internal leadership's desire to weaken the influence of the external groups was considerably impeded by their dependence on external financing. For much of its existence the Irish Parliamentary Party was largely dependent on American funds until 1914 when Redmond's support for the British war effort so alienated his traditional backers that money had to be sent from Ireland to maintain the UIL offices in the United States.² Irish Republicanism was even more dependent on American funds and though Clan na Gael was technically subordinate to the Irish Republican Brotherhood, in practice the American offspring often effectively controlled its Irish parent.³ De Valera soon found on his visit to the United States that even though the elected Dail had declared an Irish Republic, with himself as its President many leading Irish-Americans wanted to maintain their old dominance and so severe problems

¹ See Michael Cohen op. cit. 125-6 and Ben-Sasson, op. cit 1005-9.


³ See William D'Arcy the Fenian Movement in the United States (Washington, 1947) and Henri Le Caron Twenty-five Years in the Secret Service (1892), Caron was a British agent working in the Clan na Gael leadership.
resulted. De Valera had travelled to the United States to raise funds for the Republican loan there in the same way as Art O'Brien was fund raising in Britain. But the Friends of Irish Freedom, the Clan na Gael sponsored organization, argued that collecting for a Republican loan violated American law and so De Valera was forced to establish the American Commission on Irish Independence which issued certificates, exchangeable for bonds only after the Irish Republic had won international recognition. Five and a half million dollars were raised in this manner but the episode had been a powerful reminder to De Valera that the Irish Americans were despite their title, Americans first and Irish second.

Some of the old guard of the Irish Republican movement in the United States deeply resented De Valera's declared intention not to play second fiddle to them but their opposition to his policies was much more deeply rooted than in a mere personality clash. Judge Cohalan, the Clan na Gael and Friends of Irish Freedom leader, sharply rebuked De

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2 See O'Brien MS 8427, for his fund raising efforts.

Valera for his policy of trying to mobilize Irish Americans to pressurize their country's leaders to recognize the Irish Republic. "Do you really think for a moment that American public opinion will permit any citizen of another country to interfere as you suggest, in American affairs?"\(^1\) he asked De Valera. Cohalan's question aptly illustrates the particularistic nature of Irish nationalism in the United States, a nationalism that was largely the product of the American experience. Brown argues that Irish nationalism in America was an 'internalised' product stemming from their initially low socio-economic position in a society dominated by the 'Wasps'; identified by Irish immigrants as synonymous with the English landlord oppressor they had known in Ireland.\(^1\) Foner also argues from this 'internalised' perspective, though he identifies the radicalizing experience of the emigrant, in a harsh laisse faire industrial society, as the most important component in the emergence of Irish nationalism in America.\(^3\) Hechter's 'internal colonialism' model could also be applied in a modified manner to analyze the relationship between the Irish Catholic emigrant and Wasp 19th century America.

Between 1845 and 1891 over three million Irish emigrants entered the United States, many of them blaming British colonial rule in Ireland for their enforced emigration. They came to a United States where there was still a strong

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1 Dennis Gywnn De Valera (1933) 96.
2 T. Brown op. cit.
3 Eric Foner op. cit.
popular anti-British sentiment stemming from the Independence and 1812 Wars. In the United States many Irish Americans believed that the political, economic and social power of the Wasp establishment could not be conquered until British rule in Ireland had been defeated. So many Irish Americans endeavoured, whenever possible, to develop and deepen the underlying political and economic conflicts between the United States and Britain. Largely through their efforts three of the four Anglo-American Arbitration Treaties negotiated between 1897 and 1911 failed to pass through the Congress or the Senate.\(^1\) In the American 'Melting Pot' the Irish became a powerful interest group particularly influential in local government.\(^2\) Many an aspiring candidate for office found it necessary to support the anti-British position pursued by Irish American organisations. But the political power of the Irish Americans was dependent on their fundamental loyalty to the United States, as expressed in its most basic form by taking out citizenship. Even Thomas Clarke the IRB leader found it necessary to take out his American citizenship papers though he never intended to stay there permanently.\(^3\)

Irish nationalism in the United States pursued a strategy of linking the Irish struggle for freedom with the growth

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1 A. Ward Ireland op. cit. 257.

2 See Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan Beyond the Melting Pot op. cit.

3 See Louis Le Roux Tom Clarke and the Irish Freedom Movement (Dublin, 1936) 55.
of American political and economic power that seemed almost inevitably to, sooner or later, bring the United States into conflict with Britain. This strategy was fiercely opposed by the powerful Anglophile lobby and the bitterly anti-Catholic fundamentalist Protestants.\(^1\) The determination of the Irish nationalists in America to do nothing that might be interpreted by their opponents as indicating a primary allegiance to another country led to the use of the term Irish Race Conference, with its ethnic rather than political connotations, to describe their periodical national assemblies.\(^2\) The opposing tidal currents of pro and anti-British sentiment ebbed and flowed through American history but did not seriously threaten the potentially difficult position of Irish nationalists in the 20th century until the First World War. Their reaction to this event clearly illustrates the particularistic nature of Irish American nationalism and their constant dilemma that aiding Ireland might in certain circumstances be interpreted as an unAmerican activity.

Realising that there was no hope of the United States entering the War on the German side and understanding only too well the power of the Anglophile lobby that sought to align America militarily with Britain the Irish American nationalists were determined that the United States should remain neutral in the conflict that was ravaging Europe. The Irish

\(^1\) See Ray Billington the Protestant Crusade (New York, 1938).

\(^2\) C.C. O'Brien op. cit. 48-9.
American campaign to keep the United States neutral\(^1\) was not without powerful allies, notably in the German community. The 11 million German/Austrian born population was by far the largest single ethnic bloc in the United States and with 3 million of them organized—with the active encouragement of the German dominated brewing industry—\(^2\) into the German-American National Alliance, they constituted one of the most potent political interest groups in the country. The earlier noted German-Irish hostility that stemmed from the disproportionate Irish influence in the Catholic Hierarchy had substantially diminished by 1914. A new relationship had emerged during the Boer War based on a common hostility towards the British and admiration for the Boers.\(^3\) In 1907 the Ancient Order of Hibernians, one of the most influential of the Irish American organizations, signed a formal pact with the German-American National Alliance to oppose British influence in the United States.\(^4\) At the local level Irish and German organizations jointly celebrated their National Days; St. Patrick's Day and Bismarck's birthday and German-Irish leagues emerged in many areas.\(^5\)


\(^{2}\) The Alliance was regarded as a powerful anti-prohibition lobby by the brewers, see L.J. Rippley *The German-Americans* (Boston, 1976) 181.

\(^{3}\) A. Ward, *Ireland* op. cit. 83.


\(^{5}\) Rippley op. cit. 183.
The strength of the Irish-German Neutrality lobby\(^1\) backed by anti-Czarist Jews\(^2\) was too strong to be ignored and so President Wilson launched an onslaught against 'hyphenism'. Wilson thundered "Some Americans need hyphens in their names because only part of them has come over, but when the whole man has come over, heart and thought and all, the hyphen drops of its own weight out of his name".\(^3\) Until the War many had regarded hyphenism as a bridge between the Old World and the New, a means of softening the trauma of emigration but now Wilson sought to link hyphenism with unAmericanism. A wave of patriotic fervour swept the country in the wake of Wilson's speech. Americanization was encouraged with Loyalty Days and "I am an American Days".\(^4\) The British Ambassador noted with approval the growth of anti-Irish feeling in the United States\(^5\) but it was the Germans, previously regarded as one of the most popular ethnic groups in the United States,\(^6\) who bore the full brunt of public hostility following the entry of America into the War.

Many German Americans had in the first year of the war put their money where their sympathies lay and bought 10 million

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1 See Dean Esslinger 'American-German and Irish Attitudes Toward Neutrality 1914-1917' Catholic Historical Review 53 (1967) 194-216.

2 See Louis Gerson The Hyphenate in Recent American Politics and Diplomacy (Lawrence, 1964) 83.

3 Gerson op. cit. 19.

4 Ibid. 112.

5 See CAB 37/148/15

6 A. Ward Ireland op. cit. 100.
dollars worth of German war bonds.® Now many hastened to buy Liberty Bonds® in response to a masterly psychological warfare poster campaign, "Are you 100% American? Prove it! Buy US Government Bonds".® Many German-Americans Alliance branches dissolved themselves, some even transformed themselves into American Citizenship Associations; an 'Americanization' process no doubt hastened by the emergence of a semi official American Protective League whose 200,000 members investigated the loyalties of thousands of German and Irish Americans.® In what Higham describes as "the most pervasive nativism that America has ever known", no aspect of German American life was left untouched. Schools dropped the German language from their curriculum in 14 states,® libraries removed German books from their shelves and orchestras ceased to play Bach and Beethoven.® With town names like Berlin Iowa becoming Lincoln, many followed the example of the English Monarchy and anglicized their

1 See Frederick Luebke Bonds of Loyalty: German Americans and World War I (Illinois, 1974) 94.
2 Ripley op. cit. 187.
3 Words on poster, reproduced in George Theofiles American Posters of World War I (New York, 1975) 115.
4 Ripley op. cit. 190.
5 Ibid, 185.
7 Ibid, 203-208.
8 See Robert Billigmer Americans from Germany (Belmont, California, 1974) 144-5.
German family names.\(^1\) Even American culinary did not escape the tidal wave of German-phobia; that most archetypical of American dishes, the hamburger, now appeared on menus as Salisbury steak\(^2\) and sauerkraut became liberty cabbage.\(^3\) According to Billigmer, German-America lost much of its dynamism and was never the same after the tidal wave of German-phobia had swept over it.\(^4\)

With their German allies besieged on all sides most Irish Americans lost no time in proclaiming their support for the American war effort. Judge Cohalan, the leader of the Friends of Irish Freedom who had spearheaded the Neutrality campaign, now declared that he believed "there would not be in any quarter of the country a single man of Irish blood who would not think of America first".\(^5\) The Irish Fellowship Club, Chicago's largest Irish organization, condemned anything that might weaken the Allied cause as being anti-American.\(^6\) The Ancient Order of Hibernians, denouncing opposition to the War as "treason",\(^7\) postponed their Convention and suspended the publication of their paper, the *Hibernia*.\(^8\)

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1 Billigmer, op. cit., 145.
2 Rippley op. cit. 186
3 Billigmer op. cit. 144.
4 Ibid. 148.
5 D. Greaves Mellowes op. cit. 125.
6 *Times* 20 Dec., 1917.
7 A. Ward *Ireland* op. cit. 141.
while the Gaelic American which opposed the War lost much of its circulation.\(^1\) The new anti-war left wing orientated Irish Progressive League, that emerged in a bid to fill the vacuum left by the departure from the active scene of the established Irish organizations, encountered much opposition from both the Irish community and state forces.\(^2\)

The planned 1917 Irish Race Convention never took place but having established their support for the American war effort the Friends of Irish Freedom now began to link Irish independence with American war aims\(^3\), though the opposition to conscription in Ireland generated considerable anti-Catholic hostility.\(^4\) With the ending of the War the Irish American nationalists sought, along with many other ethnic groupings, to persuade Wilson to raise their national claims at the Versailles Conference and when Wilson proved reluctant to press for such a fundamental alteration of the European geopolitical system, he incurred the enmity of dissatisfied Irish, German, Polish, Italian and Jewish interests in the United States. These ethnic groups aligned themselves with Republican isolationists, traditional Anglophobes and dissident Democrats to oppose the ratification of the "Covenant of the League of Nations, drawn up as part of the Versailles Settlement."\(^5\) The Friends of Irish Freedom denounced the

1 Ward, op. cit., 141.
2 See the Golden Papers, Ms17668(NLI).
3 Ward, op. cit., 141-3.
4 Carroll, op. cit., 117.
5 For a concise but very informative account of the opposition to the League see Gerson, op. cit., 100-8.
League as "Britain's League" claiming it not only effect-
vively legitimized British rule in Ireland for ever but by
ignoring the issue of "freedom of the seas" and the Monroe
Doctrine it opposed fundamental American interests. In
their fight against the League Treaty\(^1\) the FOIF spent, in-
side the United States, much of the million dollars it had
raised in 1919 as its Irish Victory Fund.\(^2\)

Not only did the Dail leadership object to such a huge exp-
enditure, at a time when the Irish Republic badly needed
the money, but the very purpose of the expenditure was con-
trary to Dail wishes. For Dail Eireann was not opposed
in principle to the concept of the League of Nations and
indeed actually welcomed the idea that the League would
impose a moral dimension on the world political system in
which might would not be right.\(^3\) De Valera sought to pers-
uade Irish Americans not to oppose the League as such but
instead to seek modifications which would aid the Irish
cause. He was however bluntly told by one leader that the
FOIF's task was "to save America from England and all those
whom she could influence".\(^4\) Dail Envoy McCartan remarked
of this type of attitude, "God save Ireland from her friends".\(^5\)

Relations between De Valera and the FOIF leadership continued

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1 See K.R. Maxwell 'Irish Americans and the Fight for
Treaty Ratification', Public Opinion Quarterly 31(1967/8)
620-41, and John B. Duff, 'The Versailles Treaty and
the Irish Americans', The Journal of American History
LV(1968) 598-612.


3 See Dail Eireann Debates (1919) 72-76.

4 William Fitzgerald, The Voice of Ireland (1924) 238.

5 A. Ward, Ireland, op. cit., 215.
to deteriorate, coming to a head when the Irish President suggested to a reporter that Ireland, to assuage British fears, would be prepared to accept a British version of the Monroe Doctrine and enter into a mutual defence arrangement.\(^1\) To Cohalan this was more than just unacceptable and he vividly pointed to its implication that if an independent Ireland should become, "an ally in what I regard as the inevitable struggle for the freedom of the seas that must shortly come between America and England every loyal American will without hesitation, take a position unreservedly upon the side of America".\(^2\) Cohalan was reiterating the view of a Fenian leader, expressed almost 60 years previously\(^3\) but it was a view shared by many others and not just confined to Irish Americans, for Marxists also shared this perspective of an inevitable conflict between the two leading Capitalist powers.\(^4\) Both the British and American defence planners had prepared detailed contingency plans\(^5\) for such an eventuality and this threat played an important part in the British determination to maintain their possession of the Irish ports as part of the Anglo-Irish Treaty.

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\(^1\) Westminster Gazette 6 Feb., 1920.

\(^2\) Ward, op. cit., 219 and also see Daniel Cohalan The Freedom of the Seas (New York, 1919).

\(^3\) See J.L. Kiernan Ireland and America versus England (Detroit, 1864).

\(^4\) See John MacLean The Coming War with America (Glasgow 1919). Trotsky predicted an Anglo American War by 1924, see J.T. Murphy, New Horizons, op. cit., 173.

De Valera eventually responded to the FOIF's hostility by forming an American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic but the spectre of a possible Anglo Irish versus the United States conflict and its implications for Irish Americans could not be so easily exorcised. The dialectical relationship between exile and homeland political movements of necessity also impinges on the position of the exile political movement in its country of residence. The Polish World Exile Organization, Polonia, recognizing the potential conflict of interest, declared in its Constitution "that work for the Polish Nation cannot in any way cause the Poles living in foreign countries to have difficulties in regard to their surroundings and the States in which they are living." This issue of citizenship emerged at the Paris Congress, Rev. O'Reilly (Australia) opening the debate, observed, "I take it we must frankly and unequivocally accept the nationality of the country we are living in". He was supported by Brian Farrington (South Africa) who argued that the Irish in South Africa "owed individual political allegiance to the South African nation". But Art O'Brien put a very different view point:

"those delegates who happen to have the misfortune to reside in the same country as I reside in, will not take the same view with regard to the question


2 J. Zubricki, Adjustment of Polish Immigrants in Great Britain. London University MSc Thesis (1953).

3 Congress Proceedings, op. cit., 37.

4 Congress Proceedings, op. cit., 40.
of citizenship as Dr. O'Reilly or Mr Farrington. If I were in their place I think I would probably agree thoroughly". ¹

Sean Sheehan (Scotland) declared "We Irish in Scotland do not accept the nationality of the country in which we reside" but he too conceded "It is a perfectly fair and logical thing for the Irish in America to do that". ²

Immigrants can adopt three basic types of attitudes towards the political system of their new country of residence. They can give full hearted allegiance, expressed in the form of taking out citizenship and actively working within that political system for the good of their new country. Alternatively they can adopt a grudging, almost coerced, negative attitude towards their new state or even refuse to become its citizens, preferring to retain the citizenship of their country of origin. Such courses of action can endanger the position of the immigrant by generating demands to restrict their rights or even calls for their exclusion. The English Catholic publication the Tablet called for the disenfranchisement of the Irish in Britain, even though they were by birth British citizen/subjects, "surely Englishmen have a right to exclude from a decision upon English matters, the multitudes of Irishmen, who, though they live on English soil, belong to neither English party, who remain Irishmen though resident in England." ³ Irish Americans interested in Irish freedom always maintained that this cause was in the interests of the United States

¹ Congress Proceedings, 50.
² Ibid., 52.
³ Tablet 23 July, 1892.
whose citizenship they enthusiastically accepted. Yet as we have seen the Irish Americans incurred considerable public odium in their bid to keep their country out of the war. While the traumatic experience of the German Americans after the entry of the United States into the war graphically reveals how a war between the country of residence and the country of origin or 'Patria' can drastically change the position of the immigrant community.

Herzl's advocacy of a 'Jewish Nationality', that precluded full assimilation, aroused much opposition from the religious and lay leaders of European Jewry who realised the implications of the Zionist doctrine for the position of Jews in their countries of residence.¹ A concern still very apparent 60 years later in a Jewish Fellowship leaflet that observed,

"In many countries where the Jews are regarded as followers of a religion, the creation of a 'Jewish State' with its implications of a 'Jewish Nationality' might seriously prejudice the good relations which at present exist between Jews and their fellow citizens."²

The Board of Deputies of British Jews was fervently anti-Zionist until the Balfour Declaration when it cautiously began to reorientate its policy towards Zionism. Even though the British Government had appeared in the Balfour Declaration to approve of a Jewish Homeland in Palestine the Board's reaction produced a breakway League of the British Jews, formed to uphold the "status of British subjects professing the Jewish Religion" and to vigorously

¹ See Ben-Sasson, op. cit., 899.
² Bound in Volume, WP 15422 (British Library).
contest the "allegation that the Jews constitute a separate nationality". The establishment of a large Jewish immigrant colony and their subsequent demand for a Jewish State, not just a Homeland, was to cause the British Jews considerable problems as Palestine was a British Mandate and one they were very reluctant to surrender.

The supreme test of the degree of political assimilation and allegiance to the receiving country or the country of birth, in the case of the non first generation, is their response to a conflict situation between the country of birth and the country of residence or 'Patria'. Many of the Irish in Britain, as we have observed, voluntarily enlisted in the British Forces during the war; a much smaller number followed the example set in Ireland and refused to be conscripted. A group travelled over to Ireland to fight against the British Army in the 1916 Rising and subsequently a number of the Irish in Britain actively engaged in military operations in Britain itself during the War of Independence. A conflict supported by the Irish Self Determination League which recruited over 38,000 members.

Irish Americans never took up arms against their government nor were they ever asked to support such activity. Some Irish nationalist miners in Australia fought the forces of the British State at Eureka Stockade but this was essentially an economic protest and its political orientation was primarily Australian rather than Irish nationalist.

S. Cohen, op. cit.
Irish nationalists living in South Africa fought alongside the Boers but their primary motivation was the maintenance of Boer Independence rather than Irish freedom. Irish people in Britain on the other hand witnessed Fenian bombings in 1867, Clan na Gael bombings between 1883-86, an IRA campaign in Britain between 1920-21 and subsequently again in 1939-40 and from 1972 onwards. All of these activities inevitably generated considerable anti-Irish feeling in Britain. Only one other group in the Irish Diaspora ever went through a similar experience to the Irish in Britain - the Irish in Canada.

The American Civil War gave military experience to many Irish Americans and the Fenians recruited an Irish Army in the United States. Unable to transport their army to Ireland and reluctant to see it disintegrate through inactivity, the Fenians decided to strike a blow for Irish freedom and against Britain by liberating Canada. For several years in the 1860s the Canadian border was menaced by Fenian military units who on several occasions mounted sizeable incursions.¹ Stacey suggests that most Canadian Fenians were opposed to their American counterparts'...
invasion plans but following a successful series of border skirmishes, some of the Canadian Fenians began to openly carry arms and to forcibly prevent Protestant celebrations. With the threat of a Fenian invasion ever in mind the Canadian authorities were initially reluctant to take strong measures against Canadian Fenians for fear of retaliatory raids and so the Irish nationalists became a potent political force in Canada. But following the rout of a Fenian raid at Eccles Hill in 1870 the authorities took much tougher action. A wave of anti-Irish persecution then ensued, even Irish troops who had refused to join the Fenians did not escape the tidal wave of anti-Irish feeling that swept Canada. The Fenian movement in Canada never recovered from the debacle and most of its supporters turned away from Irish issues in favour of local politics of purely Canadian concern. Ironically Canada benefitted from the Fenian raids for the threat of external military intervention played a major role in bringing the Provinces into a Confederation. Fifty years after Eccles Hill, Ottawa

1 See C.P. Stacey, 'A Fenian Interlude: The Story of Michael Murphy' The Canadian Historical Review 15 (1934) 140-51.
3 See Toner op. cit. and William Baker 'Squelching the Disloyal Fenian Sympathizing Brood' Canadian Historical Review 141-58.
4 See C.P. Stacey 'Garrison at Fort Wellington, A Military Dispute During the Fenian Troubles' Ibid., 14 (1933), 161-76.
5 See Toner op. cit. and D.C. Lyne and P.M. Toner 'Fenianism in Canada 1874-1884' Studies Hibernian 12(1972) 27-76.
police had to repeatedly baton charge union jack waving crowds as they tried to storm the hall where the Foundation Conference of the Self Determination for Ireland League of Canada and New Foundland was taking place. The League which claimed 20,000 members allied itself with the French language rights movement.

Unfortunately because of organizational problems no Canadian delegates were present for the important Paris debate on the issue of exile citizenship. With the exception of the Irish in Britain none of the other groups in the Irish Diaspora had faced the same degree of hostility as the Irish in Canada. Not that they could not tell of their own experience of persecution by the State as a result of their activities on behalf of Irish freedom. In Australia Prime Minister Hughes had tried to have Archbishop Mannix removed from Australia by pressuring the Vatican and two Republican emissaries, Fr. Ó'Flannagan and Mr. O'Kelly, were deported. Across the Tasman Sea Bishop Liston of Auckland found himself on a "seditious utterance charge" as a result of his comments regarding the Black and Tans while the activity of the Irish support groups in these countries found little favour with their governments they did manage to win considerable support from non-Irish groups with their argument that Irish independence would lead to a further

1 Times 18 Oct., 1920.
2 See John Boyle, op. cit.
4 Catholic Herald, 8 May, 1923.
5 Times, 8 April, 1922.
weakening of British control that would benefit the countries concerned. In Britain this claim was only acceptable to the tiny group of Marxists who believed that the defeat of British imperialism was a prerequisite for revolution.

At Paris the American, Australian and South African delegates argued "it is not as exiles that the Irish abroad can best serve the Motherland but as subjects of their various governments". ¹ Bromley has formulated a hierarchical taxonomy whereby one can talk of a Don Cossack who is a Ukranian, who is a Russian, who is a Slav. ² But one could suggest that the potential for conflict is not the same between the self identifications of Russian and Slav as between Ukranian and Russian, for there has been a history of bitter conflict between these two rival nationalisms; similar to the historical tension between the Irish and British. And just as many Ukranians opposed Ukranian nationalism so many of the Irish in Britain favoured the interests of their country of birth or Patria. When the English born Art O'Brien, the Envoy of Dail Eireann spoke of police action jeopardizing "negotiations between your government and mine" ³ the Catholic Herald thundered "no one can at one and the same time be a citizen of the Irish Republic and also a citizen of Great Britain". But in its appeal that "the Irish in Great Britain will only be able to exercise their full influence in British society... when they enter fully into the life and citizenship of the land in which they live" ⁴ the Catholic Herald was

¹ O'Brien Ms 8456.
² Yu. Bromley, op. cit.
³ Catholic Herald 3 Dec., 1921.
⁴ Ibid.
surely recognizing that many of the Irish in Britain had not been fully integrated into British society even if they did not share the perspective of Art O'Brien.

Art O'Brien at Paris adopted the classic pose of the 'Uitlander' or outsider. Afrikaners deeply resented British immigrants for their Uitlander stance believing that the British were actively threatening their culture by giving allegiance to an external power.\(^1\) The Irish Republican Association of South Africa did not assume a Uitlander perspective, neither did the Irish support organizations in Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the United States. Wilson fought a campaign against Hyphenation, but Hyphenation in the case at least of the Irish Diaspora in South Africa, United States, Canada and Australia implied a fundamental or primary loyalty to those countries. Hyphenism is the converse of Uitlanderism. It would be false to claim that all ISDL members in England and Wales or Sinn Fein members in Scotland fully shared the Uitlander perspective of Art O'Brien and Sean Sheehan but it is interesting that whereas the Irish living in the United States termed themselves Irish Americans, the Irish living in Britain did not use a hyphenated title but merely referred to themselves as the Irish in Britain. In all my research of the Irish in Britain I have never come across a hyphenated title like Irish-British or Irish-Britons. The term Anglo-Irish referred to the dominant elite, usually Protestant, who comprised the leadership of the British

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establishment in Ireland itself and hence had little applicability in Britain.

The debate on exile or citizen ended on an inconclusive note at Paris but it was clear that most of the delegates rejected Art O'Brien's perspective. In attempting to raise, against the wishes of the Dail delegates, the issue of the Treaty, O'Brien had departed from the established position whereby the English support organization did not seek to impose its wishes on the Homeland movement. Paris revealed O'Brien as occupying a minority position with respect to the Irish Diaspora and he was soon to find himself in a minority position with the Irish in Britain as well.
Many of the 'innocents' - who constituted the bulk of the ISDL's membership - simply dropped out following the Treaty. Leaving the relatively small group of 'supporters' and 'politicos', now irreconcilably divided by the Treaty, to battle for control of the organizational shell. Chapter 19 reveals how the future of the ISDL was so inextricably linked to the onrush of events in Ireland, with successive, but unworkable compromises unable to block the inexorable road to hostilities. In Chapter 20 we will observe the inability of the Pro-Treaty ISDL members to overcome the Civil War induced apathy, disillusionment and disenchantment of the Irish in Britain and the consequent failure to build a new Irish Government support organization. The much reduced Anti-Treaty ISDL members did however, despite many difficulties, manage to keep the nucleus of their organization together until the Free State Government persuaded the British to deport many of them. Chapter 21 relates the aftermath of these deportations, the ensuing parliamentary opposition, and finally the Court rulings that compelled the British Government to request the return of the deportees, some of whom were then put on trial. A trial which was to finally destroy the ISDL.
CHAPTER 19

To the Civil War, the Rift Deepens

The Paris Congress had exposed the deep divisions within the Irish Self Determination League's leadership on the Treaty which had opened a yawning chasm, apparently unbridgeable. The deep fissures first revealed in Paris were further enlarged by the production in London of the anti-Treaty Irish Bulletin distributed from the office of the Dáil Eireann envoy in London. The Catholic Herald implied that Irish Self Determination League funds were being used to finance this publication¹ and Michael Collins complained that "Art O'Brien is using all our machinery as a Propaganda Department against us"² while the Home Office was concerned that the Bulletin's contents might be reprinted in the British Press³ (an indirect compliment to O'Brien's long established links with correspondents). The editor of the Irish Exile was warned by Sean Milroy TD, the former League organizer who was now an official in the Provisional Government, that if the paper attacked his Government, steps would be taken to create a Provisional Government Support League in Britain.⁴ The Irish Self Determination League wracked with internal arguments, however remained on the surface a united organization. Sinn Fein in Ireland might be divided into factions and the Irish Republican Brotherhood split asunder,⁵ but

¹ Catholic Herald, 25 Feb., 1922.
² Ibid.
³ ROR 145, 2 March, 1922. CP 3796. CAB 24/133.
⁴ Standing Committee Report, 11 Feb., 1922, O'Brien Ms 8435.
⁵ By February 1922 the Irish Republican Brotherhood was irreducibly split on the Treaty issue see O'Muirthile Memoir P7/52 (UCD), 177.
ostensibly the League remained relatively untarnished by the Treaty issue with most of its leadership apparently in favour of it. Ironically the unceasing attacks on the League by the Catholic Herald were undoubtedly a factor in preserving the unity of the leadership for the Catholic Herald's indiscriminate allegations that "thousands of pounds of Irish Self Determination League money has been squandered and even worse"\(^1\) was as much an implied challenge to the Pro as to the Anti-Treatyites among the leadership and the closing of organizational ranks against the common enemy necessitates mutual restraint.\(^2\) The continued imprisonment of several League organizers was also a contributing factor in keeping the organization together.

A decision by the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis not to take a vote on the Treaty but to postpone the planned election for a new Dail for a three month period to enable the formulation of a suitable compromise was welcomed by the Irish Exile, which carried the report on the front page of its March 1922 issue. But its front page appeal for unity was somewhat counteracted by a full back page advertisement for the "Uphold the Republic Fund" and an article, on another page, which described the Treaty as "a two o'clock in the morning compromise by tired and irritated men, who had come to the

\(^1\) Catholic Herald, 4 Feb., 1922.

end of their tether and wanted to sign something and be done with it".¹ This same issue of the Irish Exile carried an appeal by the Foleshill Branch for recruits which claimed that, "there can be no danger personally, now to be a member of the Irish Self Determination League".² It was not the only branch that was literally begging for new members. British Intelligence reported that, "The Irish residents of Great Britain are not showing the same keen interest in political matters as heretofore, possibly a reaction after the extreme tensions of the past two years"³ but the St. Patrick Day celebrations which were arranged by the political organizations were well attended. In Birmingham the local Irish Self Determination League branch joined with the Irish National Forresters to hold a rally in the Town Hall at which Archbishop McIntyre (the new Birmingham Bishop) spoke in favour of the Treaty.⁴ The Keighley League Branch and the remnants of the United Irish League in the area organized a joint concert,⁵ but in Halifax the League broke its practice of co-operation with other Irish organizations and held its own celebrations.⁶

The Catholic Herald which had, in the immediate post–Treaty signing period, claimed there was no longer any need for

¹ Irish Exile, March 1922.
² Ibid.
³ ROR 142, 9 Feb., 1922. CP 3725. CAB 24/133.
⁴ Catholic Herald, 25 March, 1922.
⁵ Ibid.
⁶ Irish Exile, March 1922.
Irish political organizations in Britain, now suggested that if the membership of the Irish Self Determination League were not prepared to ensure that the League unequivocally backed the Provisional Government a new Pro-Treaty organization should be created. This organization did not materialize but the presence of Sean Milroy as the guest of honour at the Union of Four Provinces St. Patrick's Day banquet, attended by six hundred people, indicated that the nucleus of such an organization did exist in London.

The March, 1922, Executive Council meeting of the Irish Self Determination League considered a report that showed an overall fifty per cent decrease in the paid up membership of the League.

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1 Catholic Herald, 4 March, 1922.
2 Ibid., 25 March, 1922.
3 Figures compiled from lists in O'Brien, Ms 8432.
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A Branch in Bradford had an almost ninety per cent decrease in membership down from five hundred and twenty one members to fifty eight. These membership figures must however be interpreted cautiously, for at the December 1921 Central Executive Council meeting the acting General Secretary, Sean Harvey, reported that there had been a steady increase in membership during the August to November period.\(^1\) The *Irish Exile* in January 1922 reported increases in the membership of three branches\(^2\) and in February, Halifax claimed that "a continuous stream of new members is ever flowing".\(^3\) Leicester reported that a proposal to disband had been defeated by sixty four votes to two yet in that same month, of March 1922, we have observed that Leicester was recorded

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1. *Irish Exile*, Jan. 1922.
2. Haslingden recorded an increase of fourteen members. Sperrymoor reported "increasing membership". Erdington reported thirty seven new members.
as having only a membership figure of twenty. The reason for this discrepancy and the explanation for the very sizeable but variable reductions reported by other branches can be partly attributed to the fact that these figures only covered those members who had paid their two shillings subscription for 1922.

Unemployment had reached serious levels at the end of 1921 with the onset of the post-War depression. Exports fell to under fifty per cent of their 1914 level and unemployment reached the two million level at the end of 1921. The almost inevitable post-War decline in economic activity was deepened by direct Government action through the implementation of the Geddes Report which drastically slashed public spending right across the board. The swiftness of the economic decline is illustrated in the Trade Union membership figures for 1920 and 1921 which reveal a decrease from 8.3 million to 6.6 million members in one year.\(^1\) The Cabinet responded to the recession by establishing an emergency committee to maintain law and order in the event of expected serious disturbances. The impact of the recession was revealed in the increasingly frequent Irish Self Determination League branches' references to the problem of unemployment in their reports for the Irish Exile. Steel, shipbuilding and engineering workers, with unemployment rates of 38%, 34% and 25%, respectively\(^2\) were the worst affected in this recession and the League membership figures for 1922

\(^1\) Branson, op. cit., 69-71.

\(^2\) Ibid., 69.
do indicate a certain relationship between the areas with the highest unemployment and the largest decline in membership. The North East of England with its shipbuilding and steel industries suffered the greatest drop in League membership but even in London, with a much lower loss of membership, the branches of Greenwich, Charlton and Blackheath areas held a joint meeting to consider what action they could take to help the unemployed Irish residents of these districts.\(^1\) It is very probable that many League members could not afford to pay their annual subscriptions and hence did not appear on the Head Office membership register but often remained on the individual branch strength. Some branches undoubtedly withheld all or part of their subscriptions believing that they would be used by the Head Office to finance anti-Treaty propaganda. Others refrained from submitting their subscriptions until the League's future existence was clarified at the April Annual Conference. When all these allowances have been made, it is still evident that the Irish Self Determination League had lost a very considerable number of its members but that the decline was less than the fifty per cent that the paid up membership figures suggest.

The American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic suffered a much greater membership decline\(^2\) than the League with areas like Pittsburg losing over ninety eight per cent of its members\(^3\) and even in the epicentre of

\(^1\) Catholic Herald, 5 November, 1921.
\(^2\) Tansill, op. cit., 436.
\(^3\) Catholic Herald; 3 June, 1922.
Irish Americanism, Boston, the membership declined from one hundred and twenty five thousand to nine thousand.¹ The Irish Self Determination League operating in the much less favourable British environment, thus survived the immediate post-Treaty dissension period to a much greater extent than its American counterpart. Differences of opinion on the merits of the Treaty held by the leadership of the League never really developed into arguments relating to the merits of the League's continued existence.² In America, however, Edward Doheny, the Association's President, argued that the organization "is no longer needed because the reasons for its formation no longer exist".³

Organizational membership decline, especially over a short period of time, does tend to develop a cumulative momentum of its own which by its very size adversely affects the morale of the remaining members and may generate further membership loss. The declining membership figures were the subject of considerable discussion - often heated - at the Executive Council meetings. P.J. Kelly argued that as they showed the majority of the Irish Self Determination League branches and membership were now located in Lancashire and Yorkshire the April Annual Conference should be switched from London, where the decline in membership had, actually, been

¹ Ibid., 1 April, 1922.
² J. McManus, a former member of the League's Executive Council, did suggest that the League having achieved its purpose should be disbanded, see Catholic Herald, 4 Mar., 1922 but this was after his resignation from the organization in protest against the Paris Congress expenses and he was not supported by any of the pro-Treaty League leaders.
³ Catholic Herald, 18 Feb., 1922.
below average, to a venue in this region.¹ This proposal was defeated on the grounds that any further interference with the Conference arrangements would alienate many members but Art O'Brien's next manœuvre revealed that he did not appreciate the motivations that had driven many members out of the League after the signing of the Treaty, believing that its objective had been attained.

O'Brien proposed ..., that the Executive Council should request the Conference to reaffirm the objectives and Constitution of the League as formulated by the First Annual Conference "to secure the application of the principle of Self Determination for Ireland and the Recognition of the Irish Republic proclaimed in Dublin in Easter 1916". As such it was a relatively non-controversial motion but O'Brien argued that this was not an abstract commitment and claimed that the Rules of the organization pledged the membership to work actively for the maintenance of the Irish Republic. There was a heated discussion at this meeting when some Executive Council members demanded to know how O'Brien was able to interpret the Rules in a manner that firmly committed the League to oppose the Treaty and hence work against the majority wish of the Dail Eireann TDs; but in the vote that was eventually taken O'Brien's proposal was carried by a majority of six (fourteen for, eight against). The defeated minority were however determined to investigate the manner in which Art O'Brien had interpreted the Rules. To their fury they discovered that the issue was not one of

¹ Ibid., 18 March, 1922.
'interpretation' but rather the existence of a Rule they had never known about. The controversy over the 'omission' of the rule pledging "our members to work for the Recognition of the Irish Republic and meanwhile to support by every means in their power, the cause of an independent Irish Republic" from the League's Rule Book, issued to all members was to the detriment of the organization, very publicly conducted in the columns of the Catholic Herald.¹ Many organizations restrict certain types of information to specified sections or people but 'omission'² of information is much more easily achieved in formal rather than informal organizations.

In March 1922 the Irish Self Determination League was an organization which in the period of a few months had lost a very considerable proportion of its membership; an organization that contained many members who openly doubted the necessity of its continued existence; an organization whose membership was deeply divided on the Treaty issue; an organization which contained a very large number of 'Innocents', members with no previous experience of intra-organizational conflict and intrigue. It was hardly conducive to the future well being of the League that many members now learned that they had joined an organization whose full objectives had been deliberately concealed from them. The 'concealment' policy had extended to the highest levels. All the Catholic

¹ Catholic Herald, 11th, 18th, March, 1922.
² As used by Harold Guetzkow, 'Communications in Organizations' in James March ed., Handbook of Organizations (Chicago, 1965), 551.
Herald allegations about sinister influences controlling the League in a manner unknown to the membership, appeared to acquire a new substantive character when the President of the Irish Self Determination League, P.J. Kelly, publicly stated that he had not known about the missing Rule. Art O'Brien's belated explanation that this Rule had been omitted from the printed Rule Book, distributed to all members, on the advice of legal experts who had claimed that its publication would have given the Authorities grounds to suppress the League was just too disingenuous for many members who had learned of O'Brien's manoeuvres at the Paris Congress. Legal opinion could proclaim that an organization with a Republican objective was technically violating British Laws but that did not necessarily mean that the British Government would rigidly enforce a rather ambiguous law and suppress the Irish Self Determination League if it adopted a clearly Republican stance. The Sinn Fein organization in Britain was openly Republican but the Authorities did not ban it. The position of a Dail Eireann Envoy in London clearly flouted British Law but on at least one occasion the police provided a bodyguard for Art O'Brien. The Authorities might possibly, though it is unlikely, have attempted to suppress a Republican League in its early stages of development when it still had only a small membership. It is, however, very unlikely, considering the divided opinion in Britain on the Irish issue, that they would have acted

1 Catholic Herald, 18 March, 1922.
2 Ibid., 1 April, 1922.
once the organization had grown to over twenty thousand members and after the Truce (July 1921) it would have been almost impossible to have taken such legal action. Members of the League were therefore doubly annoyed, for having been misled in the first instance when they were recruited and for the deception having continued long after it could ever have been justified on a legal basis. The February, 1922 issue of the Irish Exile carried a detailed statement of the League's objectives, without any mention of omitted Rules and many members were undoubtedly antagonized about this omitted Rule through reading the Catholic Herald.

Deception is often a common practice in many organizations and may even be tacitly accepted by the membership if they believe the policy is not contrary to their interests. Thus the Board of Deputies of British Jews passed into the control of the extreme Zionist element in 1944 largely as a result of a wholesale policy of deception. The majority of representatives on the Board of Deputies were nominated by Synagogues. The normal avenue to nomination in the case of non-practising Jews was confined to a few long established social and cultural organizations. Fervent Zionists, however, discovered the existence of a number of tiny, almost defunct Synagogues, and all that these non-practising Jews had to do was to pay the synagogues' annual subscription, which enabled them to convene meetings of the 'congregations' for the purpose of nominating representatives to the Board of Deputies. The means by which the Zionists
'took over' the Board of Deputies was an open secret in the Jewish community but as many people sympathised with the aims of the Zionists, a collective blind eye was turned to the episode.¹ The Irish Republican Brotherhood's history reveals its organizational mastery of 'the art of deception': controlling Sinn Fein Ard Fheises by the arbitrary appointment of delegates, regardless of area of residence, and ensuring the appointment of members, who often "couldn't speak Irish", to paid positions within the Gaelic League.² The Irish Self Determination League was operating in a rather different environment. A definite commitment to working for the Republic was contrary to the wishes of the majority of the membership who resented that having been deceived initially, the object of the deception ploy was to secure the adoption of a policy they opposed. Art O'Brien came out of the 'missing Rule' affair very badly. A detailed search of his papers and the surviving League records reveals no sign of the League leadership prior to March 1922 ever having discussed this particular 'Rule' and it would not be unreasonable in the circumstances to doubt the actual existence of this 'Rule' and regard it as having been tactically created sometime during early 1922 rather than having been 'resurrected'. The agenda for the Third Annual Conference of the Irish Self Determination League showed clear signs of division within the League. At previous conferences officers had been elected virtually unanimously but at the April 1922 Conference there was a contest for

² See O'Broin, op. cit., 181.
the Presidency between P.J. Kelly, nominated by the Liverpool District Committee and fifteen other branches, and Art O'Brien, nominated by the London District Committee and only three other branches. Nine nominations were received for the post of Vice President and three for Treasurer. Thirteen major policy motions were submitted, three London Branches called on the League to oppose the Treaty but another London Branch sought a declaration of support for the Provisional government of the Irish Free State and a Cardiff Branch openly supported the Treaty but with the reservation that complete independence should be the ultimate objective. The continued existence of the League, at least in its present form, was the subject of several motions. Liverpool District Committee proposed that the League be dissolved and a new organization with a lesser political orientation should be formed for the purpose of "the moral and material uplifting of the Irish residents in Great Britain".¹ The proposal that such an organization should seek "no political representation on municipal or national legislative assemblies in England"² may have been inspired by the Nationalist Party members of the League who did not want to create any threat to their Party's control of council wards in areas of Liverpool with a large Irish electorate. Swansea No. 2 Branch advocated that League branches should be transformed into Gaelic League branches but its neighbour, Swansea No. 4 suggested an explicitly political change of name to the Irish Republican Recognition League. The least

¹ Catholic Herald, 1 April, 1922.
² Ibid.
controversial motion was from Derby and Notts No. 3 Branch which requested Conference to ensure that "children of Irish parents in Britain be taught a thorough knowledge of Irish history, literature, sports and customs".  

The immediate pre-Conference period further revealed the deep divisions that had emerged within the League as branches discussed the agenda and mandated their delegates on which way they were to vote. The Levershulme Branch never sent a delegate; it split on the agenda and dissolved itself.  

Eskwinning passed a vote of confidence in Michael Collins and the Provisional Government and the Mid-Durham District Committee instructed their delegates to make a strong protest over the publication of a full page "Uphold the Republic Fund Appeal" in the Irish Exile as being contrary to official policy. The Central London and Finsbury Branches supported O'Brien's motion while the Walthamstow delegates were mandated to vote for any resolution that opposed the Treaty. The Aberavon Branch wrote a letter requesting that the Conference and delegates "must not act the coward; we must not shirk our responsibilities by placing the whole of the responsibility on the people at home.

1 Catholic Herald, 1 April, 1922.  
2 Ibid.  
3 Irish Exile, April, 1922.  
4 Ibid., March, 1922.  
5 Ibid., April, 1922.  
6 Ibid., April 1922  
7 Ibid., March 1922.
because they may vote in favour of the Treaty; rather we should consolidate the position until the people at home have a chance of regaining courage and confidence to renew the fight for the complete victory.¹ This branch accompanied its clear cut advocacy of a substantial modification of the League's relationship with the Homeland Movement with a strong warning that the League should not moderate its stance to attract new recruits; "these people are no good to us and they are no good to Ireland. We carried on in the dark days without them, we can carry on now without them".²

In Ireland the political situation had deteriorated considerably. The Provisional Government of the Irish Free State was still co-functioning, in an often confused manner as the Cabinet of Dail Eireann but the Dail TDs who had opposed the Treaty formed Cumann na Poblachta (League of the Republic) and the next day their leader, De Valera, warned that achieving freedom might entail "a march over the dead bodies of their own brothers".³ The Provisional Government performed feats of verbal acrobatics in an endeavour to persuade the volunteer IRA that they would remain the Army of the Republic, which they were in the process of disestablishing, while simultaneously forming a new professional National Army. By mid-February 1922, individual IRA units had not only repudiated the Treaty but were raiding RIC

¹ Irish Exile, April 1922.
² Ibid..
³ Irish Times, 16 March, 1922.
barracks for arms. Faced with this challenge to its authority, the Provisional Government withdrew its permission for the IRA to hold an Army Convention and threatened that any officer who attended would be dismissed. The proscribed Army Convention took place (26th. March, 1922) in secret. The Freemars Journal contravened a request not to publicize the proceedings and the IRA reacted by literally taking their premises apart.\(^1\) The two hundred and twenty three Convention delegates, representing one hundred and twelve thousand volunteers, repudiated the Treaty, the leadership of Dail Eireann and placed the control of the IRA under a new Executive.\(^2\) De Valera ominously spoke of "rights which a minority may justly uphold even by arms, against a majority".\(^3\) The confrontations that occurred between National Army and Executive Forces in Limerick, Athlone Boyle and a score of other places, as the rival armies sought control of barracks evacuated by the British Army and Police, mostly ended without blood being shed in any quantity, after token exchanges of gunfire, but such a situation could not continue indefinitely and the Catholic Herald demanded that the Provisional Government follow Smuts' actions and put down the rebels.\(^4\) The Irish Times gloomily warned "we are within measurable distance of an outbreak of Civil War"\(^5\)

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\(^1\) Irish Times, 31 March, 1922.

\(^2\) Bower Bell, op. cit., 47.

\(^3\) Calton Younger, op. cit., 251.

\(^4\) Catholic Herald, 8 April, 1922. Smuts had been forced to put down a rebellion by his former comrades in South Africa.

\(^5\) Irish Times, 29 March, 1922.
but General Macready, the British GOC in Ireland, reported that Civil War was unlikely simply because the Executive Forces were so much stronger than the National Army.\footnote{See GOC: Weekly Report On Ireland, 1 April, 1922.} Indeed, for a period during March there was a distinct possibility that the Free State might find itself involved in a new military conflict with the British Army; as the situation in the North of Ireland went from bad to worse, when almost four hundred people, mostly Catholics, were killed in the Belfast area between July 1921 and March 1922.\footnote{See Reports in DE 2/347 and 2/348.}

Collins reacted in a typical manner; arms given by the British Government to equip the new National Army were exchanged for Executive Forces' arms and sent across the border, with Free State officers, to defend Catholic areas against the onslaught of the British equipped and paid Special Constabulary.\footnote{Calton Younger, op. cit., 259-61.} It was in this politically highly unstable period, fraught with the possibility of armed conflict between the two armies in Southern Ireland and the potential threat of a clash between British forces and IRA units supporting the Provisional Government north of the Border, that the Irish Self Determination League held its Annual Conference in the first week of April 1922 in London.

The Special Branch predicted that the Conference "would be a lively one"\footnote{ROR 149, 31 March, 1922. CP 3917. CAB 24/136.} and it certainly was. But it would have been even more so if the Government had not preempted much of the
thunder of the anti-Treatyites by releasing all the Irish political prisoners convicted in the post-Truce period \(^1\) with the exception of the Connaught Rangers. \(^2\) The appearance of the released Irish Self Determination League organizers in the company of two Ministers of the Provisional Government, Duggan and O'Higgins, was interpreted by some delegates hitherto unsure about the Treaty, as a visible manifestation of the negotiating strength of the new Government and a reassurance to their fears that under the Treaty the Irish Free State Government would be a mere cipher, rubber stamping British directives. There were approximately one

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1 A Cabinet meeting had decided as a matter of policy to consider each prisoner's case individually rather than have a general amnesty, 30 Jan., 1922. See Cabinet 6 (22), CAB 24/29.

2 The Connaught Rangers were a Regiment in the British Army stationed in India. They mutinied in June 1920, after hearing reports of British atrocities in Ireland. One soldier was executed and many others sentenced to long terms of imprisonment in Britain; see T. P. Kilfeather, The Connaught Rangers (Tralee, 1969), Sam Pollock, Mutiny for the Cause (1969) and R.A. Hinchy, 'The Connaught Rangers Mutiny', An Cosantoir XVIII (1958), 439-44. Cabinet 6 (22) ibid. There was strong opposition from some Ministers to the release of the Connaught Rangers and as a compromise it was decided that the Secretary for War should examine the case "with a view if possible to their liberation in connection with the impending disbandment of the Regiment". The Secretary for War, Sir Worthington Evans, subsequently recommended that there should be no amnesty for Mutiny but that the longer sentences could be reduced to seven years if there was no publicity given to the proposed reductions. See War Office Memo, CP 3690 CAB 24/132. The Cabinet in the interests of maintaining military discipline accepted this recommendation; see Cabinet 12 (22), 21 February, 1922. CAB 23/29. The Military still consider the case of the Connaught Rangers to be such a sensitive issue that its records and reports on the Mutiny - WO 32/4235 and WO 32/4236 are still not open for inspection at the Public Records Office. And the emotions that the 'Mutiny' can still evoke were seen when Trident Television publicly condemned a play on the subject they had originally sponsored, see Irish Press, 12 November, 1979.
hundred and seventy delegates present\(^1\) at this, the most crucial conference of the League since its formation.

The Conference proceedings opened with an acrimonious argument over the financial position of the League, whose income for 1920-21 was £20,399,\(^2\) with most of the discussion centred on the provision for Salaries (£3,900)\(^3\) and the organizers' expenses (£491). A minority of delegates wished to have the individual salaries of the organizers made public but this motion was defeated. Dissension over the financial position of organizations is often the first visible sign of severe internal conflict and is effectively a form of surrogate warfare by proxy. The debate on the League's funds which at one point looked like lasting for the entire day was only ended by Sean Harvey's challenge "to go through the Petty Cash Book" item by item.\(^4\)

The resolutions submitted by Art O'Brien and P.J. Kelly were not put to the Conference, indicating that there had been

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1 The exact figures are imprecise because different totals are given in the various reports of the Conference. The Irish Exile, April 1922, in the course of its four page Conference report, refers to an attendance of 169 but in another reference claims that there were 181 delegates present. The Catholic Herald, 8 April, 1922, claims that there were 170 delegates and the Special Branch report mentions the figure of 169, see ROR 150, 6 April, 1922, CP 3934. CAB 24/136.

2 See O'Brien, Ms 8432.

3 The provision for Salaries was considerably inflated by the practice of paying two thirds of deported official's salaries to their families. See Cabinet Minutes of 27 April, 1921. DE 1/3.

4 Irish Exile, April 1922.
a degree of pre-Conference manoeuvring to establish a common position that would enable the League to continue in existence. Hugh Lee simply proposed on behalf of the pro-Treatyites that, pending the General Election in Ireland, it would be "impolitic to make any vital alteration in the League" and this resolution was seconded by Alderman Scurr, hitherto identified with the anti-Treatyites. The section of the League membership who opposed the Treaty were themselves split into factions. One led by Art O'Brien wished to postpone the decisive vote until after the Irish elections. The other wished to force the issue and have the Conference commit the organization to a definite anti-Treaty stance. Brian Hannigan, on behalf of this faction, proposed an amendment to Lee's resolution that

"though recognizing the lawful authority of the new State, Conference hereby pledges itself to support those of our people in Ireland who will undertake to work for the re-establishment of an Irish Republican State".

The discussion that followed became so heated that at one point the Chairman described the proceedings as resembling a "bear garden" but amid all the confused rhetoric two main strands of argument can be unravelled. The first was that the pro-Treaty section accepted the Treaty in a very pragmatic manner. In the words of a Mr. Coffey the Treaty permitted the Irish Free State to create an "army of seventeen thousand and they would be in a position to start fighting again in five years time". The second argument

1 Catholic Herald, 8 April, 1922.
2 Irish Exile, April 1922.
3 Catholic Herald, 8 April, 1922.
4 Irish Exile, April 1922.
involved a reiteration of the Paris Congress decision that they "must support whatever the majority of the Irish people want". The votes were taken in an atmosphere of much "cheering and hissing", the amendment being defeated by ninety votes to fifty eight and the resolution accepted on a one hundred and three to forty eight basis. The timely appearance of some of the released prisoners on the platform contributed somewhat to a reduction of the tensions. Art O'Brien made a speech intended as a strong appeal for the continued unity of the organization while simultaneously striving to regain the leadership of the anti-Treatyites.

"He believed that many delegates had voted for the resolution in order to keep the organization together and he hoped that when the time for decision came they would be on the side of the Irish Republic." The Conference after further argument agreed to adjourn until after the Irish elections and for the existing officers to retain their positions.

The Catholic Herald headlined its report of the Conference: "Anti-Treaty Motion Beaten: Irish in Britain Refuse to Dictate to People at Home". A Special Branch officer reported that "Art O'Brien was very crestfallen after the Conference refused to take a clear decision", but this assessment

1 Irish Exile, April 1922.
2 Catholic Herald, 8 April, 1922.
3 Irish Exile, April 1922.
4 Ibid.
5 Catholic Herald, 8 April, 1922.
6 ROR 150, 6 April, 1922. CP 3934. CAB 24/136.
was an oversimplification of a complex set of issues. Art O'Brien in fact recognized that in the context of the accepted resolution the anti-Treatyites had suffered a major defeat, moreover a defeat which he had endeavoured to avoid. The defeat had occurred because a faction of the anti-Treatyites had repudiated O'Brien's compromise and sought the confrontation which he wished to forestall. Some members of this faction by walking out of the hall after the resolution was passed had publicly demonstrated that they no longer wanted a large scale organization, if that entailed a dilution of their position. Even more ominous was the shouted threat by a member of the Standing Committee that "the London IRA will deal with these people"\(^1\) to delegates speaking in favour of the Treaty. This intervention alienated a not insubstantial minority of delegates, as yet undecided on the Treaty issue, for an analysis of the voting indicates that at least nineteen delegates abstained on both votes and another ten changed their pro-amendment votes to pro-resolution votes. Art O'Brien in an effort not to be outflanked on the Treaty issue was forced to weaken his unity plea by a public declaration against the Treaty which he made in order to regain the leadership of the anti-Treatyites. O'Brien's ambivalent policy however cost him support on both sides.

The Conference's decision to commit the Irish Self Determination League to a policy of relative inaction was hardly in accordance with Weber's definition of an organization

\(^1\) Catholic Herald, 29 April, 1922.
as: "a system of continuous purposive activity of a specified kind",\(^1\) for its post-Conference activity was to be directed towards merely assuring its continued existence as an organization. Yet Galbraith strongly asserts that the dominant interest of most organizations is not the achievement of specified goals but its very survival.\(^2\) Organizational goals are not impersonal rational constructs but "abstractions distilled from the desires of members and pressures from the environment and internal system"\(^3\) inextricably intertwined with the continued existence and very survival of the organization.\(^4\) The reluctance of the majority of the Irish Self Determination League leadership to take the steps which would have decisively ended the existence of the League, as it had evolved over two years, was paralleled by the adjournment of the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis in Ireland to preserve unity. Organizations tend to develop an internal dynamic or momentum of their own, their members tend to recall past fraternal relationships when disputes arise and hesitate to initiate decisive confrontations. Between January and mid-April 1922 the IRA and the National Army confronted each other on numerous occasions but though guns were often pointed, they were rarely fired and when


\(^3\) Hall, op. cit., 10.

Art O'Brien at an Irish Exile editorial meeting a few days after the Conference issued instructions for the publication to mostly use "non-political material, language, sport and music etc" but it was impossible merely issuing instructions or passing conference resolutions to suspend the ongoing political discussion on the Treaty in many branches. The Central London Branch, whose members included Art O'Brien, passed a very pro-Republican motion and that very atypical League branch, Oxford, continued its eccentric path by changing its name to the Irish Republican League. One London Branch, Silvertown, decided to "forthwith cease its existence" but expressed its willingness to co-operate with some future Irish organization if the members supported its objectives and the Special Branch reported that the Liverpool branches of the League had been very inactive since the Conference. Some branches closed down after the members had either decided the League had no future objectives that could reasonably be attained or because the membership were too divided politically to continue functioning as a working branch but the case of Lewisham was rather different. A leading member of the Lewisham Branch, William Robinson, who had been imprisoned for his IRA activities,

1 Letter to Brian Kennedy, 4 April, 1922, O'Brien Ms 8456.
2 Irish Exile, April 1922.
3 Catholic Herald, 13 April, 1922.
4 ROR 153, 27 April, 1922, CP 3952. CAB 24/136.
publicly declared in favour of the Treaty to the annoyance of his comrades in the local IRA unit and they tried to kidnap him at a branch meeting. Shots were fired in this incident with the result that the membership voted at their next meeting to suspend all branch activity.\(^1\) Guns were also produced during a heated discussion at the Peckham Branch meeting.\(^2\)

The Catholic Herald in its report of these incidents reminded its readers that a member of the Irish Self Determination League Standing Committee had threatened such occurrences if the motion on the Treaty was passed\(^3\) and many members of London branches no doubt, either resigned in protest against such intimidation or, decided it was safer not to attend branch meetings and so the erosion of the League in London quickened. It is extremely improbable, despite the speculation of the Catholic Herald, that Art O’Brien or even any of the anti-Treatyite leadership of the League, including the officer who had made the threat, encouraged such intimidatory action. They were powerless in the face of militant action by armed persons reluctant to accept any political authority. One armed group of London IRA members, who claimed they deserved some financial recompense, even forcibly entered the League's Head Office and threatened "to blow the place up".\(^4\)

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1 See ROR 20, April 1922, CP 3945, CAB 24/136; ROR 153, 27 April 1922, CP 3952, CAB 24/136; Catholic Herald, 22 April, 1922.

2 Ibid., 29 April, 1922.

3 Ibid.

4 ROR 153, 27 April, 1922, CP 3952, CAB 24/136.
A similar though much more serious situation had developed in Ireland where since early April gunfire had become a nightly sound in Dublin, with bank and Post Office raids a daily occurrence (not always undertaken by the Executive forces). A Free State General was killed in Athlone and an assassination attempt was made on Michael Collins and two other senior officers. At the end of April Civil War appeared to have commenced with sporadic skirmishes giving way to pitched battles between National and Executive troops in Kilkenny and Annacarty but after some fifty casualties had been suffered a Truce was negotiated. This was at least partly influenced by a very successful Anti-Militarism Strike organized by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

The seizure of the Four Courts in Dublin and the resultant paralysis of the legal system by the Executive Forces was the source of much concern to the British Cabinet. Ministers believed that the Free State was not prepared decisively to confront the Republicans and in evidence pointed to the almost ritual character of the recent fighting in which, despite the expenditure of much ammunition and the employment of Armoured Cars (supplied by the British Government) there were only a few fatalities. The British

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1 See Calton Younger, op. cit., 270-311; Bower Bell, op. cit., 47-48; Kee, op. cit., 133; Catholic Herald, 29 April and 6 May, 1922.

2 Mitchell, op. cit., 156.

3 Cabinet 27 (22), 16 May, 1922. CAB 23/29. The capture of Kilkenny by the Free State forces which took three days of fighting, involved several hundred troops but despite prolonged and heavy gunfire, there were no deaths, many on both sides deliberately fired high of the target. See Calton Younger, op. cit., 285-86.
Cabinet, fearing a Republican coup d'etat that the Free State forces would not resist, had already drawn up contingency plans for the reconquest of Ireland and the prevention of the "serious outrages [that] might take place in this country".  

The Provisional Government might have been forced to tolerate the presence of a Republican HQ across the river from their offices but they were determined no longer to countenance a London Dail Envoy who was so openly anti-Treaty. Art O'Brien publicly protested against the exclusion of the Connaught Rangers from the Amnesty and following what he considered to be unfavourable comments about him made by the Minister of Home Affairs (Duggan) in a newspaper article he publicly condemned the Provisional Government's unwillingness to press the cases of the remaining prisoners. 

The Provisional Government, which since the Paris Congress had been seeking an opportunity to dismiss O'Brien, seized its chance, dismissing him the day his letter was published. A brusque exchange of letters between the Minister for External Affairs, Gavan Duffy, and O'Brien ensued with O'Brien claiming that as he had been appointed by the Dail he could only be dismissed by that body. C.B. Dutton was offered O'Brien's former position but declined to accept.

1 Cabinet 23(22), 5 April, 1922 and Cabinet 24 (22), 10 April, CAB 23/29.

2 Irish Independent, 7 April, 1922.

3 Ibid., 17 April, 1922.

4 For the dismissal of O'Brien see the case file - P7/B/279 (Mulcahy Papers) and the Correspondence in DE 2/410, DE 1/4 and S1605.
Art O'Brien now, perhaps realizing that with the loss of his position he had also lost much of his former influence in the Irish Self Determination League, appeared to repudiate the Conference decision to adjourn. Bleakly surveying the diminished fortunes of the League since the Treaty was signed, he wrote:

"signs of apathy and indifference have been very apparent in the Irish Self Determination League. Many branches have ceased to function, membership had markedly dropped and the financial revenue has decreased very considerably. This slow disruption could have been stopped, if only the recent Conference of branches had adopted a definite and clear line of policy, the effect of the delaying motion carried at the Conference was to leave the organization in a state of suspense for several months. Instead of steadying the process of disintegration the results of the Conference has given it impetus."

Elsewhere in this May issue of the *Irish Exile* the readers were informed that

"as a consequence of the delaying motion at the Conference the Executive has been obliged to dispense with the services of all organizers"

and could themselves observe the straightened financial position of the League by the reduction of the *Irish Exile* from twenty four pages to sixteen pages.  

Art O'Brien once again returned to his Paris Congress argument that the Irish in Britain, because of their particular circumstances, should adopt a different position on the Treaty than the people in Ireland. He maintained that the Irish Self Determination League had not attained its objectives and hence should remain in existence. Hugh Lee put

1 *Irish Exile*, May 1922.

2 The price was correspondingly reduced to two pence.
the case for the pro-Treatyites. His claim that the Treaty conferred economic freedom to the extent that the Irish Free State, by fixing a low rate of taxation, "could entice English capital"¹ to develop the Irish economy; reveals just how little even intelligent leaders like Lee understood the implications of the Treaty and in particular Article 5. This provided for an Irish liability for an unspecified proportion of the United Kingdom Public Debt and as a later Cabinet record shows was intended precisely to prevent the type of economic boom Lee envisaged.² Lee, like O'Brien, however, believed that the Irish Self Determination League should continue to exist for "it is not that we Treatyites differ from Republicans as to our ultimate objective, namely complete independence, our difference is as regards methods".

He brushed aside the bitter controversy within the League over the Treaty in a plea for unity stressing that it is "only natural that members of the Irish Self Determination League should be sharply divided on the Treaty issue, as members of the organization are generally young and enthusiastic".³

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¹ Irish Exile, May 1922.

² In 1925 the Free State Government protested that its economy, ruined by the Civil War, could not meet its financial liability to Britain. In the discussion that followed this plea the British Cabinet "were reminded by one of the signatories of the Irish Treaty that one of the principal reasons for the insertion of Article 5 had been that if the Irish Free State had been relieved of all debt, its financial and fiscal situation would be so favourable as compared with that of Great Britain as to attract capital and industry from this country in order to escape taxation. Owing to the Civil War and other causes, however, this anticipation had not been realized" - Cabinet 56 (25), 2 Dec., 1925. CAB 23/51.

³ Irish Exile, May 1922.
The pro-Treaty section of the League's leadership wished to maintain the unity of the organization but there were definite limits on how far they were prepared to compromise. They were not willing to tolerate any public declaration by other League leaders on the Treaty if such statements could be inferred to represent the policy of the League. At its mid-May meeting the Standing Committee of the League passed a resolution that it believed there was "a strong well organized and determined proportion of the Irish people who are bitterly opposed to the acceptance of the Treaty". This resolution as such did not directly attack the Treaty but P.J. Kelly and Hugh Lee publicly disassociated themselves from it claiming that the Standing Committee "does not represent the views of the majority of the members of the Irish Self Determination League". This very public dispute among the League leadership occurred just before a meeting was organized in London to establish a new openly pro-Free State organization. The meeting was sponsored by the Union of Four Provinces Club, not hitherto noted as an institution in the forefront of the Irish Separatist struggle. A London Committee to raise funds for the Free State candidates in the coming election was duly established but though a message of support was received from Dr. Mark Ryan, the veteran Fenian leader, no known members of the League's London branches could be identified from the attendance list. A similar committee in Scotland was somewhat more

1 Freeman's Journal, 15 May, 1922.
2 Ibid., 18 May, 1922.
successful and its offshoot in the North-East of England secured the services of J. Connolly, the President of the Tyneside District Committee, much to the annoyance of O'Brien\(^1\) who did however appreciate that Connolly, just out of prison, was in need of the money that this full-time organizer's post provided him. The particular case of Connolly excepted, none of the pro-Treaty League leaders were prepared to join a new organization believing that the adjourned Conference would firmly commit the League to supporting the Free State. The heat generated within the leadership over the Standing Committee resolution was considerably dissipated by a startling political development in Ireland a few days later.

Events in Ireland once again fostered the fervent illusion that conflict could be avoided and the unity of opposites maintained. The open combat of early May had been ended by a Truce following the signing of an 'Army Document' by leading National Army, Executive and Neutral IRA officers which called for "an agreed election with a view to forming a Government which will have the confidence of the whole country."\(^2\) Pressure was exerted by these officers on their respective political leaders and the resulting agreement was termed, after its principals, the 'Collins-De Valera Pact'. This Pact provided for a National Coalition Panel of candidates to contest the June election for the Third Dail (Parliament of the Irish Free State) under the banner

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1 O'Brien, Ms 8435.
2 Calton Younger, op. cit., 276-7.
of Sinn Fein, which called a special Ard Fheis to ratify the agreement. Candidates were to be chosen proportionally to the pro and anti-Treaty strength in the Dail, though all other parties and interests could contest the election, and a Coalition Government was to be formed by this panel.¹

The British Government were horrified by the Pact.² Churchill angrily denounced the agreement in Parliament³ and the British Cabinet considered the Pact violated the Treaty in spirit and openly mocked Article Seven, which required all Ministers of the Provisional Government, unequivocally, to signify their acceptance of the Treaty.⁴ We have already observed that Collins had authorized extensive covert Free State military aid for the beleagured Catholics in Belfast and there had been considerable conflict on the border between the Northern police forces and National Army, Executive and Neutral IRA troops, who were practically fighting as a unified force. An incident now occurred which brought British Army troops into open conflict with the Free State forces. British Army troops moved into the disputed territory of the Belleek-Pettigo triangle and shelled Free State positions. The conflict lasted several days during which Churchill's bellicose attitude nearly endangered the entire Treaty until Lloyd George negotiated a face-saving

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² For a detailed account of the British Government's position see Thomas Towey, 'The Reaction of the British Government to the 1922 Collins-De Valera Pact', Irish Historical Studies 22 (1980), 65-76.

³ 154 HC Debs, Cols, 2125-82.

⁴ See Cabinet 27 (22), 16 May, 1922 and Cabinet 30 (22), 30 May, 1922. CAB 23/29.
ceasefire.¹

The British Government might rail against the 'Pact' but to the leadership of the Irish Self Determination League desperate to preserve organizational unity it was greeted like mana from heaven. To the Standing Committee of the League representing "opposing views in reference to the Treaty", ² the 'Pact' was viewed as embodying the promise of the "hope of a dramatic reunion of our people on a national basis".³ The Standing Committee issued a statement (printed in the June issue of the Irish Exile) claiming that:

"the disintegration of the Irish Self Determination League at the present moment would be a national calamity, built up as a result of infinite labour and self sacrifice on the part of its members. The organization has become the greatest Irish political factor this country has ever known. In the course of three years over forty thousand pounds has been collected for patriotic purposes. The League has rescued thousands of our people from Anglicization and given them a healthy Irish outlook - an outlook which had been almost lost during the forty years of political struggle and association with English Parties who used the Irish population in this country for their own purposes.... The standard of national pride, dignity and self respect has been raised through the teaching of the League which has lent willing assistance to every Irish/Ireland organization in this country. This is work of the greatest permanent value".⁴

¹ See Calton Younger, op. cit., 307-10; War Office Memo on Belleek-Pettigo Incident, CP 4017, CAB 24/137 and for the Irish Military reports - S1235.

² Jones, op. cit., 212, depicts a vivid impression of Churchill awaiting the latest dispatch from Belleek as if it was a telegram from the Gallipoli beach head and refers to Churchill as being obsessed with "winning the battle of Belleek". For Churchill's own account of this skirmish see Churchill, The Aftermath, op. cit., 336-7.

³ Irish Exile, June 1922.

⁴ Ibid., June 1922.
This statement signed by all the League's national officers provides several interesting insights as to how organizational goals evolve and change.

In the first part of this statement the reference to funds raised indicates an organizational perspective of evaluating the 'effectiveness' of the League in quantitative terms even though the original specific objectives had not been attained. Freeman and Hannan have demonstrated that as most organizations never achieve their stated goals, they evaluate their effectiveness in quantitative terms which may have little in common with the original goal. Members were in fact requested to continue their support for the League not because the original objective or goal of Self Determination had not been realized, for that ambiguous goal was not shared by those who believed that the Treaty had given Ireland the right of Self Determination, but in terms of the League's overall contribution to the maintenance of an identifiable Irish community in England and Wales. In effect because the original goal was either unattainable given existing resources or had become a source of division, the organizational goals had been modified or 'displaced', though this had never been formally ratified by a Conference.

1 P.J. Kelly (President), A. O'Brien (Vice President), H. Lee, W. McMahon, and M. Maloney (Joint Treasurers), S. McGrath (General Secretary).

2 As used by James Price, op. cit..

3 John Freeman and Michael Hannan, op. cit..

The formation objectives, the Constitution, of the Irish Self Determination League remained unchanged as the 'Official' goals but the League had now adopted a much broader, generalized, less political, 'Operative goal';¹ to maintain the national identity of the Irish in England and Wales, a function originally implied in the League's objectives but now the 'means to an end' had become ends in themselves.

The formulation of this new operative goal was the only way to maintain organizational unity but the impact of this statement from the leadership was weakened by the publication, in the same issue of the Irish Exile² of a violently anti-Treaty article by P.D. O'Hart, a leading London Sinn Fein member, in which he brusquely ridiculed Hugh Lee's article in the previous issue. Once again the impetus towards uniting the respective factions was impeded by a small coterie unprepared to make any compromises. Nevertheless, there were several issues on which both the pro- and anti-Treatyites and the neutrals within the League could campaign in a united manner. The position of Catholics in Belfast had become critical; the clergy in that city estimated that almost four hundred Catholics had been killed in under two years (July 1920 - May 1922) and another thirty died in the first week of June.³

² Irish Exile, June 1922.
³ Catholic Herald, 18 February and 27 May, 1922.
expelled from the shipyards and mills, and four hundred were made homeless in the month of April alone.¹ Thousands fled across the border, many others went to Britain, principally to London, Liverpool and Glasgow where over three hundred were accommodated in one church hall.² The welfare of these refugees was totally the responsibility of local Irish communities. The British Government's inaction on this issue can be contrasted with their treatment of two other Irish groups who came to Britain. The Government established the RIC Resettlement Branch of the Irish Office to aid RIC personnel who had left Ireland and this body liaised with other official³ and unofficial bodies, such as the Westminster Cathedral based Catholic Women's League⁴, to find employment and accommodation for these men. The Government under Parliamentary pressure⁵ was forced to establish a Relief Committee for Southern Irish Loyalists who did not wish to remain in Ireland. Ten thousand pounds⁶ was budgeted for the relief

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¹ Catholic Herald, 13 May 1922.
² Ibid., 17 June, 1922.
³ See Mepol 2/1814, a request to local London police stations to investigate the financial standing of businesses in which ex-RIC men wished to invest their gratuities.
⁴ Catholic Herald, 17 June, 1922.
⁵ 151HCDeb cols 1302. In 1929 a backbench Tory rebellion won further payments for the Irish Loyalists; see Catholic Herald 2 March, 1929.
⁶ Cabinet 26 (22), 10 May, 1922, CAB 23/29. This was subsequently increased to £25,000, see CP 208 (23) 25 April, 1923. CAB 24/160. See also the files of the Irish Distress Committee (Refugees): Irish Grants Committee. TS 27/179 and Relief of Refugees from the Irish Free State, HO 45/11992/465017 and correspondence between HM and Free State Governments on the Relief of Irish Refugees - Cmd. 1684 (1922).
of a group who according to figures given in Parliament numbered only three hundred\(^1\) and were already adequately cared for by private charitable organizations with considerable funds.\(^2\) The Irish Self Determination League organized a series of meetings to protest against the plight of the Belfast Catholics and demand the release of eleven League members who had been arrested on arms conspiracy charges during May.\(^3\) The London District Committee reported that,

"May has witnessed a great renewal of the former activities of the Irish Self Determination League in London. A large number of branch meetings have been held and they have in every instance been very well attended".

The series of public meetings in London drew audiences which "exceeded all expectations and enthusiasm ran very high"\(^4\) with an attendance of seven thousand at a Trafalgar Square rally.\(^5\) The Bradford No. 5 Branch however reported good branch meetings "which are now of a more 'social trend' owing to the decision of the committee not to have political discussions until the Irish people decide for themselves".\(^6\)

Other branches also pursued this policy of strict neutrality to the point of effectively refraining from all political

\(^1\) The Southern Irish Relief Association whose President was the Duke of Portland and the Marquis of Lithgow as its chairmen, was only one of a number of such organizations. See D. 989 B/1-10 (PRONI).

\(^2\) Catholic Herald, 13 May, 1922.

\(^3\) ROR 154, 4 May, 1922, CP 3960, CAB 24/136.

\(^4\) Irish Exile, June, 1922.

\(^5\) O'Brien, Ms. 8435.

\(^6\) Irish Exile, June, 1922.
activity. The Lewisham Branch recommenced functioning but only as a "social branch until the present central leadership is removed".  

This new, relative unity of the Irish Self Determination League was dependent on the success of the Collins-De Valera Pact and that agreement implicitly rested on the drafting of a Free State Constitution basically acceptable to the anti-Treatyites. When the first draft of the new Constitution was submitted to the British Cabinet its proposals horrified Ministers who vehemently protested that they violated virtually every clause of the Treaty. The proposed Constitution effectively reduced the status of the Crown's Representative in Ireland to a Commissioner and the oath of allegiance - a crucial issue to the anti-Treatyites - was omitted, while the Irish demanded the, then, unheard of right, to make their own treaties with foreign powers and sought the abolition of the appeal to the Privy Council. British Ministers exerted very strong pressures on the Irish

1 Catholic Herald, 27 May, 1922.

2 For the intra-governmental negotiations between the ratification of the Treaty and the submission of the new Constitution, see the minutes and reports of the British Cabinet's Provisional Government of Ireland Committee - CAB 27/154, CAB 43/3, and 43/7 and for a concise account of the day-to-day problems that arose see Thomas Towey, 'The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the Irish Elections of 1922', Eire-Ireland, 15(1980), 18-29.

3 Joseph M. Curran, 'The Issue of External Relations in the Anglo-Irish Negotiations of May-June 1922', Eire-Ireland, 13(1977), 15-25, argues that the Irish conceded far too much on the issue of external relations as South Africa and Canada would have supported their position.

4 Cabinet 31(22), 1 June, 1922, CAB 23/30.
to substantially redraft the Constitution. The new draft met with the approval of the British Government, though its a-religious character annoyed some English Catholics, and in doing so effectively destroyed the base of the Pact for the anti-Treatyites totally rejected the new Constitution.

Compromise now at last proved impossible and Michael Collins effectively ended the Pact with an eve of election speech repudiating its 'panel vote provision'. The Irish Self Determination League protest that polling day (16th June, 1922) was overshadowed by the British threat of renewed warfare was justified for Churchill, himself, told the Cabinet "the more the fear of renewed warfare is present in the minds of the electors the more likely are they to get to


3 The Month August 1922 complained of a "serious omission" in the Irish Free State Constitution, as there was no reference to the "Authority of God as the source of all lawful power" and demanded an amendment to include this.

the polls and support the Treaty". The combined effects of these conditions and the outdated electoral register which effectively disfranchised many led the Irish Labour Party leader Johnson, himself a supporter of the Treaty, to declare the elections "were a farce and utterly useless as any test upon these questions" (the degree of whole hearted support for the Treaty).

Only twenty one percent voted for the anti-Treaty Sinn Fein candidates: the pro-Treaty Sinn Fein candidates only polled thirty eight percent of the votes cast; for almost forty percent of the electorate rejected both factions of Sinn Fein and voted for a wide range of Independents, Farmers and Labour Party candidates. To many voters the need to maintain a Sinn Fein party in existence was no longer obvious and a large section of the old Irish Parliamentary Party vote, who had never really accepted the Sinn Fein policy, supported the Labour Party in a protest vote against both factions of Sinn Fein. Before the results were declared on the 24th June, Field Marshal Wilson was shot dead in London on the 22nd and a wave of arrests hit the Irish

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1 Cabinet 32(22), 2 June, 1922, CAB 23/30.

2 In particular women under thirty were excluded. Griffiths argued that the delay in compiling a new register would "torpedo the Treaty"; see Catholic Herald, 11 March, 1922.

3 McCracken, op. cit., 75.


5 Mitchell, op. cit., 162.
Self Determination League of which his killers had been members. The League suffered considerable embarrassment from this episode which set in train the escalation of events, culminating in the Provisional Government assault on the Four Courts. The shells that hit the Four Courts at 4.29 am on the morning of the 28th June 1922 heralded the Civil War which destroyed the Irish Self Determination League as a mass organization of the Irish in Britain.
CHAPTER 20

Civil War in Ireland: the Irish Self Determination League Divides

The assassination of Field Marshal Wilson by two rank and file members of the Irish Self Determination League on 12 June 1922 was a very serious embarrassment to an organization already considerably weakened by internal conflict. A Cabinet meeting hastily convened on the afternoon of Field Marshal Wilson's death was informed that the police had been keeping close surveillance on thirty ISDL members in London for some time and the necessary instructions were given to raid their homes. About eighteen members of the League were subsequently detained for questioning in the aftermath of this incident but only two members were eventually charged with offences related to the possession of explosives and rifles. However as one of these individuals, Mrs Elizabeth Eadie, was a senior administrative official at the League's London Head Office, considerable adverse publicity inevitably followed as a result of her conviction for the possession of incendiaries. Art O'Brien was himself several years later accused of a direct involvement in the assassination by Elizabeth

1 Catholic Herald, 19 August 1922 gave brief details of Dunne and O'Sullivan's membership in the London ISDL.

2 Conference of Ministers held at 5 pm. (22/6/1922) - Cabinet 36(22) Appendix III (CAB 23/29).

3 Times, 24 June 1922 and 27 June 1922.

4 Ibid, 30 June 1922 and O'Brien Ms 8427.
Lazenby; her evidence— if it can be called that, is somewhat tenuous\(^1\) but the promptness of his action in securing legal services for Dunne and O'Sullivan does raise certain questions never adequately answered.\(^2\)

Whatever the precise involvement of ISDL leaders in the assassination, the incident certainly weakened the level of support for Irish organizations in Britain for the community was swept by a tidal wave of anti-Irish feeling.\(^3\) Sectarian passions rose to a new peak in Liverpool and Glasgow\(^4\); there were reports of Irish people being sacked on the spot\(^5\) but the impact of this rise in anti-Irish hostility was somewhat muted by the outbreak of Civil War several days later. This relative lessening of anti-Irish hostility—which still remained a strong force in many areas where the Irish were most visible—was ironically the result of a fundamental misinterpretation of the causes that led to the Civil War. To most British people the attack on the Four Courts Garrison by the newly elected Irish Government was practical evidence of the determination of their former opponents to suitably punish those who had issued the order to assassinate the Field Marshal. In fact, as we relate in more detail elsewhere, the actual

\(^1\) Lazenby, op. cit., 135.

\(^2\) Taylor, Assassination, op. cit., 85.

\(^3\) Freeman's Journal, 28 June 1922.

\(^4\) ROR 161 29 June 1922, CP 4075. CAB 24/137.

\(^5\) Irish Independent, 28 June 1922; Catholic Herald, 8 July 1922.
impulse— and in effect it was little more than a spur of the moment decision, — behind the Four Courts attack owed very little if at all to any desire to placate the British Government. The Irish Government ignored peremptory demands by the British in the wake of Wilson's assassination to take immediate action against the Four Courts to the point where the British Cabinet ordered their G.O.C. in Ireland to launch his own military assault. General Macready, however, found sufficient excuses to refrain from such action until the General Staff were able to persuade the Cabinet that the British forces lacked sufficient resources in Ireland for such an attack: which could well have produced a new realignment of the contending Free State, and various Republican military groupings. It was the kidnapping of General O'Connell, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the new Irish Government's Army, by the Republican forces in the Four Courts that was the decisive factor in the long complex chain of events that culminated in the Civil War. It is very doubtful if many National Army personnel would have been so motivated by the death of their old opponent Wilson and even after the kidnapping of a very popular officer, a mutiny delayed the actual

1 Cabinet 36(22). CAB 23/30.

2 Decision taken on 23 June 1922. CAB 21/255 and also Macready op. cit., 652-54.

3 British attack order rescinded on 25 June 1922. CAB 21/255.

4 O'Malley, op. cit., 88-90.

5 For a detailed chronology see Outbreak of Events Preceding the Civil War. S 1322.
assault on the Four Courts. The attack commenced shortly before dawn on the 28th June, 1922 but initially was carried out with such little enthusiasm that the British Cabinet seriously considered the possibility of actively employing their forces to bolster up the National Army. For their part the Four Courts garrison, reluctant to appear unduly aggressive had refused to take the necessary precautions of fortifying nearby buildings to serve as their perimeter outposts. Their Republican compatriots elsewhere in Dublin, still annoyed by the Four Courts garrison's split with the mainstream Executive forces at the Army Convention held the previous week, were likewise reluctant to engage the National Army units besieging the building. And when they did intervene, it was on the other side of the River Liffey after instructing the Four Courts garrison to surrender.

The nature of the fighting, the seizure of buildings - prestigious but geographically isolated from each other - only to surrender them a few days later, the paucity of casualties especially compared to those sustained in

1 Provisional Government Minutes, 27 June 1922, P7/B/6/2.
3 Joseph Curran, op. cit., 230.
5 O'Malley, op. cit., 91-97.
6 Total casualities were reported in the Freeman's Journal 10 July 1922 as being 64 dead and 280 wounded. The National Army claimed to have had 19 soldiers killed and 112 wounded; see Freeman's Journal 11 July 1922. The Republicans never officially listed their casualties but as they were fighting from within the protective walls of strong buildings which they usually surrendered before contd...
the 1916 Easter Rising week indicated; despite the heavy use of artillery and the massive amount of ammunition expended by both sides, a definite determination to make a lot of noise without inflicting serious casualities on opponents. The fighting in Dublin during the end of June and the beginning of July was more of a gesture than anything else. Certainly the Catholic Herald, a publication which we have repeatedly observed had few sympathies with Republicanism, reported the conflict in much detail under the banner headline "each activated by the highest of patriotic motives". Its editorial clearly implied that the fighting so far had been a gesture and suggested that without any imputation of cowardice and lack of patriotic adherence to the Republican opinions they profess, the Irregulars may now "laudably lay down their arms".

any final hand-to-hand assault it would be reasonable, applying standard military accounting methods to infer that they suffered even fewer casualities than their opponents. So the majority of the casualities, as is inevitably the pattern in urban fighting, were non-combatants.

1 Catholic Herald, 8 July, 1922.
2 'Irregular' was the term popularly applied by the press to describe those waging war against the new Irish Government. Its derogatory implications led to threats by the anti-Government forces against publications employing it. Terminology is definitely a problem in discussing the forces participating in the Civil War. The Government's Army used its old title - Olglaigh na h Eireann - the name by which the IRA was and still is known in its Irish title, but used the term National Army as the English version of its name. Its opponents often referred to them as 'Free Staters' or just 'Staters', their own title originally in the English version - Executive forces of the Irish Republican Army was quickly abbreviated to IRA as the Civil War progressed.

3 Catholic Herald, 8 July 1922.
This conciliatory tone was even more strikingly struck in the initial attitude of the ISDL Anti-Treatyite leadership towards the outbreak of the Civil War. There seems to have been a general desire by both the pro and anti-Treaty supporters in Britain to downplay the significance of the Dublin fighting, to regard it as a more serious and certainly more prolonged outbreak than had previously occurred but one that would still probably end like its predecessors in another truce. Few signs of hostility towards the new Irish Government and its Army were publicly displayed on the part of the ISDL Anti-Treatyite leadership. On the contrary when Sean McGrath's wife died at the end of July, prominent representatives from both factions attended the funeral service in London\(^1\) and even more strikingly a National Army contingent fired volleys of shots over her coffin at the burial in Ireland.\(^2\) Art O'Brien also displayed a very conciliatory attitude to his arrest in Dublin by National Army troops;\(^3\) he was, he subsequently wrote in an indignant refutal of press comments, "treated very courteously" during the few days he was detained.\(^4\)

It was of course a time of great confusion; people were often unsure as to which side they supported; some who

1. *Freeman's Journal*, 1 August 1922.
4. *Freeman's Journal*, 11 July 1922. Also see Art O'Brien File, S 1605.
joined the National Army later defected to the IRA. It took some time before people realized that this indeed was the ultimate conflict and that a point had now been reached where emotionally fired personal loyalties and allegiances had to be weighed against practical choices. In Britain the process was further complicated by the issue of Dunne and O'Sullivan waiting in Wandsworth Prison for their execution. Collins went to extraordinary lengths to free the two condemned men. When the military efforts came to naught he persuaded his Ministers - some of whom undoubtedly began to wonder why he was making such strenuous attempts to save men whom the British Government were determined to execute - to secretly ask the British Cabinet to reprieve Dunne and O'Sullivan.\(^1\) Pro and Anti-Treaty ISDL supporters joined in a common effort to gain a reprieve, several petitions were circulated, one organized by George Bernard Shaw\(^2\) and another circulated through the Irish community attracted 45,000 signatures.\(^3\) The demand for a reprieve was supported by the Daily Herald\(^4\) and several MPs including James Sexton, who had opposed the political objective of the 1920 Liverpool Dock Strike when Irish workers struck in an attempt to have prisoners in Wormwood Scrubs released.\(^5\) Several hundred people sang

\(^1\) See the file on the Death of Sir Henry Wilson and the subsequent execution of Reginald Dunne and Joseph O'Sullivan, S 1570 (State Paper Office).

\(^2\) Taylor, Assassination, op. cit., 188.

\(^3\) Freeman's Journal, 9, 10, August 1922.

\(^4\) Daily Herald, 3 August 1922.

\(^5\) Freeman's Journal 9 August 1922.
Irish songs outside Wandsworth Prison on the Sunday before the executions and others gathered to say the rosary outside the prison gates on the actual morning of the executions. Some however regarded the actual demand for a reprieve as in itself as much a subversive action as the assassination; a writer in the Times warned that circulating a petition would certainly spark off "anti-Irish feeling in England" while the Morning Post complained of the amount of publicity given to the reprieve campaign by some Fleet Street papers.

With the execution of Dunne and O'Sullivan the pro and anti-Treatyites in Britain lost the last remaining issue on which they could unite if only temporarily, to campaign for the achievement of a common objective. Already there were signs that the growing tensions that had widened with the onset of the Civil War could no longer be peacefully contained even in Britain. While pro and anti-Treatyites were joining together in a demonstration outside Wandsworth, their Durham counterparts engaged in what was described as a "pitched battle" when Free State supporters in the ISDL tried to hold a meeting there. Smoke bombs were thrown, and the widespread use of "sticks and fists" resulted in the meeting being abandoned. A similar meeting in

1 Freeman's Journal, 8 Aug., 1922.
2 Ibid, 11 August 1922; Times, 12 August 1922; and Taylor ibid, 194.
3 Times, 9 August 1922.
4 Morning Post, 11 August 1922.
5 Freeman's Journal, 8 August 1922; Times, 8 August 1922.
Newcastle on the same day also ended in considerable disorder. An earlier meeting in Falkirk the previous month had turned into a large scale "punch up". "The ISDL is falling to pieces all over the country" reported the Cabinet's Intelligence Adviser while a Member of Parliament who inquired about the current strength of the organization was informed that its membership, estimated at 18,000 in March 1922 had now "considerably decreased". This reduced membership was very substantially further decreased after the League formally and irrevocably split when the adjourned Conference was reconvened in July.

Art O'Brien, acting under considerable pressure from his hard line Republican supporters, persuaded the League's Standing Committee to reconvene the adjourned Conference. His move was firmly opposed by the organization's President, P.J. Kelly, who counter attacked with a statement advising branches not to attend the proposed conference and suggesting instead that he would personally reconvene the adjourned Conference when "peace returns to Ireland." Kelly's statement was publicly supported by Hugh Lee who earlier that month had attacked a strong anti-Free State resolution proposed by his own Manchester District Committee,

1 Catholic Herald, 12 August 1922.
2 ROR 164, 20 July 1922, CP 4115. CAB 24/137.
3 ROR 165, July 1922, CP 4132. CAB 24/137
5 ROR 166, 3 August 1922, CP 4144. CAB 24/137; Freeman's Journal, 29 July 1922.
6 Catholic Herald, 29 July 1922.
condemning Michael Collins for shelling the Four Courts at the "bidding of the English"¹ as being "contrary to the League's policy" of formal neutrality on the Treaty issue.² In his eve of conference statement Lee now warned members against attending this "inopportune conference whose only business appears to be the resurrection of the secret 'Uphold the Republic' rule".³ Lee however had seriously miscalculated the purpose of this reconvened Conference which had other objectives than merely committing the Irish Self Determination League to unequivocal support to the Anti-Treatyite cause. For Art O'Brien and his supporters were now determined to remove all Treaty supporters from their national leadership positions. The Conference delegates elected Art O'Brien as the new President of the League, with Mrs Prosser (Barrow-in-Furness) and Gilbert Barrington (Newcastle) becoming the new Vice-Presidents. Martin Maloney and Sean McGrath retained their old offices as Treasurer and General Secretary respectively.⁴

The promotion of Gilbert Barrington in particular, to a national League office showed the extent to which the organization was now controlled by hard line uncompromising Republicans. Following his release from prison, in April 1922, where he had been serving a sentence for IRA activities, Barrington visited his former pupils at a

¹ Manchester Guardian, 1 July 1922.
² Ibid, 3 July, 1922.
⁴ See Report of ISDL Conference held on 29 July 1922 O'Brien Ms 8435.
South Shields school and told them "to fight for Ireland against the British Government" when they grew up.  

Art O'Brien justified Kelly's dismissal as President of the League by implying that his position as the only Standing Committee officer who did not hold either a Branch or District Committee officership indicated the former President's lack of popularity among the organization's rank and file. No amount of verbal camouflage could however conceal the damage that had been self-inflicted on the League in the process of turning it into a fully fledged Republican organization. Two hundred and seventeen branches had sent delegates to the April conference but only forty-three branches were represented at the July Conference. London with thirteen branches present led the way, followed by seven from the Tyneside area, five from North East Lancashire and three each from Notts and Derby, Cardiff and Mid Durham. Two branches each were represented in Manchester and Sheffield while the Barrow, Bradford, Preston, Swansea and Wigan areas had been reduced to one branch in each district. Some of these branches however seem only to have sent delegates to observe the proceedings and in the following weeks several

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1 Catholic Herald, 7 October 1922.

2 Irish Independent, 29 July 1922. The following month (September) Art O'Brien issued a strong rebuke to P.J. Kelly condemning his suggestion that all Irish National Aid Fund cheques should be jointly signed by Hugh Lee and Art O'Brien to prevent any bias against relieving the plight of former prisoners now supporting the Treaty; see Ms 8427.

3 See O'Brien, Ms 8435.
split away from the reorganized ISDL. The Mid-Durham District Committee advised its affiliated branches to sever all relations with the new ISDL Standing Committee while the Cardiff District Committee formally dissolved all the League branches in its area. Its last resolution was a joint vote of condolence to the relatives of Reginald Dunne, Joe O'Sullivan and Arthur Griffith, the leader of the Provisional Government who died early in August. Other branches not represented at the Conference speedily announced their dissolution or their decision, like that of the Newport branch, to continue their existence purely as an Irish social club. Several former League branches in the Staffordshire area joined together to form the North Staffordshire Irish Reunion Committee under the Presidency of Canon O'Rourke.

Yet with hindsight Art O'Brien and his fellow-minded supporters would seem to have had no alternative choice but to take the necessary decisive steps that finally split the League. Maintaining the League's policy of non-intervention in Irish politics was effectively giving the pro-Treatyites a bloodless victory while their presence in all levels of authority throughout the ISDL organization impeded the impact of attempts by the anti-Treatyites to

1 *Freeman's Journal*, 7 September 1922.
2 *Catholic Herald*, 19 August 1922.
3 C.f. the Pontypridd branch - *ibid*, 22 July 1922.
4 Ibid, 12 August 1922.
5 *Freeman's Journal*, 15 August 1922.
use their leadership positions to commit the League to all out opposition to the Treaty. With the onset of the Civil War the previous existing status quo position of the League became untenable and so the anti-Treatyites had really no other option but to mobilise their forces and seek a formal organizational goal transformation accompanied by the necessary wholesale branch and individual membership expulsions that this process inevitably entailed.

Simmel\(^1\) and Aldrich\(^2\) suggested that organizations facing situations of intense intra-organizational conflict have three basic choices. They can simply ignore the divisive issue, but this tactic was clearly a non-starter for the ISDL given the very strong views on both sides with regards to the Treaty issue. Or they can try to dilute the level of intra-organizational tension by recruiting new members who are not committed to any of the competing viewpoints. Again this was clearly impossible at a time when the Treaty had so obviously divided the Irish community. The final choice involves the expulsion of one section by constricting the organizational boundaries and strengthening membership requirements by either enacting new rules like Art O'Brien's insistence on enforcing the secret 'Uphold the Republic' rule or by generally raising the level of ideological


conformation. Zald and Ash¹ argue that in certain circum-
stances the expulsion of dissidents does not weaken the 
organization but rather instead confers the valuable 
benefits of heightened internal consistency and consensus, 
thereby greatly facilitating the process of goal trans-
formation. Their argument is only however really applic-
able in the case of organizations expelling a minority 
deviant tendency whereas the minority anti-Treatyites in 
the ISDL had effectively expelled their opponents who 
undoubtedly constituted the majority of the League's 
membership.

By expelling the bulk of the League's membership the anti-
Treatyites certainly ensured their future organizational 
existence, albeit in a much weaker form than before. 
Their pro-Treaty opponents however made little use of the 
new situation and failed to effectively reorganize the 
League as a support organization for the Provisional Govern-
ment. P.J. Kelly's intentions to await the "return of 
peace to Ireland" before reconvening the adjourned 
Conference effectively committed the pro-Treaty section 
of the League to enforced inactivity as long as the Civil 
War lasted. Its duration turned out to be much longer than 
most had anticipated for contrary to the expectations on 
both sides, hostilities did not cease when the IRA withdrew 
from Dublin. The IRA, for a variety of often conflicting

¹ Mayer N. Zald and Roberta Ash, 'Social Movement 
Organizations. Growth, Decay and Change'. Social 
Forces, XLIV (1966), 327-41.
reasons, had effectively decided not to fight a major battle in Dublin. It mobilized less troops in the Capital than the National Army, which realizing the significance of maintaining its hold on Dublin had committed about a quarter of its eleven thousand personnel to the attack on the Four Courts. The IRA had considerably less arms than the National Army but appreciably more troops\(^1\) who could, and often did, obtain arms by attacking the small isolated garrisons the National Army was obliged to distribute piecemeal across the rest of the country. Instead of moving troops into Dublin when the fighting started, the IRA moved its men in the surrounding counties further south to consolidate the so-called 'Republic of Munster'. However by surrendering Dublin so easily the IRA ensured that it lost the war; for giving up the principal communication centre from which roads and railways radiate throughout Ireland, enabled the National Army to speedily dispatch the fast moving columns that rapidly retook the IRA occupied towns in the North, East and West of the country and sliced through the Midlands, cutting the Republican controlled rural areas into a series of disconnected localities. While the IRA moved its troops up from the deep South to defend an impossibly long 'Limerick-Waterford Line', troops using shipping, seized in Dublin Harbour, sailed around their defence positions to land on the relatively undefended shores of Kerry and Cork. Nowhere, except around the

\(^1\) For the respective balance of force see 'Commander in Chief's Report' P7/B /7/2/24, and 'Report of the Executive (IRA) Subcommittee' P7/B/58/19/1.
Limerick area did the IRA make any serious attempt to defend the towns it held; its leaders seemed to have an instinctive prejudice against fighting from fixed positions, preferring the fluidity of guerilla warfare. They unconvincingly argued that any sustained effort to hold a major town, particularly the capital city, would inevitably bring the British forces - still garrisoned in strength inside the Dublin area - into action alongside the National Army.  

But "bringing the British back into the War" was certainly a Republican objective immediately before the start of the Civil War and definitely the motivation behind the abortive campaign in Britain itself the next year.

The Republican leadership, though in reality the IRA was never really coordinated at anything above, and often a good deal below, Division level throughout the Civil War were confident when they evacuated their last urban stronghold in mid-August that they could through widespread guerilla warfare effectively prevent the new Free State from functioning. They believed that the new Government would be unable to provide sufficient troops to quell the IRA's numerous small guerilla units. But possession of Dublin - the financial centre of Ireland - and the other urban areas afforded the Free State the revenue with which to raise the necessary troops. Over 130,000 unemployed,

1 See General Macready's Situation Report of 1 July, 1922 CAB 24/137.
2 See O'Donnoghue op. cit., 260-72.
3 See Military Appreciation 12 Aug., 1922, CP 4165. CAB 24/138
4 Mitchell, op. cit., 150.
many of them embittered veterans of the British Army, offered the rapidly expanding National Army a fertile recruiting ground. At the beginning of July the National Army was authorized to expand its establishment over three-fold. With over two thousand would-be recruits in one day in Dublin alone, the National Army was to further double its size by the end of the Civil War when it had literally snuffed out guerrilla warfare by a saturation strategy. Big business enterprises offered to make up the difference in salaries for their employees temporarily enlisted for the duration of the War, while the Bank of Ireland gave six months paid leave to all its young male staff who it actively encouraged to join the National Army. Big business concerns - and many smaller enterprises as well - had enthusiastically welcomed the Truce and the ensuing Treaty. Their antipathy towards Republicans was further increased when the IRA levied a 'war tax' during its brief occupation of Cork and Limerick. The IRA's guerrilla campaign, which by the winter of 1922, essentially consisted of wrecking the communications system and in particular conducting a virtual 'scorched earth' offensive against the vital railway network, considerably dislocated an already ravaged economy and produced substantial further

1 'Expansion of the National Army', S 1302.
2 See Report by Major Whittaker (British Army Intelligence Officer), 19 Sept., 1922, CAB 24/139.
3 Freeman's Journal, 15 July, 1922.
5 Ibid, 15 July, 1922.
unemployment.

Of the IRA leadership, only Liam Mellowes advocated linking specifically radical economic policies to their war aims, but he was in prison and a voice literally crying in the wilderness.¹ Military tactics alone dominated the IRA's strategy, and these often actively operated against the poor, the small farmers and the workers whom the IRA leaders regarded as their natural allies but offered them few material prospects in return for their support. Buildings in Cork intended to house slum clearance families were burnt by the IRA to deny their possible use to the National Army.² The same practice was followed in the case of the Cleeves Creamery where the workers had formed a 'Soviet'³ and opposed all outside interference.⁴ The Workers Republic, printed in London by the Communist Party on behalf of its tiny Irish counterpart⁵, who were fighting with the Citizens Army alongside the IRA⁶ warned:

"if the Republicans reduce the struggle against the Free State to a merely military struggle, then the


² Catholic Herald, 19 Aug., 1922.


⁴ Calton Younger, op. cit., 397.


centralized power of the Capitalist State will crush them in a few months.\(^1\)

The author of this article was right but it took considerably longer than he envisaged. On the 21st August the Freeman's Journal in bold headlines proclaimed: "National Army - Supreme from Donegal to Cork." But on the following day Michael Collins, Commander in Chief of the National Army, was killed in his own rural Cork homeland. His death - because of its particular circumstances, shot at long range in a hastily organized ambush - has become Ireland's equivalent of the 'Kennedy assassination conspiracy' with various authors suggesting that he was alternatively killed by his own guards or by a British agent.\(^2\) Whatever the precise manner of his death the actual incident had a considerable impact on the Irish community in Britain, particularly in London where he had spent the formative years of his revolutionary period, - he was still at the time of his death the Southern English representative on the Supreme Council of the IRB. A striking photograph shows an Irish girl kneeling in a London street, rosary beads in her hand, as she prayed in front of a newspaper seller's placard announcing "Collins Dead" - oblivious of the puzzled crowd surrounding her.\(^3\) The Catholic Herald devoted a full page to his death and masses were said in many Catholic churches.\(^4\)

1. Workers Republic, 1 July, 1922.
4. For details of the many masses see Catholic Herald, 9 Sept., 1922; Catholic Times, 2 and 16 Sept., 1922.
Over 3,000 people attended a requiem for Collins and Griffiths in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, and St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle, was packed by a capacity congregation for a High Mass celebrated in front of a tricolour draped catafalque. Tributes to the dead Irish leader came from all sides of the now very divided Irish political movement in Britain, from branches of the virtually defunct United Irish League and both Pro-Treaty and Anti-Treaty ISDL branches. Sean McGrath spoke of the "loss of a great Irish leader" - of a comrade who had become an opponent. A large number of Irish people living in London crossed over to Dublin for the funeral where they joined Art O'Brien, following his release from Portlaoise Prison where he had spent most of August after his second arrest by the National Army.

But even as they stood around the graveside in Glasnevin, the rifle fire of a nearby IRA ambush was a vivid reminder of the impossibility of recreating, on a permanent basis, the old spirit of unity that had brought them temporarily together again. The death, the previous month, of Sean O'Daire had the same traumatic effect on the Irish

1 Manchester Evening News, 11 Sept., 1922.
2 Freeman's Journal, 1 Sept., 1922.
6 Ibid, 28 Aug., 1922.
7 Ibid, 24 Aug., 1922.
8 Catholic Herald, 2 Sept., 1922.
Movement in Glasgow as Collin's death had in London. O'Daire's death was particularly ironic for he was killed in ambush by an IRA unit led by Frank Carty - the man he had freed from a Glasgow prison van, a year and a very different war, ago.¹

The Newcastle ISDL branch reconstituted itself as the Michael Collins Branch of the Irish Free State League²—an organization which however appears to have been confined to that city. The Eskwinning branch decided to pursue an independent course of action in favour of the Free State,³ while the Colne branch decided to become a purely social club.⁴ This disintegration and fragmentation of the pro-Free State ISDL branches was considerably hastened by the uncertain and contradictory policies of the pro-Treaty ISDL national officers. At the end of September, Hugh Lee and P.J. Kelly informed ISDL branches that they intended to reconvene the adjourned Conference (April) in November.⁵ But no such conference appears to have been held in 1922, and in December Hugh Lee told a newspaper reporter that he now believed the "League had accomplished its purpose"⁶, a sentiment most definitely shared by the Catholic Herald which strongly argued that the Free State did not require

¹ Freeman's Journal, 28 July, 1922; Times, 29 July, 1922.
² Catholic Herald, 30 Sept., 1922.
³ Ibid, 9 Sept., 1922.
⁴ Ibid
⁵ Catholic Herald, 30 Sept., 1922.
the support of any Irish organization in Britain.¹

Lee's change of heart was probably influenced to a considerable extent by the apparent failure of the Pro-Treaty ISDL members to make much headway in his own town, Manchester. Here as in most of the other Irish communities there were two ISDLs, existing side by side in an atmosphere of mutual recrimination. After the July Conference the Anti-Treaty supporters held new elections for branch and district Committee Officeships but the existing Pro-Treaty Officers refused to recognize the legality of these. Both factions claimed to be the legitimate ISDL² but the local paper which investigated this "truly Hibernian situation"³ concluded that the Anti-Treaty ISDL with five branches and about three hundred and fifty members was the strongest in terms of active membership.⁴ The existence of two competing organizations, with the same name was hardly conducive to attracting new members, uncertain as to which of the factions was right and this unfortunate situation led the Standing Committee of the Anti-Treaty ISDL to discuss the "advisability of changing the name of the organization"⁵ to avoid any further confusion. Lee's views as to the desirability of winding up the League were no doubt also considerably influenced by a very unpleasant event that had

¹ Catholic Herald, 7 Oct., 1922.
³ Ibid, 19 Aug., 1922.
⁴ Ibid, 13 Dec., 1922.
⁵ Minutes, 13 Nov., 1922, Ms 8427.
occurred the weekend before he gave the newspaper interview. The Annual Manchester Martyrs' Commemoration attended by several thousand people in remembrance of the three Fenians, hanged there in 1867, broke up in "wild disorder"\(^1\) when Republican and Free State supporters violently clashed. Manchester was not the only place to witness scenes of violent conflict between rival Irish exile factions that day. A particularly nasty confrontation also occurred on the other side of the Atlantic, in New York\(^2\). In both places the cause of the disturbances was the same, underlying simmering tensions brought to the boil by a traumatic development in the Irish Civil War; the introduction of special Military Court Martials empowered to inflict the death penalty for a wide range of offences without any possibility of appeal.\(^3\) The first executions took place in mid November\(^4\) but it was the execution of Erskine Childers, a week later, that sparked off the confrontation in Manchester. Childers had been responsible for transporting 100 rifles bought in 1914, with money raised by an Irish committee in London, to Ireland. Afterwards this former Clerk to the House of Commons had joined the Royal Navy but subsequently became the leading Sinn Fein propagandist and a determined foe of the Treaty. His execution, for the possession of a pistol given to him by Michael Collins, brought home to the Irish in Britain and elsewhere the

\(^1\) Manchester Evening News, 27 November, 1922.
\(^2\) Manchester Guardian, 27 November, 1922.
\(^3\) Dail Eirann Debates, 28 September, 1922, Col. 931.
\(^4\) Freeman's Journal, 18 November, 1922.
\(^5\) Ibid, 25 November, 1922.
ruthless determination of the Provisional Government to crush the militant opponents of the Treaty.

From the manner in which the pro-Free State Government press editorially ignored the executions it is apparent that they were greatly troubled by them, including even their staunch supporters who had previously advocated a tougher line. The IRA responded to this new tactic by shooting dead a prominent Government TD - General Sean Hales whose brother was a leading IRA commander.¹ As a reprisal the Government executed the four senior IRA prisoners it held.² Even the stringent military censorship imposed on the press in Ireland could not contain the flood of protest from public bodies against what Tom Johnson, the leader of the Official Opposition in the Dail denounced as "Murder, an illegal act of vengeance".³ The earlier executions carried out after a summary court martial did at least have some semblance of legality as the law authorizing them had been enacted by the Dail. Executing without trial four men arrested months before at the fall of the Four Courts was as the Government freely admitted no more than an 'official reprisal'.⁴ As such this action was not one that found favour among many in the Irish community in Britain. The very timing of the executions on the feast day of the Immaculate Conception alienated many Catholics.

¹ Curran, op. cit., 265.
² Curran, op. cit., 265.
³ Freeman's Journal, 9 December, 1922.
⁴ Ibid.
Two of the men executed had close connections with the Irish National Movement in Britain; Liam Mellows had been born in England and as Director of Purchases, during the War of Independence, remained in very close contact with the various organizations supplying munitions, while Rory O'Connor had been the OC Britain during the IRA's phase of offensive activity there. It was not an auspicious start for the Free State which had officially come into existence, two days earlier, when the King had signed the requisite proclamation following the passing of the Irish Free State Constitution's Act; opposed only by the two Communist MPs in the House of Commons, Newbold and Saklatvala.

The revulsion felt against the executions at least partly explains the almost total failure of the new Free State Government to organize an effective, or indeed any real support movement among the Irish in Britain. Towards the close of 1922 the Pro-Treaty Sinn Fein Clubs in Scotland formed themselves into an Irish Exiles League with the intention of organizing throughout Britain. But despite having the active goodwill of the Free State Government, who offered the services of their Northern Boundary Commission officials, the new organization never really took off in Scotland and succeeded only in putting out a few isolated offshoots in North East England. The majority of

1 Curran, op. cit., 263.

2 Freeman's Journal, 28 Nov., 1922.

3 Ibid, 19 Dec., 1922.

ISDL branches broke away from the new Anti-Treaty leadership after the July Conference and while some, as we observed, then immediately dissolved themselves, many still remained in existence for some time either as social clubs or independent political organizations. In addition to the potential manpower resources afforded by the ISDL Pro-Treaty membership the Free State could, at least theoretically, count on the support of the majority of members in two other existing organizations.

The Irish National Forrester, the Irish Nationalist Beneficial Society, recorded a membership of over 20,000 in 1922. Its important influence in the umbrella worldwide INF movement can be seen from the attendance at the following year's International Congress held in Dublin. 111 delegates represented branches in Ireland itself, 47 delegates came from England and 39 from Scotland. The Cabinet's Intelligence Advisor reported the INF membership was largely in favour of the Free State and that the members were "well represented in Northern English industrial areas". Its membership was indeed largely confined to the North with a few branches in the Midlands and the South; a geographical distribution corresponding to the earlier Irish immigrant settlement patterns and closely paralleling the distribution of the United Irish League branches, with which it shared a largely common membership. The formation

1 Catholic Herald, 21 April, 1923.
3 ROR 174, 28 Sept., 1922. CP 4242. CAB 24/139.
of the Irish Free State forced the INF in England and Scotland to acquire a certain degree of autonomy from the parent organization in Ireland, to satisfy the requirements of the Registrar of Friendly Societies in England and in particular Northern Ireland. The tensions that stemmed from the enforced formation of separate Regional Councils for England and Scotland produced a de facto breakaway from central authority that ultimately encompassed a large number of branches and considerably weakened the overall organizational effectiveness of the INF. The second organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, effectively duplicated much of the INF's work but had a much smaller membership. According to the Cabinet's Intelligence Advisor,

"the leaders of the Ancient Order of Hibernians support the Free State but they have few followers among the ordinary London Irishmen."

To a considerable degree the AOH belonged to a different era and depended for much of whatever strength it retained on the maintenance of a high level of inter-communal sectarian tensions in particularistic places like Liverpool and Glasgow.

In any case the leaders and members of the INF and AOH were not accustomed to acting politically in their own right. Rather the membership of both organizations had traditionally pursued their political aims through the United Irish League. The most that the Free State

1 Catholic Herald, 11 Aug., 1923.
2 ROR 192, 6 Feb., 1923. CP 91(23). CAB 24/158.
Government could expect of them from an organizational point of view were simple resolutions of support and a firm resolve on the part of their leaders to deny Anti-Treatyites a platform at their, largely, social events.

The key to their effective co-option as a working support organization in Britain on behalf of the Free State lay in reactivating the almost defunct central UIL organization and reviving its moribund local branches. But neither the signing of the Treaty nor the formation of a Provisional, and subsequently, a Free State Government evoked any signs from the UIL leaders of their willingness to effectively reorganize themselves as a support organization acting on behalf of the new Irish Free State and its Government. Developments in the British political sphere did however force the UIL and in particular its President T.P. O'Connor, who by this time in effect functioned as its constitutional, - but only just -, monarch, to reconsider the organization's future in the light of the changed political relationship between Britain and Ireland. The Lloyd George Coalition had run into trouble on many fronts both at home and abroad. The short lived post war boom had now run out of steam and all the signs clearly pointed to an ever deepening economic recession but as neither the Conservative nor Liberal parties had any fundamental economic differences this was certainly not sufficiently important to cause the collapse of the Coalition Government though

1 For example the London AOH Convention passed a resolution supporting the Free State Government, Freemen's Journal, 29 Jan., 1923.
it did fuel a series of by election reverses. Lloyd George's Irish policy, culminating in the Treaty Settlement of December 1921, was undoubtedly the single most influential factor in the formation of the anti-Coalition back bench Conservative grouping known as the Diehards. Mostly belonging to the old Tory landowner section of the Conservative Party these MPs tended to have more personal connections with Ireland, either in the form of land holdings or ancestry and in some cases birth places, than the majority of their party colleagues. They had strong and powerful connections in the armed forces, the former Naval Intelligence Director, Vice Admiral Sir Reginald Hall, and the former CIGS, Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson were Diehards. Their influence was sufficiently powerful to prevent the appointment of General Bryne - regarded by them as a 'Sinn Fein supporter' - as the head of the Home Office's Intelligence section in succession to Sir Basil Thomson, whose sacking they regarded as a 'blow against Ulster'.¹ Fifty eight Conservative MPs - though not all of these were actual members of the Diehard group² - voted against the Irish Treaty - and thirty seven openly opposed the Government over its response to the House of Commons debate that immediately followed the assassination of Sir Henry Wilson - a man regarded by some Diehards as a future Tory Prime Minister.³ But important as they were as a focal point for the rapidly developing anti-Coalition feeling inside

¹ Kinnear, op. cit., 97.
² Defined as those who actually signed Diehard manifestos.
³ Kinnear, op. cit., 83.
the mainstream of the Conservative Party, the Diehards never looked capable of mobilizing a decisive Conservative Backbench vote against the Coalition.

Unfortunately for Lloyd George, June - the month in which Field Marshal Wilson was assassinated - was also the month, the great 'Honours Scandal', slowly ticking away for years just below the surface of political life, finally blew up in his face. The subsequent and very public disclosures that Lloyd George had through the offices of Maundy Gregory and others 'sold Honours' to noveau riche businessmen - many of them war profiteers - on a sliding scale, starting at £10,000 for an ordinary knighthood and £35,000 for a baronetcy, lost Lloyd George much of his remaining credibility which by this time was, in truth, not very much. It was in this atmosphere of scarcely concealed mistrust on the part of most Conservatives and outright hostility from the Diehards: that Lloyd George proceeded to finally destroy his administration with an ill thought out, badly planned, foreign intervention that, almost brought Britain into a new military conflict; at a time when the British population definitely did not want any fresh foreign adventures, particularly if they seemed likely to lead to war. In Asia Minor Lloyd George's pro-Greek policy had already antagonized many Conservative backbenchers who favoured the new Turkish state created on the Asian side of the Straits by Atta Kemal. In August 1922 the Turkish Nationalist Army totally routed the Greeks at Smyrna and

1 Rowland, op. cit., 574-75.
advanced towards the British positions on the Straits at Chanak. Lloyd George mistakenly tried to use the resultant 'Chanak crisis' to whip up a 'war fever' in Britain as a prelude to a sudden General Election. But at the dramatic and historic Carlton Club meeting of the 19th of October 1922, the Conservative back benches finally rebelled against the leadership of Chamberlain and "startled themselves" by decisively rejecting any further participation in the Coalition. Lloyd George's Irish policy was probably the single most important event that influenced the Carlton Club vote. He immediately resigned and Bonar Law, who succeeded Austen Chamberlain as the Conservative leader, became the Prime Minister of a Caretaker Government in the interim period before the General Election held on the 15th November, 1922.

The forthcoming General Election forced the UIL to undertake a limited series of activities initially designed to mobilize support for their parliamentary candidates. At a hastily convened Caxton Hall conference, in London, T.P. O'Connor launched an appeal to "reconstitute UIL branches and hold meetings of Irish electors in all possible constituencies". The attendance at these meetings held during the following week showed the extent of the

3 Ibid, 139.
4 Freeman's Journal, 26 Oct., 1922.
UIL's decline since its pre-war heyday. Two hundred delegates attended the Glasgow convention\(^1\) and another 170 delegates representing 35 branches in Yorkshire, Lancashire and Staffordshire - the traditional UIL heartland - met at Manchester, to discuss not just the mobilization of the Irish vote in Britain but the future of the League itself.\(^2\) They agreed to T.P. O'Connor's proposal that the UIL, having outlived its usefulness, should sponsor a conference after the election to discuss the future representation of Irish and, significantly, Catholic interests in Britain. Their proposed new organization was however received with little real enthusiasm and encountered much outright hostility. The press was almost universally hostile to the new initiative with only the Catholic Times giving it a very cautious welcome.\(^3\) The Manchester Evening News - covering much of the old UIL heartland - believed it would not attract much support and declared that the UIL had decayed beyond the point of resurrection.\(^4\) The Liverpool Daily Post followed the majority of the press in opposing outright the proposed new organization.\(^5\) The most virulent opposition came, not unexpectedly, from the Catholic Herald which initially ridiculed the UIL initiative as "Another Corpse Revival - Rip Van Winkle has woken up.\(^6\)

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1 Freeman's Journal, 2 Nov., 1922.
2 Freeman's Journal, 1 Nov., 1922.
3 Catholic Times, 7 Oct., 1922.
6 Catholic Herald, 14 Oct., 1922.
but in the following weeks' edition the very idea of an "Irish National Party" in Great Britain was denounced as an "anachronism and an absurdity, it should be wiped out". ¹ The Catholic Herald subsequently suggested that the new organization was simply a ruse created to pay off the UIL's bank overdraft. ²

But to the Cabinet's Intelligence Advisor, T.P. O'Connor's proposal "to organize moderate opinion" was a very welcome development for,

"all through the recent agitation, moderate Irish opinion in this country remained voiceless and the followers of the old Nationalist Party allowed irresponsible Sinn Feiners and Self Determination Leaguers to dominate the situation".³

It was a vain hope as the author was obliged to admit in his subsequent Reports - "T.P. O'Connor's effort appears to be doomed to failure", ⁴ it is "encountering much lethargy".⁵ The Special Branch was also wrong in their assumptions that the new organization planned to link the old Nationalist movement in Britain firmly to the new Free State Government. The old Home Rule movement in Ireland played only a minimal role in the political life of the new State. Many of its supporters refused to have anything to do with either of the rival Sinn Fein factions with

¹ Catholic Herald, 28 Oct., 1922.
² Ibid, 4 Nov., 1922.
³ ROR 175, 5 Oct., 1922. CP 4264. CAB 24/139.
⁴ ROR 179, 19 Oct., 1922. CP 4296. CAB 24/139.
⁵ ROR 178, 26 Oct., 1922. CP 4292. CAB 24/139.
over a quarter of a million voters casting their ballots against them in the June 1922 Election. Many old Home Rulers regarded the Treaty as offering little more than the 1914 Settlement and in fact quite a number of irreconcilable Nationalists believed that its recognition of partition was a considerable step backwards. Only a handful of old Nationalists became TDs in the new Dail and, with only some 3% of TDs in the 1923 Dail having started off their political life in the old Parliamentary Party, the Nationalists had less than half the representation of their former Unionist opponents¹ who joined Cumann-na Gheadheal.

The new Irish Government went to considerable lengths to conciliate the minority Unionist section in Southern Ireland and in particular appointed a disproportionate number to the Senate but made little effort to co-opt the old Home Rulers who eventually founded a new Irish National League in 1926.² The UIL in Britain believed that its members had been deliberately passed over by the Free State when it appointed its representatives in Britain, particularly with the nomination of James MacNeill a brother of the Minister of Education, a former Indian Civil Service employee as its first High Commissioner in London. Under his direction Free State officials in Britain maintained a very low profile, doing very little to mobilize political opinion within the Irish community.

¹ McCracken, op. cit., 89.
² Catholic Herald, 18 Sept., 1926.
especially on the Northern Ireland issue.\textsuperscript{1} If the appointment of MacNeill was a disappointment to UIL leaders, the Free State's acceptance of Tim Healy as the British nominee for the new position of Governor General certainly infuriated them; for Healy had been the most virulent of Parnell's opponents, inside the Nationalist movement, after the famous 'split' occasioned by Parnell's relationship with Kitty O'Shea. He had been expelled from the Irish National League of Great Britain\textsuperscript{2} and even among the anti-Parnellite forces was regarded as a maverick, "a brilliant disaster"\textsuperscript{3} who had allowed his own personal prejudices, and unrelenting hostility to those who opposed him, to fatally dominate his political judgement. His appointment as Governor General confirmed the UIL's suspicions of the Free State Government's hostility towards Parnellism\textsuperscript{4} and virtually assured that the reconstituted UIL would refuse to give anything other than lukewarm support to the Dublin Government. It certainly ended any hope the Free State Government may have entertained of co-opting the proposed new organization.

John Dillon, the leader of the old Nationalist movement in Ireland, agreed with T.P. O'Connor's plans to reorganize the UIL into a new organization whose primary focus would be orientated towards the problems faced by the Irish.

\textsuperscript{1} Catholic Herald, 4 Oct., 1924.
\textsuperscript{2} Lyons Dillon, op. cit., 169.
\textsuperscript{3} Curran, op. cit., 263.
\textsuperscript{4} Catholic Herald, 30 Aug., 1924.
community in Britain rather than towards involvement in domestic Irish politics. He argued that the UIL must now

"make a bold effort to capture the Gaelic revival movement and the social side of Irish life."\(^1\)

The Home Office noted at the same time "the Irish in many areas are tired of national politics" but had "run quite a number of Irish Catholic candidates in the Borough elections."\(^2\)

The Nationalists in Britain only fielded two candidates in the November 1922 General Election. T.P. O'Connor was once again returned unopposed in his Liverpool Scotland constituency but in the next door Exchange seat the former Belfast MP, and Vice President of the AOH, Joe Devlin polled a very respectable 12,614 votes, representing almost 45% of the voting electorate\(^3\) and demonstrating that, in Liverpool at least, its very particularistic form of Irish Nationalism was still an important political force.

T.P. O'Connor claimed that Devlin failed to attract as many Liberal votes as in previous elections\(^4\) while Devlin himself blamed his defeat on the unprecedented Conservative mobilization of their female supporters\(^5\) and certainly the Tories had poured a very large number of canvassers

\(^1\) Lyons, Dillon, op. cit., 473.
\(^2\) ROR 179, Nov., 1922. CP 4294. CAB 24/139.
\(^3\) F.W.S. Craig, Minor Parties at British Parliamentary Elections 1885-1974, (1975), 47.
\(^4\) Manchester Guardian, 21 Nov., 1922.
\(^5\) Catholic Herald, 25 Nov., 1922.
aided by unprecedented financial resources into the constituency.¹ T.P. O'Connor only endorsed one other candidate, an independent Liberal in the Camberwell constituency², but he was defeated. The *Freeman's Journal* advised the Irish in Britain "whenever they see a Diehard head let them hit it".³ But despite Lloyd George's claim that opposition to the Irish Treaty was the main motivation behind the Carlton House vote, that had led to the General Election,⁴ Ireland never really surfaced as an election issue and even the Conservative Manifesto only contained a brief reference to it⁵; while a three hundred strong Northern Irish Unionist delegation sent over to 'influence' the Conservative election campaign returned home, in disgust, having failed to get an invitation to appear even on Diehard platforms.⁶ Charles Diamond campaigning for Labour "on an anti-Socialist" platform lost in Rotherhithe to a Conservative, who had produced a leaflet suggesting that Diamond "should go back to Ireland".⁷

The Conservatives gained 345 seats in the new Parliament while Labour with 142 seats now became the official

¹ P.J. Waller, op. cit., 291.
² The Star, 13 Nov., 1922; *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Nov., 1922.
⁵ Kinnear, op. cit., 139.
⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Nov., 1922; Catholic Herald, 18 Nov., 1922.
⁷ Catholic Herald, 25 Nov., 1922.
opposition leaving the divided Liberals with 117 seats in third place. Labour appears to have captured the majority of the Irish vote in Britain,

"not so much for their love of Labour; there is a lot of feeling that Labour did not very actively oppose Lloyd George's Irish policy between 1920-21 but because of their fear and distrust of what is called the 'Ascendancy Party.'"

But the extent to which Labour's past attitudes to Ireland alienated Irish voters in Britain was probably considerably overestimated; certainly the Special Branch wrongly suggested that Arthur Henderson might lose the East Newcastle by election of January 1923 because he

"is not popular with many of the Irish voters and is being reproached with having acquiesced in the executions of 1916 when he was in Government." It was a mistake shared with the Daily News who also mistakenly claimed that the "Self Determination League and the Irish Republican Brotherhood are big powers on Tyneside," but J. Macnamara, who described himself as President of the Irish Labour Party and the Self Determination League, issued a statement claiming that the Irish community there did support Henderson. His victory margin of over 4,000 votes was ironically the same as the Daily News estimate of the size of the constituency's Irish vote. An attempt by the Manchester Pro-Treaty ISDL

1 A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit., 256.
2 ROR 178, 26 Oct., 1922. CP 4292. CAB 24/139.
4 Daily News, 10 Jan., 1923.
6 Ibid, 10 Jan., 1923.
to mobilize the Irish vote on behalf of candidates supporting the North East Boundary Commission, on which their leader R.J. Purcell served as the Northern English representative, was publicly opposed by their Anti-Treaty counterparts who argued that no organization had the right to tell the Irish in Britain as to how they should cast their votes.2

The Anti-Treaty ISDL however showed few signs themselves of being able to mobilize Irish opinion in England and Wales in support of its cause. The autumn and winter of 1922 was a very bleak period for their organization which faced not so much outright opposition in the Irish community, though this did exist in varying degrees in different areas, but the much more debilitating and morale sapping mass apathy that permeated the community to such an extent that Art O'Brien wrote:

“there is very little enthusiasm for anything here at the moment”,3

“our people here are disheartened and suspicious of everything and their attitude of mind tends rather to be destructive rather than constructive”.4

His condemnation of his members' destructive attitudes was undoubtedly a reference to the problems faced by his close comrade Sean McGrath, who was forced to take the

1 Catholic Herald, 11 Nov., 1922.
2 Manchester Evening News, 10 Jan., 1923.
3 Art O'Brien to R. Brennan, 4 Sept., 1922, Ms 8456.
4 O'Brien to Brennan (undated letter but probably Autumn 1922), Ms 8456.
extreme step of submitting his resignation, as General Secretary of the ISDL, to counteract allegations that he was not totally committed to the Anti-Treaty Cause. McGrath's critics inside the League, who seemed mainly to be those hard line Sinn Fein members, who had opposed the formation of the ISDL, claimed that by attending Michael Collins' funeral and by sanctioning a Free State Army volley over his wife's grave he had given grave offence to other members. The Standing Committee managed to persuade McGrath to withdraw his resignation but this episode, ironically at a time when British Intelligence was reporting McGrath was again involved in arms purchases, was a foretaste of the bitter personal attacks on O'Brien and McGrath that were ultimately to lead to the final disappearance of the League. It is also interesting to consider that McGrath's critics were purely political activists, while his military comrades imprisoned in Kilmainhan spontaneously knelt and said the rosary for their former leader when they heard of Collins' death.

Art O'Brien, had himself lost some of his authority and prestige within the League as a result of the enforced closure of his Republican Government Representative's office due to a severe lack of funds. At the same time the new Irish Government renewed with vigour the legal

1 See O'Brien Ms 8427.
2 ROR 180, 9 Nov., 1922. CP 4302. CAB 24/140.
3 Barry, op. cit., 183.
4 O'Brien Ms 8459.
action first started by Michael Collins to regain control of funds originally entrusted to O'Brien by the First Dail. This action was part of a concerted drive by the new Irish Government to deny their opponents access to funds, particularly in the United States.\(^1\) In Art O'Brien's case this legal action ultimately became another source of disagreement between himself and De Valera, who initially instructed O'Brien to defend the action but appears not to have provided the requisite funds for the very expensive legal costs.\(^2\) Art O'Brien's own personal position in the Republican hierarchy in the immediate period after the fall of the Four Courts is somewhat unclear. Hutchinson, the Scottish Sinn Fein leader, asked in August 1922 for the appointment in his country of a 'liaison officer' between the Army and Sinn Fein similar to the position held by Art O'Brien in England.\(^3\) O'Brien however seems to have held no duly authorized political position in the Anti-Treaty forces for the first four months of the Civil War. He was not of course the only Republican leader to find himself in this uncertain position. De Valera himself, perhaps shrewdly realizing that there was little he could do in the immediate period, refused to accept anything but a humble volunteer's rank in the IRA; but following Liam Lynch's cavalier rejection of discussion on the necessity of establishing the future relationship

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1 *Times*, 23 Aug., 1922 - The Free State Government was granted an injunction in New York, freezing £510,000 of De Valera's American loan.

2 See Art O'Brien File, 1922-1936, S 1605.

3 S 1859.
between the IRA and the Anti-Treaty TDs;\(^1\) he then demanded that either the IRA recognize the existence of the political movement or the TDs would resign. The IRA Executive's Meeting of the 16/17th October 1922 decided that a new civil Republican Government should be formed\(^2\) and the following week the available Anti-Treaty Second Dail TDs met secretly to elect De Valera as President of the Republic and the new Council of State. The IRA Executive formally pledged its allegiance to this new 'Government' but as it still retained the final right to approve or reject peace terms to end the Civil War, the Army in effect remained the supreme authority.\(^3\) Shortly after his election De Valera reappointed Art O'Brien as the official London Representative of the new Republican Government.\(^4\) This action may possibly have been what Gaughan describes as the

"establishment of a link between the political wing of the Anti-Treaty forces as represented by De Valera, Stack and Art O'Brien.\(^5\)"

As O'Brien certainly had, by his visits to Ireland and his accompanying spells of imprisonment, maintained his contact with the Anti-Treaty political leadership in Ireland.

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\(^1\) See the captured correspondence between De Valera and Lynch which was subsequently published as *Correspondence of Mr Eamonn de Valera and Others*, (Dublin, 1923).

\(^2\) O'Donoghue, op. cit., 270-77.

\(^3\) Macardle, op. cit., 807-8, and O'Donoghue, op. cit., 342-43.

\(^4\) S 1605.

\(^5\) Gaughan, 'Stack', op. cit., 291.
The restoration of his personal official position, though it may have improved O'Brien's morale, did little to improve the fast declining fortunes of the ISDL, now but a shadow of its former pre-Civil War strength. The surviving branch minutes - largely confined to London reports - depict an organization rapidly losing members and unable to instil any real sense of purpose among its depleted ranks. The fact that the November London District Committee meeting was "so poorly attended that the bulk of the work was deferred to a special meeting"¹ indicates that the cancer of apathy gnawing its way through the rank and file supporters had even penetrated the middle rank leadership. Ironically this poorly attended District Committee was the first held after the change in representation which increased the number of branch delegates from one to three irrespective of membership size. This increased representation was probably an attempt to involve a greater number of the dwindling membership, in the running of the League, and it was also no doubt an effort to camouflage the effective loss of almost half the London branches in the first four months after the July Conference. In a bid to conceal the demise of some of these, no longer functioning branches, O'Brien ordered the amalgamation of the existing branches on a new area pattern that 'twinned' functioning branches with 'ghost' branches.² Such a neat paper reorganization could not solve the many problems

¹ Circular to delegates, 20 Nov., 1922, Ms 8427.
² O'Brien to Purcell, 23 Oct., 1922, Ms 8435.
facing the local branches. Writing from Twickenham once a flourishing large branch, Joe Fowler, who was fast emerging as one of the new hard line local Republican leaders, vividly described the "great struggle to" maintain our outpost of the faith...taxing to the utmost one's enthusiasm and energy, but the maintenance of every Republican centre is so essential."¹ Art O'Brien in, an otherwise very frank, assessment of the organization's position tried to suggest in a circular, to all the remaining branches, that if the League could survive this current very difficult period then "our now small centres will form the nucleus of bigger activities to come". But for the moment, he suggested that "if we cannot meet in large halls as formerly, let us meet even in the smallest of rooms if necessary" before concluding with an exhortation, common to organizations facing much reduced interest in their message, "if the multitudes will no longer come to hear our gospels let us preach to the few."²

O'Brien's reference to the League's inability to hold meetings in large halls should not be taken as an indication of its total failure to attract an audience sufficiently big to fill such halls. About eleven hundred people heard Mary MacSwiney vehemently denounce the Free State Government at the Essex Hall commemoration of her brother's death held under the auspices of the ISDL.³

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¹ Letter 22 Nov., 1922, Ms 8427.
² Circular, undated but probably September/October 1922, Ms 8436.
³ Freeman's Journal, 26 Oct., 1922. ROR 179, November 1922. CP 4294. CAB 24/139.
This was however one of the few meetings where the Special Branch proved unable to influence the hall owner to deny the League its facilities. Special Branch harassment of the League even extended to the definitely illegal practice of stopping the postal delivery of a large number of ISDL leaflets sent out to the local branches. In Ireland itself, the ever wary eye of the official military censor, ensured the ISDL was very rarely mentioned in newspapers. This was a considerable setback for an organization severely crippled by the inability to resume the publication of its own organ and therefore totally dependent on external publicity. The burning of the total supplies of the Catholic Herald for Southern Ireland, by the IRA during its occupation of Cork, ensured that organ's unceasing hostility to everything connected with the Republican cause; which went as far as denouncing De Valera as a "hybrid Spaniard of alleged Jewish extraction", and it only mentioned the Anti-Treaty ISDL whenever the reference was particularly unfavourable to the

1 Art O'Brien described how the Special Branch successfully persuaded Islington Council to reject ISDL hall booking applications. See letter 27 Feb., 1923, Ms 8427.

2 ROR 168, 17 Aug., 1922. CP 4164. CAB 24/138 - it is apparently contrary to the Post Office regulations not to deliver any mail which is definitely not of an obscene nature.

3 Catholic Herald, 5 Aug., 1922.

4 Ibid, 23 Sept., 1922; The Catholic Herald was, and as the twenties proceeded became even more, noted for its virulent anti-semitic tone.
organization. The various Republican newsheets like War News and Poblacht na h Eireann, produced underground in Ireland under very difficult circumstances, only reached England in very small quantities if at all. The Pro-Treaty ISDL also failed to produce their own newspaper, but the Free State Government continued to produce an edition of the Dail Eireann Bulletin from its London office. This however confined itself almost totally to reporting events in the North East of Ireland where, as the Catholic Herald reminded its readers, the campaign of assassination had not abated since the partition of the island but had instead reached such a level of ferocity that a new section of Belfast's Catholic Milltown cemetery had been totally filled in two years solely by Pogrom victims.¹

By means of this Bulletin and through its Northern Boundaries Commission the Free State Government attempted, with considerable success, to prevent the Anti-Treaty forces in Britain from utilizing the plight of the Northern Catholics as a means of mobilizing support for their campaign against the new Irish Government. It is however almost impossible to estimate the potential size of the support within the Irish community in Britain for the Anti-Treaty cause in Ireland. Kelly in his statement condemning the reconvening of the adjourned ISDL Conference claimed he was convinced that,

"90% of the Irish in Great Britain are in favour of giving the Free State party and the Provisional

¹ Catholic Herald, 19 Aug., 1922.
Government every opportunity and support in giving effect to their policy.  

The British Cabinet were informed,

"more than 90% of the Irish in Great Britain are in favour of the Free State and the remaining small minority are not among those who count socially, politically or in the commercial world."  

In an earlier report the Special Branch bluntly, if somewhat unempirically, analyzed the respective socio-economic composition of the Pro and Anti-Treaty supporters in terms of

"the more respectable and responsible people supporting the Provisional Government, the cranks and roughs the Republicans."

Yet as my analysis of the social status of the ISDL's leadership shows, men like Art O'Brien, Martin Maloney and George Clancy can hardly be dismissed as "roughs" or as not "counting in the commercial world." Attempts to even tentatively locate the socio-economic source of Anti-Treaty support within the Irish community in Britain are considerably impeded by the almost total lack of attention given to this topic in works dealing with the Civil War in Ireland. Few Irish sociologists would disagree with McCracken's very generalized observation that,

"the Pro-Treaty Party which stood for peace and ordered Government won the support of the conservative, propertied class in the country, the large farmers, the leaders in industry and commerce and the well established professional men. The Anti-Treaty Party relied chiefly on the small farmers, shopkeepers and sections of the artisan and labourer class."  

1 Irish Independent, 27 July, 1922.  
2 ROR 184, 7 Dec., 1922. CP 4353. CAB 24/140.  
3 ROR 162, 6 July, 1922. CP 4090. CAB 24/137.  
4 McCracken, op. cit., 113.
Yet this must remain as only a very generalized observation for there were too many exceptions on either side for it to be anything else. Rumpf evaluating the role of the farmers in the Civil War suggests that in general the more prosperous dairy and cereal crop areas where the emphasis was on production for a market, especially the British export market, favoured the Treaty whereas the subsistence farming regions of the much less fertile West were by and large Anti-Treaty.¹ Lysaght however observes that the IRA, despite its numerical concentration in the West, was considerably hindered by its earlier campaign against landless labourers occupying large tracts of under utilized land and that these lumpen proletariat tended to enlist in the paid Free State Army.² A British military observer noted that "unemployment" seemed to be a substantially more important motivation than fervour for the Treaty among most recruits to the Free State Army.³ A Free State Government Minister claimed that one in five of the country's school teachers - jobs commonly regarded as the most secure positions in the Irish labour market - were militant Anti-Treatyites.⁴ But at this moment we must frankly confess to our inability to do more than give a very impressionistic glimpse of the socio-economic composition of Anti and Pro-Treaty forces. This situation will unfortunately remain so until Irish sociologists and

¹ Rumpf, op. cit., 68.
² Lysaght, op. cit., 69.
³ Major Whittaker. CAB 24/139.
⁴ Catholic Herald, 6 Jan., 1923.
historians turn their attention to a wide ranging series of local empirical investigations in the style pioneered by Fitzpatrick\(^1\) whose seminal work unfortunately stops before the onset of the Civil War.

The Irish Civil War was above else a conflict motivated by different interpretations of the nationalist ideology that had fuelled the earlier War of Independence. That is not to say it was not a war where economic issues were totally absent from the thoughts of the participants; these were indeed present but, though they underlined the conflict, their visible influence was muted and seen more as shadows illuminated by the fire of war. Smith suggests, after a very detailed exploration of the varying types of Nationalism, that "it is impossible to tie Nationalism to the aspirations of any social groups in a consistent manner".\(^2\)

It is an extremely apposite reminder of our present inability to systematically analyze the socio-economic composition of the opposing forces in the Irish Civil War when father fought son and brother killed brother. One example, many others could be cited, shows the problems facing sociologists attempting to analyse the conflict. Eoin McNeill, a Minister in the Free State Government, had two sons fighting in the war, one in the army loyal to his Government, the other was killed opposing it.\(^3\)

\(^1\) David Fitzpatrick, op. cit.


\(^3\) Younger, op. cit., 470.
There are no surviving records, indicating the socio-economic status of the Anti-Treaty ISDL rank and file members, similar to the League's pre-Civil War 'Occupational Register'. But the overall impression gleaned from the surviving, and admittedly, very scanty material pertaining to the organization during this period casts serious doubts on the accuracy of the Special Branch's blunt dismissal of the Anti-Treaty supporters in Britain as "cranks and roughs". It would appear that both Kelly and British Intelligence seriously overestimated the degree of support within the Irish community for the Free State and certainly greatly exaggerated the fervour of that support. Certainly in Ireland itself, there was definitely not a nine to one majority in favour of the Free State during the Civil War. That is not to say, of course, one can interpret the public's lukewarm attitude to the Free State Government as support for its opponents. Apathy, disillusionment and disenchantment were the dominant attitudes of most people in Southern Ireland and undoubtedly in the Irish community here. The lack of real popular support for the Free State Government was of such an extent it considerably worried both Irish Government Ministers¹ and British military observers.²

Once again when we try to quantify the degree of active support for the Free State within the Irish community in Britain we come up against that old familiar problem of the 'silent majority'. As the Manchester Evening News,

a paper determinedly behind the Free State, observed, "the section of Irish people here who are content to remain within the British Empire though they may be numerous are silent."

Their leader writer then observed that "while Republicans may be a tiny minority in Ireland, the Irish Republicans in the Manchester district have proved that they are a far from insignificant body. The charge may be brought against them that they foment disturbances in Ireland while remaining at a safe distance and separated from the scene of turmoil by the expanse of the Irish Sea but we must do them the justice to say that judging by their record, the majority of them if circumstances permitted, would like to be in the thick of the struggle themselves."  

This editorial, in what was probably the English paper with the best record of reporting activities inside the Irish community, was inspired by a 5,000 plus attendance at an Anti-Treaty ISDL meeting held the previous day in Manchester. It was certainly the largest manifestation of Republican strength seen in Britain since before the onset of the Civil War. And it reflected the growing confidence felt by many Anti-Treatyites in Britain that their cause was no longer quite as hopeless as it has appeared six months before. The fall of the Four Courts, the surrender of Dublin without an effective fight, the evacuation of all Republican controlled towns during the summer and early autumn, had induced almost total despondency in the ranks of the Anti-Treaty ISDL. The Free

State's failure to win the early decisive battle that would have brought the war to a speedy conclusion, the reversal once again to the guerrilla type warfare that characterized the War of Independence, now enabled many Anti-Treaty supporters to nurture the growing conviction that a protracted conflict would eventually so weaken the economic resources of the Free State, it would be forced back to the negotiating table. Even the pessimistic Joe Fowler observed "there were some slight indications of the turn of the tide" and as winter developed the military position did actually appear to be now much more favourable for the IRA. With its long communications lines, broken at many points by demolished bridges, torn up railway tracks and trenched roads, the Free State Army, now increasingly split into the small units necessary to garrison towns and villages throughout the country, was constantly subject to ambushes and hit and run attacks by the more mobile IRA flying columns which were not so nearly affected by the adverse weather conditions. In early December the IRA captured the important focal point of Carrick-on-Suir and for almost a week its advance posed a serious threat to Dublin itself.¹ These relative military successes produced few new recruits for the Anti-Treaty ISDL but they did give many members a new hope which was reflected in substantially increased organizational activity. An increased level of activism that was, paradoxically, to spell doom for the ISDL as the response of the authorities was to deport en masse the national and local leadership the following March.

¹ Younger, op. cit., 495.
CHAPTER 21

A Plot Foiled: Deportation and Trial

Towards the end of 1922, the Republican leadership in Ireland evidently considered there was still sufficient potential popular support for their cause among the Irish community in Britain to justify the dispatch of a high level propaganda team to work alongside the revived ISDL organisation. Sean O'Mahony, a member of De Valera's new Council of State, led the team which included a very formidable quartet of prominent Republican women, Mary MacSwiney TD (the sister of the dead Lord Mayor) the widow of Cathal Brugha, Maude Gonne McBride, the widow of a 1916 executed leader, and the first woman ever elected to Westminster, the Countess Markievicz. With her many connections in British Labour organizations and the women's movement she proved to be a particularly useful and extremely hard working addition to the Republican cause in Britain. In the first fortnight of March 1923 alone, she spoke at seven meetings in London, four on the Tyneside, three in Manchester¹ as well as speaking at Scottish venues.²

The Countess effectively based herself in Britain for

¹ O'Brien Ms 8419.

almost a year but most of the team, like the fiery Mary MacSwiney who spoke at a "very largely attended meeting"\(^1\) commemorating her brother's death, and Mrs. Brugha who however only drew a crowd of about four hundred people\(^2\) to her 'Anti-Treaty Meeting' two months later, were only in Britain for a specific series of meetings. Sean O'Mahony however appears to have been involved in other non-propaganda activities and was probably using London as a convenient base for establishing new munitions purchase networks on the continent. He still found time to speak at a number of meetings and a police report, produced at his subsequent trial on a sedition charge described a Bermondsey meeting where he spoke to

"about six hundred people, all Irish, a large number of them being young men and women who displayed considerable enthusiasm specially at the speaker's remarks against the Free State and the British Empire."

Significantly this officer considered it important to note "there was a complete absence of any priests or Catholic officials in the hall".\(^3\) Only a year before such a report would undoubtedly have referred to the presence of at least half a dozen priests who would probably have occupied places of honour on the platform itself. It

\(^1\) Freeman's Journal, 26 Oct., 1922, O'Brien Ms 8427.


\(^3\) Police Report of Bermondsey Meeting, 21 Jan., 1923, Tagged as 'Exhibit 9', O'Brien Ms 8419.
would however be rash to simply interpret the non-presence of priests at this particular meeting as conclusive evidence that the ISDL had now totally lost its previous clerical support, for a number of priests subsequently stepped into the gap when the ISDL leadership was deported and indeed Free State Army Intelligence officers were annoyed when several priests, actively involved in the supply of munitions to Ireland were not included among the deportees. Priests living in the East End of London who opposed the Treaty, and they were very definitely a minority of the clergy who generally did support - for various reasons - the new Irish Government, probably decided that recent local events necessitated their 'diplomatic' absence from local ISDL meetings. The previous Sunday a rather nasty scuffle involving opposing members of the congregation occurred when two East Ham priests tried to prevent the distribution of leaflets advertizing the Bermondsey meeting.

These two priests and the section of their congregation who militantly assisted them had been infuriated by the content of this leaflet denouncing the Irish Catholic Hierarchy. The Irish bishops in their collective pastoral letter of October 10, 1922, strongly denounced the IRA campaign of "murder" against the National Army and accused them of having "wrecked Ireland from end to end, burning and

1 "A few militant priests have stepped into the breach left by the deported in London" - ROR 203, 25 April, 1923, CP 219(23). CAB 24/160.
2 P7/B/84.
3 O'Brien Ms 8427.
destroying national property of enormous value.\textsuperscript{1} They were certainly right about the huge economic damage the Civil War was inflicting on an economy, already in deep trouble and scarcely able to take the stress of a new military budget; so large in comparison to its tax base, that this was already proportionately greater than the British war time expenditure.\textsuperscript{2}

This pastoral letter outraged Republicans both inside and outside Ireland. It was not so much their reference to murdering their opponents that antagonized the IRA, even though this implicitly sanctioned the activities of the National Army. Such condemnation had been frequently voiced before, during the War of Independence when the IRA was fighting the British, and as we have observed had little effect on the guerrillas determination to continue fighting. Indeed when Cardinal Logue threatened to excommunicate every Republican sympathizer in Dundalk, after its inhabitants had openly welcomed its seizure by the IRA, in July 1922, he observed such a dire threat "would not affect the desperate characters who fear neither God nor man".\textsuperscript{3}

What really antagonized and even alienated Republicans, was not the Bishops' condemnation of their military tactics, such denunciations would have been seen almost as ritual

\textsuperscript{1} Freeman's Journal, 1 Oct., 1922. \\
\textsuperscript{2} Catholic Herald, 14 Oct., 1922. \\
\textsuperscript{3} Glasgow Herald, 31 July, 1922.
criticism with no real import, but their absolute rejection of their cause, the 'Republic' which to many had assumed a mystical if not sacred character. The Bishops' blunt claim "A Republic without popular recognition behind it is a contradiction in terms"\(^1\) not only spotlighted the Republican's dilemma, that they were fighting against the wish of the majority of the people. It also sought to remove the legitimacy of their cause and reduce their military struggle to the level of banditry. The pastoral letter had little practical effect, IRA members already facing summary execution for possession of arms were unlikely to be influenced by episcopal pronouncements, even accompanied by threats of excommunication. The threat to "withold the sacraments" in any event turned out to be a hollow gesture for sufficient priests - despite threats of suspension\(^2\) - supported the Anti-Treaty cause to ensure that any Republican denied confession in one area, could find a more sympathetic confessor without too much trouble.

With so many priests openly defying their bishops, Rome was forced to send an envoy, a Mgr. Luzio whose very mission was interpreted by the Free State Government, with considerable justification,\(^3\) as a propaganda victory for the Republicans. Most historians now consider that the Catholic Hierarchy made a serious tactical error in

\(^1\) *Catholic Times*, 14 Oct., 1922.

\(^2\) *Catholic Herald*, 14 Oct., 1922.

\(^3\) Neeson, *Civil War*, op. cit., 328-30.
issuing their pastoral letter as it could have little practical effect other than as a propaganda boost for the Free State Government. And as the Republicans took over the Government only a decade later, with memories still embittered by the Episcopalian stance, the episode ensured that the Hierarchy exerted considerably less influence on the new Government than on its predecessor. Dan Breen, a prominent IRA leader and subsequently a member of Fianna Fail, frankly admitted the "Civil War was bad but it saved us this much — it saved us from the Government of Maynooth".

The ISDL's response to the Bishops' pastoral letter was not as vehement as their Chicago counterparts who threatened to "found a new American Catholic Church" if Rome did not immediately repudiate the Irish Hierarchy. Mary MacSwiney publicly renounced her adherence to the Catholic faith at an ISDL meeting, but few members were prepared to follow her example and settled instead for the widespread, Church door distribution of a leaflet proclaiming "Fidei Defensores, Cromwell could not destroy our Faith and neither can the Bishops". This leaflet

1 Curran, op. cit., 255.
2 Younger, 483 - Maynooth, the largest seminary in Ireland, is the traditional meeting place of the Hierarchy.
4 Catholic Herald, 21 Oct., 1922.
5 Copy in Art O'Brien Ms 8427.
echoed the League's earlier attack on Cardinal Bourne's 1921 St. Patrick's Day Pastoral letter with its defiant rejection of the political authority of the Episcopacy but this time there was no Archbishop Mannix to support the ISDL and the Irish Catholic congregations in Britain were deeply and often violently divided on the issue. In some places like East Ham members of the congregation openly sided with the leaflet distributors against their clergy; in others, as in the case of a Glasgow parish where the police had to rescue two female Republicans from a mob of fifty irate parishioners¹, the reception was definitely hostile. The issue was of sufficient importance to find its way onto the agenda for the London District Committee's February meeting.²

The Catholic Herald used these occurrences and highlighted a somewhat obscure incident where the IRA burned a convent used to accommodate National Army troops as evidence of the ISDL's campaign against Catholicism itself. But though the campaign against the Irish Hierarchy, sometimes literally fought on the doorstep of British churches, did not gain the ISDL many recruits neither does it appear to have lost them any sizeable number of members. Certainly their opponents failed to mobilize any fervent Catholic hostility that did emerge against this ISDL campaign.

A British Intelligence report observing yet another failure

¹ ROR 203. 25 April, 1923. CP 219(23). CAB 24/160.
² Agenda 15 Feb., 1923, O'Brien Ms 8427.
to organize Pro-Treaty support in London complained there was still "little sign of a revival of moderates in London to combat extremists".\(^1\) This failure to reorganize Pro-Treaty support is even more significant than the similar attempts made earlier, for the Free State was now definitely winning the Civil War. At the beginning of February 1923, a senior IRA officer, Tom Barry, informed Liam Lynch that the Anti-Treaty military forces were facing imminent defeat\(^2\) as the balance of forces, with the IRA reduced to 8,000 troops and the National Army expanded to over 40,000 soldiers\(^3\), had now decisively swung against the Republicans. The number of attacks made on National Army garrisons clearly indicated the declining military power of the IRA: there were 98 attacks in November 1922 but only 63 in January 1923 and in the month of February this level was almost halved.\(^4\) The IRA, at a very high cost in lost personnel did launch a new offensive in the last week of February\(^5\) but it never regained even the temporary initiative it had seemed to hold three months earlier. The remorseless toll of the firing squads: the penalty of execution was extended in January 1923 to a whole new series of offences including even the possession of documents, began to sap Republican morale and reports

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\(^1\) ROR 194, 22 Feb., 1923. CP 123(23). CAB 24/159.

\(^2\) Captured communication reprinted in the *Irish Independent*, 9 April, 1923.

\(^3\) O'Donnoghue, op. cit., 297.

\(^4\) Figures given by President Cosgrave - interview with the *Daily Express*, 12 March, 1923.

\(^5\) *Freeman's Journal*, 18 Jan., 1923.
began to appear of whole units surrendering with their arms.  

The firing squads were probably the decisive element in the Free State's military victory, yet executions, like the eleven carried out on the 21 January, were a tactic unlikely to gain for the new Government anything but the most convinced Pro-Treaty support. And the new year saw the emergence of measures even more unlikely to win active support for the Free State among a disillusioned, apathetic Irish community in Britain. Official executions did at least have some legal justification, though the new practice of suspending sentences as long as there were no attacks in a specific area, which in effect made prisoners hostages for the behaviour of those still fighting, contravened established legal practice. But the growing number of prisoners shot while escaping spotlighted an alarming new trend.

As the level of fighting decreased, paradoxically the viciousness of the combat intensified, whereas in the earlier period hundreds fired at each other without any real effect now the bullets increasingly found their

1 *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Feb., 1923.
2 Ibid, 22 Jan., 1923.
4 See for example, the "murder verdict" recorded by a Kerry coroner's jury, ibid, 6 April, 1923.
targets, particularly in small scale street ambushes. National Army troops responded to devastating IRA land mine ambushes in South Kerry - one of their few remaining strongholds - by tying prisoners to mines and then detonating them. At first the press simply reported such incidents as "prisoners killed removing mines"¹ but some National Army officers, appalled by the actions of some of their troops, soon made the full truth known.

The Catholic Herald which initially dismissed these reports as Republican propaganda² was forced to warn only three weeks later that the Free State was in danger of losing the support of the Irish in Britain as a result of its troops' indiscipline.³ A leaked British liaison officer's report on the growing indiscipline among National Army troops infuriated the Free State Government,⁴ but confirmed many people's suspicions about the conduct of the war.

Civil War by its very nature is usually characterized by the high level of personal viciousness, particularly

¹ See report of 12 prisoners killed in one such incident Freemars Journal, 8 March, 1923.

² Catholic Herald, 6 Jan., 1923.


⁴ The IRA published, much to the embarrassment of the Free State Government, an intercepted British Military Intelligence report which claimed National Army troops had "murdered" prisoners. The Irish Government angrily blamed the British authorities for this 'leak'; see SI784 (SPO).
towards prisoners and other non-combatants, exhibited on both sides. The indiscipline of the National Army probably cost the Free State considerable support among the Irish in Britain while the corresponding tendency of the IRA to increasingly concentrate on 'soft' targets won the Anti-Treaty ISDL few new recruits.

Sean McGrath wrote to all branch secretaries suggesting that a series of public meetings on Free State atrocities should bring a "large influx of members", but only twelve new members joined during February 1923. It is probable that if the ISDL had been prepared to relax its hard line stance on unequivocal support for the Anti-Treaty cause, it might have had more success in attracting those who had been alienated from the Free State by the executions. The ISDL was now, however, firmly controlled by hard line Anti-Treatyites who insisted that the few new members who did join should sign a declaration explicitly recognizing the 'Irish Republic'. It also seems to have been their intention to have sought a more Republican sounding title for the organization at the next annual conference.

1 Letter dated 31 Jan., 1923 - O'Brien Ms 8427.

2 Report of ISDL Standing Committee held 10 March, 1923, O'Brien Ms 8419.

3 See a letter from Sean McGrath to Art O'Brien 21 Feb., 1923, in which he says "I don't think Hugh Lee (the Manchester Pro-Treaty ISDL leader) will start any opposition camp, as a matter of fact, I think Mr. Lee has changed considerably since you last saw him". - O'Brien Ms 8427.

4 O'Brien Ms 8427.

The appointment of another senior IRA officer, Anthony Mullarkey to replace Gilbert Barrington on the Standing Committee when he went to Ireland, clearly illustrated the extent to which the hard line Republicans had taken total control of the ISDL. This process had been hastened by the enforced resignations of more moderate Anti-Treaty leaders, like the Birmingham ISDL leader Harrington, who having obtained employment with the Irish National Assurance Company; as a result of their earlier rise to prominence within the local Irish communities during the pre-Treaty period, were now ordered to sever their connections with the Anti-Treaty ISDL or face dismissal.

Other employers also used economic sanctions against rank and file ISDL members as in the case of Shelia O'Connell dismissed from her post as Matron of a Bradford Catholic orphanage. A report and subsequent correspondence in the Catholic Herald revealing the increasingly frequent practice of specifying "English or Scotch desired" in advertisements placed by Catholic institutions, suggested she was unlikely to obtain similar employment. In the light of the foregoing discussion, especially the very

1 Standing Committee Minutes 6 Feb., 1923 and 19 Feb., 1923 O'Brien Ms 8427.


4 Catholic Herald, 24 Feb., 3 March, 1923.
evident failure of the ISDL to increase its membership
Art O'Brien's confident, but retrospective, assessment
"a considerable improvement had been made and it looked
as if the League might once more be a powerful factor in
the fight for the Republic", should be treated only for
what it was - a post-mortem justification of his desire
to continue the League's existence despite the contrary
wishes of the Republican leadership.¹ A more honest, and
certainly more realistic, assessment of the position of
the ISDL in early 1923 was given by Art O'Brien himself
in a contemporary letter when he referred to the position
of the League as having "now become more stabilized".²

That particular term with its connotation of a hospital
patient's condition is a particularly apt description of
the ISDL in February 1923. The haemorrhage of members
which had so sapped the strength of the League since the
signing of the Treaty and even threatened the very exist­
ence of the organization after the July 1922 Conference
had now been stemmed. Like most patients who had been
laid low by a prolonged and extremely debilitating malady,
the League could never expect to be anything other than
a shadow of its former self. But its continued survival
seemed to be no longer in question and there appeared to
be no reason why the ISDL could not continue almost

¹ Letter to Sinn Fein Head Office Dublin, 16 Jan., 1925,
O'Brien Ms 8431.

² Letter from Art O'Brien to Gilbert Barrington, 6 Feb.,
1923, O'Brien Ms 8427.
indefinitely in its post-conference truncated form, loosing a branch here, forming a new branch there\(^1\), with little hope of any real expansion but with reasonable confidence that its very reduced, cadre membership was sufficiently determined to ensure the continued existence of the organization. Though perhaps not necessarily under the banner of the Irish Self Determination League for the Standing Committee had decided to recommend a change of name to the Annual Conference in April 1923\(^2\). They hoped this name would more firmly identify the organization's support for the Republican cause in a manner similar to the League's Scottish counterpart, Cumann Poblacht na h'Eireann Albain, formed by a reorganization of Sinn Fein branches there at the end of 1922.\(^3\)

The Conference never took place as in April 1923 most of the ISDL's national and local leadership were no longer in Britain, having been deported the previous month, and confined in various Irish prisons and internment camps. In the early hours of March 10, 1923, a co-ordinated series of nation-wide arrests resulted in the detention of forty people in London, twenty two in the Liverpool area, eight in Manchester and two elsewhere in England, while another forty were arrested in Scotland,

\(^1\) Preston ISDL collapsed at the beginning of February 1923 but a new branch was formed in Fulham, Ms 8427.

\(^2\) O'Brien Ms 8427.

\(^3\) Glasgow Herald, 13 Nov., 9 Dec., 1922.
mostly in the Glasgow area.\(^1\) After being held initially in local police stations they were taken, some of them chained together in open lorries\(^2\), to the Liverpool and Glasgow docks and put aboard the waiting Royal Navy warships which conveyed them to Dublin where they were interned in various prisons and camps.\(^3\)

Each deportee was given an order signed by the Home Secretary stating as a person "suspected of acting, or having acted, or being about to act in a manner prejudicial to the restoration or maintenance of order in Ireland" the Home Secretary had exercised the power given to him by Rule 14B of the Restoration of Order (Ireland) Act 1920 to "order that you be deported to the territory of the Irish Free State, to be interned in any place there, at the discretion of the Government of the Irish Free State."\(^4\)

The English courts, however, subsequently ruled that the entire deportation proceedings were illegal and correspondence between the Irish and British Governments indicates the British Cabinet must have been aware their


\(^2\) Transcript of Deportees Compensation Tribunal - Treasury Solicitors Papers, TS 27/183.

\(^3\) Ibid.

\(^4\) Ts 27/181
proposed intention to deport people resident in Britain was indeed highly questionable if not definitely illegal. The initiative behind the deportations came from National Army Intelligence Officers stationed in Britain who were alarmed by the extent of the IRA's logistical network there. Their reports on Republican activity in Britain had revealed a situation sufficiently important to warrant a formal request from the Director of Intelligence to the Commander-in-Chief requesting him to ask the Irish Cabinet to submit proposals to their British counterparts concerning the possible internment of several hundred people resident in Britain.¹

The British Government believed it did not possess the necessary powers to intern people in Britain and so the Irish Government suggested the Republicans should instead be put on trial for conspiracy in England.² The Home Office indicated its strong opposition to the prospect of such a large number of conspiracy trials in England; although it suggested such a procedure might be possible in Scotland³, a view not held by the Glasgow Prosecutor Fiscal, who was concerned that the lack of positive evidence available, due to the reluctance of Intelligence Officers to reveal their sources, would inevitably

¹ Director of Intelligence to Commander in Chief, 14 December, 1922 - O'Malley P17a/182


³ Home Office Memo, 15 December, 1922 in O'Malley P17a/182.
result in the dismissal of most of the charges.¹

A considerable volume of correspondence was exchanged between the two Governments and their respective intelligence agencies² before a compromise solution, whereby the British would deport the people wanted by the Irish Government, who would then intern them in Ireland, was finally worked out. In the process of these lengthy negotiations the British Government clearly indicated its reluctance to arrest the three hundred people identified as hard line Republicans by National Army Intelligence³ and firmly insisted on a substantial reduction of about two thirds of this figure.

Despite National Army assurances that all the persons named on their list were active supporters of the Anti-Treaty cause, several of those deported had either refused to take sides in the Civil War⁴ or had actually

¹ Correspondence included in Director of Intelligence Report, 18 June, 1923; ibid.

² See Correspondence with the Home Office in Mulcahy P7/B/84; O'Malley P17/195; Kennedy P4/11/9; Kennedy to Irish Free State High Commissioner London, P4/G/16 (UCD); Papers of Patrick McGilligan - Secretary to Irish High Commissioner London - P35 (UCD); and Irish Cabinet Minutes in Mulcahy P7/B/245 and P7/B/84.

³ This list included 55 in London, 78 in Liverpool and 134 in Scotland, see Director of Intelligence Files in O'Malley P17a/182.

⁴ As in the case of Fintan Murray - TS 27/179.
supported the Free State. The "lengthy and drawn out nature of the negotiations between the Irish and British authorities seem to have come to the attention of some of the ISDL leaders, for as early as November, 1922, British Intelligence was reporting that Art O'Brien feared "large scale deportations" and in February 1923 suggested he seemed to know about the inter-Government negotiations in some considerable detail. Art O'Brien had good reason to suppose he had been targeted for deportation; his multiple arrests and detentions during his trips to Dublin in the summer of 1922, were not unrelated to the interception of a letter from a senior IRA officer, requesting O'Brien to supply a list of likely Free State Intelligence agents recruited from Collin's old London network. British Intelligence were certainly aware of efforts by Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath to buy arms, while Irish Intelligence reported that

1 Like Mr McGlynn - Times, 20 April, 1923.
2 ROR 179, November, 1922, CP 4294. CAB 24/139.
4 "Mick Collins is using some of his former associates for intelligence work in Dublin. Will you get from Art O'Brien a list of the prominent Free Staters or pals of Mick who are at present out of London and also a complete list of Mick's former pals as he may be utilizing some of them. This is urgent". Letter from Earnie O'Malley to Sean T. O'Kelly (arrested with O'Brien in Dublin July, 1922) intercepted by National Army and subsequently published in Freemans Journal, 27 July, 1922.
5 ROR 170, 31 August, 1922, CP 4173, CAB 24/138. And ROR 180, 9 November, 1922, CP 4302. CAB 24/140.
O'Brien had spent at least £8,500 on munitions in the first two months of 1923 alone. It seems that only days before his arrest, Art O'Brien obtained a passport, though it is not clear whether this was to be used simply to avoid his impending arrest or for a trip abroad on Republican business. He subsequently claimed he had firm information in advance on the arrests, the day before they took place and his own arresting officer testified O'Brien told him "I knew about this at 2 p.m. and you will not get as many as you expect".

O'Brien was certainly correct in his assumption that some of the senior IRA officers in Britain had indeed escaped the net while on the political side of the Anti-Treaty movement, the police also failed to arrest most of the editorial staff who produced the *Eire* paper, which had been launched in Scotland two months previously and had soon become the principal Republican publication in Ireland as well as Britain. Considerable efforts were made to track down the wanted persons and one was subsequently deported, before the Government yielded in the face of strong parliamentary opposition

1 See S1605 (SPO).
2 Transcript, Page 26, TS 27/183.
3 Ibid, 62.
4 ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166 (23). CAB 24/159.
5 Launched on January 21st, 1923, see O'Brien Ms 8427 and 8431.
6 John McCann was deported in early April, see *Manchester Evening News*, 5 April, 1923.
and decided to call a halt to further deportations. It is possible that Art O'Brien though knowing in advance about the deportations decided not to take evasive action and instead relied upon his English birth place to save him from deportation to another country. At least eight other deportees were born in England, and indeed several of these had "never been in Ireland before." One had been born in England of English parents while another was born in India.

Despite an earlier parliamentary statement that persons born in England could be deported to Ireland, under the relevant provisions of the Restoration of Order In Ireland Act, people in this category had probably assumed this situation had changed, once the South of Ireland was given its own Government with almost full internal legislative powers. And so they and others who had either not actively supported the Anti-Treaty cause or even had supported the Free State, probably

1 Kathleen Brooks, John McCann, Arthur O'Hara, Charles Garrety, James Hickey, Kathleen Barrett, George Clancy, Thomas Joyce. It has not been possible owing to the non-availability of records to compile a similar list for the Scottish deportees.

2 See TS 27/183.

3 Irish Times, 31 March, 1923.

4 138 H.C. Debs. 5, col. 540.

5 Home Secretary Shortt refused to say whether even those born in Ireland could be deported from Britain after the new Free State Constitution had been ratified, 157 H.C. Debs. 5, Cols, 659-660.
felt as traumatically shocked and bewildered by their unexpected deportation as did the Japanese community in America, particularly those born in that country, when they were interned en masse after Pearl Harbour\(^1\)

Certainly this was the side of the deportations issue that the Parliamentary Opposition initially focussed their attentions on, with MPs like George Lansbury,\(^2\) James Maxton,\(^3\) Jack Jones,\(^4\) and Robert Wilson\(^5\) raising the issue of specific deportees who had been born in Britain. But Home Secretary Bridgeman reminded questioners that being born in Britain did not necessarily make a person of Irish descent loyal to the country and pointed out that "both of the men who murdered Sir Henry Wilson were born in this country."\(^6\)

However it quickly became clear that the Government had seriously underestimated the degree of parliamentary

\(^1\) For the Internment of the Japanese community in America, see:


\(^2\) 161 HC Debs. 5 Col. 1762.

\(^3\) Ibid, Col. 1549.

\(^4\) Ibid, Col. 1043.

\(^5\) Ibid, Col. 2389.

\(^6\) Ibid., Cols. 2246-52.
opposition to the deportations. The initial state-
ment by the Home Secretary on the deportations and the
IRA attacks they had pre-empted\(^1\) triggered off such
repeated stormy question time sessions\(^2\) that the Govern-
ment was forced, against its wishes, to permit an
Adjournment Debate\(^3\) on the topic. It won this by
sixty votes but the issue was not allowed to rest there.
The Home Secretary had initially refused to give the
House any details about communications received from
the Irish Free State Government concerning the deport-
ations.\(^4\) But in the face of MPs' concern that deportees
might be summarily courtmartialed\(^5\) or even "accidentally
shot"\(^6\) he was forced to promise the House that the
Irish Government would not charge them with any offence\(^7\)
and subsequently admitted he had established a clear
understanding that the deportees would be returned from
Ireland whenever the British Government so wished.\(^8\)

However the British Home Secretary's attempts to reassure
MPs that the deportees still effectivley remained under
British jurisdiction while in Ireland deeply antagonized

\(^1\) H.C. Debs. 5, Cols., 1043-48.
\(^2\) Ibid, Cols, 1548-1554; Cols. 1762-170.
\(^3\) Ibid., Cols. 2218-62.
\(^4\) Ibid, Col. 1548
\(^5\) Ibid, Col. 2102
\(^6\) Ibid, Col 2105.
\(^7\) Ibid, Col. 1765
\(^8\) Ibid, Cols. 2146-48
an Irish Government very loath to publicly concede its subordinate position, particularly in a matter affecting internal security. President Cosgrave emphatically refuted the Home Secretary's claim, that the Irish Free State was not outside the jurisdiction of the Restoration of Order in Ireland Acts, when he told the Dail the following day;

"The Restoration of Order in Ireland Act 1920 and the Regulations made there under, are, so far as the territory of Saorstat Eireann is concerned, are spent and of no legal force in effect... no one is being held here under the authority of that Act."  

A senior Dublin judge subsequently backed this interpretation. This extremely embarrassing denial of British control over the deportees in Ireland was swiftly followed by an even more significant bombshell announcement by Cosgrave. The British Government, he said, had assured him that all the deportees were Irish citizens; that this was patently not so, provided the deportees with an issue they exploited to the maximum possible benefit. In a letter to the Home Secretary the deportees who had formed a committee to represent their interests in Mountjoy argued that the majority of them were not in fact Irish citizens. The deportees born outside Ireland were obviously entitled to the citizenship of the country of their birth while the relevant section of the Constitution of the Irish Free

1 161 H.C. Debs. 5, col. 2102.
2 Dail Eireann Debates, 20 March, 1923.
3 Irish Times, 31 March, 1923.
4 Dail Eireann Debates, 20 March, 1923.
State clearly restricted citizenship to those actually domiciled in its territory. And so the deportees argued that as "our domiciles are in England, we are by the terms of the Constitution of the Irish Free State, which is an Act of the British Parliament, debarred from citizenship of the Irish Free State."¹

This argument which the British Government never effectively tried to refute, presented the Parliamentary opposition, particularly the Labour MPs, with an opportunity to savage the Government for so contemptuously interfering with the "liberties and rights of British citizens".² It also afforded a way by which the Labour leadership could be seen to respond to the strong feelings the deportations had generated within local party organizations without appearing to be in any way tacitly supporting the Anti-Treatyists. Some Labour MPs like the Rev. Dunnico, the organizer of a Defence Fund for the deportees, and Will Thorne who demanded the party should "hold protest meetings all over the country"³, and Jack Jones⁴ did openly support the political cause expounded by the deportees. Supporters of the ISDL were also very active at local government level in raising the deportation issue. Alderman Scurr, a member of the League, used his

² HCDebs 5 , Col. 2218.
³ ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166 (23). CAB 24/159.
⁴ 161 H.C. Debs 5, Col. 1151.
official position as Mayor of Poplar to demand their immediate release with full compensation. He also put forward a resolution on this issue, that was accepted by the Independent Labour Party Conference. Another ISDL Councillor, R.P. Purcell, successfully persuaded the Woolwich Council to unanimously pass a similar resolution but the Manchester City Council meeting had to be adjourned twice when the issue was raised, with Conservative and Labour members actually engaging in physical confrontations on both occasions.

The deportation issue aroused such strong feelings inside the Labour Party, that the leadership eventually set up an official Parliamentary Labour Party Enquiry, under Arthur Greenwood and J.W. Muir, which visited Ireland and met Government and Labour Party leaders there. It was not permitted to see the deportees but it did meet representatives of the Republican prisoners' welfare organization. Their report accepted the deportees' claim that they were British, not Irish citizens, and strongly criticized the British Government for deporting people under legislation introduced for promoting order in Ireland, a "responsibility", it said, "which no longer rests with the British Government, but with the

1 Freemans Journal, 22 March, 1923; Catholic Herald, 7 April, 1923.
2 Liverpool Post and Mercury, 29 March, 1923.
3 Manchester Evening News, 11 April, 1923.
4 Ibid, 18 April, 1923.
Free State Government. It expressed concern over the conditions the deportees were being held in and suggested that "unfortunate incidents might occur to the deportees" as the "Free State Government has not yet got complete control of all its troops". The Report concluded that the British Government by arresting and then deporting "these people is clearly responsible for their reasonable comfort and safety during internment" and suggested the Government had an obligation to look after the deportees' dependents left behind in Britain. It recommended the Government should only have extradited those who were definitely Irish citizens and should instead have charged the British citizens, if sufficient evidence was available, otherwise they should not have been arrested.¹

The Communist Party attacked this recommendation, which effectively incorporated the Mountjoy Prison Deportees Committee's demand to be tried in Britain², as evidence of the Labour Party's definite Free State bias in a "Hands off Ireland" manifesto that declared "Irish Republicans we are at one with you".³ It instructed all its branches to launch a new "Hands Off Ireland" movement using the deportations as the launch vehicle.

One of the most interesting changes produced by the

² ROR 200, 5 April, 1923, CP 183 (23). CAB 24/159.
³ ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166 (23). CAB 24/159.
great loss of ISDL members, following the Treaty Split was the Anti-Treatyite leadership's new found pragmatism; implicitly reversing the organization's earlier strong isolationist stance in favour of seeking new allies to compensate for its membership loss. So at the end of 1922, Art O'Brien, who personally had very little time for the policies advocated by the Communist Party, opened discussions with their leadership¹ in a bid to utilize more positively their opposition to the Treaty. These tentative negotiations were extended into a series of larger meetings between Saklatvala and ISDL representatives who included a priest, Father McKenna, and leaders of the Communist Party of Ireland. The outcome of this discussion was a series of joint meetings on the Free State's campaign against Republicans.²

At the other end of the political spectrum the Catholic Herald initially supported the deportations³ but the following week switched its line to the one officially advocated by the Labour Party;⁴ indicating, perhaps, that it had detected a ground swell of opinion within the Irish community against the deportations. T.P. O'Connor initially declared his unwillingness to raise the deportations in Parliament owing to his reluctance to do

¹ ROR 186, 21 Dec., 1922. CP 4375. CAB 24/140.
² ROR 193, 15 Feb., 1923. CP 105(23). CAB 24/159.
³ Catholic Herald, 17 March, 1923.
anything that might publicly embarrass the Irish Government\textsuperscript{1} but soon found himself asking parliamentary questions about some of his constituents who had been deported.\textsuperscript{2} The Catholic Church in Britain never officially commented on the deportations though it was suggested by the press that they had not displeased Cardinal Bourne.\textsuperscript{3}

Encouraged by the Parliamentary Labour Party's support for their contention they were British citizens, the Deportees Committee decided to legally test their deportation and subsequent internment by taking a test case, Arthur O'Hara's, to the Irish courts. The judgement that the act under which they were deported no longer applied to Ireland was a major victory for the deportees, even though the judge also ruled their internment once they had arrived, no matter voluntarily or not, in Ireland was legal.\textsuperscript{4} The British Government tried to stem the new parliamentary row that followed this judgement by persuading a back bench MP, Sir Kingsley Wood, to introduce a Private Bill amending the Restoration of Order in Ireland Act. The Bill provided for a statutory advisory committee to review all the deportations and the Home Secretary sought by this tactic not only a means by which he could order the release of a number of

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Freeman's Journal, 17 March, 1923.
\item \textsuperscript{2} 161 H.C. Debs 5, Cols. 226-29.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Diary Editor, London Evening Standard, 12 March, 1923.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Irish Times, 31 March, 1923.
\end{itemize}
deportees and thus assuage parliamentary concern: but a new piece of legislation "reaffirming the existence of the powers under which we acted."¹

Very few of the deportees were however prepared to even formally apply to the Advisory Committee for a review and their Deportees Committee, denounced the new body as a "mockery of the principles upon which the English judiciary system is based on".² They challenged the Home Secretary to arraign them on specific charges, employing the evidence he claimed had been accumulated against them. Art O'Brien who had emerged as the deportees' spokesman was selected by them as a test case for a Habeas Corpus writ in the London High Court. His application was rejected by the court which ruled the writ could not be granted owing to O'Brien being outside the control of the Home Secretary³ but this was really a pyrrhic victory for the British Government as the judgement effectively supported, much to the embarrassment of the British authorities, the earlier Dublin judicial interpretation of the powers of the Free State. So in a new bid to strengthen their legal position, the British Government made an Order in Council, statutorily including the Irish Free State within the

¹ Restoration of Order in Ireland (Amendment Bill) Memorandum from Home Secretary, 9 April, 1923, CP 188 (23). CAB 24/159.
² Letter to Home Secretary, 20 March, 1923, TS 23/181.
³ Freeman's Journal, 11 April, 1923.
British Isles for the purpose of making internment orders. It was a fatal mistake, vehemently denounced as adding "a new terror to litigation with Government officials if they can make Orders in Council while a case is being argued to assist their argument".\(^1\) by the High Court to which O'Brien had taken his Habeas Corpus appeal. The judges savaged the Government for introducing a Restoration of Order in Ireland Act that was so essentially based on the wartime Defence of the Realm Act to the extent of including a large number of regulations which could not conceivably apply to Ireland.\(^2\)

Lord Justice Scrutton argued that even if these "lazy and unintelligent" regulations still had any effect in Ireland - and his colleague Justice Bankes claimed they did not - only the non-existent Chief Secretary for Ireland could order internments. Lord Justice Atkin, going even further, bluntly asserted his opinion that "the Home Secretary had no more right to delegate the choice of place (of internment) to the Irish Free State Government than to the first man he met in the street".\(^3\)


2 "It is difficult to understand why in 1920 it was desirable for the restoration of order in Ireland to regulate the cultivation of hops in England (Regulation 20) or the capture for food of migrating birds or rabbits in England (Regulation 2K) or to limit English season tickets (Regulation 7B) or to forbid persons in England to have in their possession more silver coinage than they reasonably required (Regulation 30E). Why these regulations were ever enacted in this lazy and unintelligent way I do not understand" - Ibid.

3 Ibid.
In a last ditch effort the Attorney General, appearing on behalf of the Government, sought to avoid the granting of O'Brien's Habeas Corpus application by arguing - contrary to the Home Secretary's previous assurances to Parliament - that his political master no longer had any control over the terms of O'Brien's internment. But he was forcibly reminded by Lord Justice Scrutton that the original Habeas Corpus Act of 1679 expressly "condemns the sending of inhabitants or residents of England as prisoners for criminal matters into Ireland with the severest penalties". Granting the Habeas Corpus application, to a man who described himself as the "representative in London of the Irish Republican Government, an undoubtedly illegal body", Lord Justice Scrutton said that while "it was quite possible even probable that the subject in this case is guilty of high treason, he is still entitled only to be deprived of his liberty by due process of law."\(^1\)

The legal ripples generated by the O'Brien case can still be seen today in the present Prevention of Terrorism Act which provides only for deportation and not for internment. This legislation is based on the 1939 Prevention of Violence Act which specifically rejected the possibility of interning IRA suspects during the 1939-40 bombing campaign, after the Lord Privy Seal warned the Cabinet that the Home Secretary's proposal

\(^1\) Times Law Report, 10 May, 1923.
could risk a repeat run of the "Art O'Brien case".  

The Art O'Brien case, though virtually unknown today, stands as one of those landmark cases in English law where the Judiciary asserted the right of the individual to be supreme over all other considerations irrespective of how much they embarrassed the Government. A Times editorial rightly described the case as one "of great constitutional importance" in which "the Lord Justices were called upon to guard the liberty of His Majesty's subjects against encroachments of the Executive, and they certainly succeeded in maintaining the great tradition of the Law of England that they should pay no regard to any inconvenience which might be caused by their decision". Inconvenience was however a very mild term to describe the embarrassment the granting of Habeas Corpus to Art O'Brien had caused the Government. It had arrested a large number of British citizens at the bidding of another government who had no legal jurisdiction over them and had then deported them under armed guard - an action that enraged a High Court bench, appalled by the blatant flouting of established legal convention. In response to persistent

2 Times, 10 May, 1923.
3 "He (Art O'Brien) is apparently imprisoned without trial for a sentence of indefinite duration; and the Home Secretary who ordered his arrest and deportation to Ireland, states to the court by his counsel, the Attorney General, that the Home Secretary cannot release him. Before the War it is almost impossible to conceive that such a state of things could exist in England" - Lord Justice Scrutton, Times, 10 May, 1923.
Opposition queries, some of which were concerned about the fate of their deported constituents, the Home Secretary had assured MPs he still retained control over the deportees even though they were now interned in another country. But this claim had been promptly rejected by the President of the Irish Free State, the Irish courts and even the British Government's legal adviser, the Attorney General in his final defence statement to the High Court.

By all standards the British Government had managed to get itself into a first class monumental legal and parliamentary row and this at a time when the Prime Minister, Bonar Law, was preparing to quit his office, through ill health,¹ with the succession likely to cause a period of internal strife inside his Party. The Attorney General in a brief statement to Parliament informed the members the Government had lodged an immediate appeal with the House of Lords,² who in compliance with the Government's wish for a speedy verdict agreed not only to postpone their traditional Whitsun holiday but to sit earlier and rise later than customary, while accepting typescript, rather than the traditional formally printed record of the earlier High Court case.³

¹ Bonar Law discovered in early May 1923 he had terminal throat cancer and immediately submitted his resignation. A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit. 264.
² Times, 10 May, 1923.
³ Times, 11 May, 1923.
The appeal to the House of Lords was intended however only to provide the Government with a few extra days' grace to consider how it should react to the High Court Art O'Brien Habeas Corpus Writ. For the Government had already learned even before the High Court case had concluded, that it did not in fact have the legal powers to deport O'Brien. This had been established by a special Privy Council convened at the request of the Attorney General to provide an "Interpretation Order" of the present validity of the Restoration In Ireland Order Act. After a careful scrutiny the Privy Council decided that even if the High Court favourably - which was unlikely - interpreted the British Isles as still legally encompassing the Irish Free State, the omission of two crucial words rendered the entire relevant section invalid. It also warned the Attorney General that the Government's hasty action in retrospectively changing the law after the Irish court ruling was likely to be interpreted by the High Court as a "confession of the weakness" of its case. The Government had in fact known for two years that the Restoration in Ireland Order Act had been hastily drafted, with the result it was open to variable legal interpretation, even when all of Ireland was still under British rule.

1 "regulations there-under" (see below).

2 Memoirs of Sir Almeric Fitzroy (1925) Vol. 2 801. Sir Almeric was the Secretary to the Privy Council and convened the meeting on 29 April, 1923.

3 Home Office memo (June 1921) in Home Office File 414 250/13, placed in TS 27/181.
The High Court had previously under these circumstances ruled in the Government's favour, in the earlier Brady test case, but a strongly dissenting opinion of Lord Justice Scrutton had indicated that should Ireland ever gain its own political administration, the British Government's powers to deport people from Britain to Ireland, which he personally believed to be already non-existent, would automatically cease.

As expected, the House of Lords quickly concluded it had "no jurisdiction to hear the appeal" and a hastily convened Cabinet meeting later that day decided to ask the Irish Government to return Art O'Brien. It also set up a working party to discuss new legislation to provide for internment within Britain itself and to draft the necessary indemnity bill to prevent the Government from being sued by the deportees for illegal arrest and imprisonment. Telegrams sent the following morning to the Irish Government requested the release of Art O'Brien whose immediate re-arrest (once landed in

1 Memo on Edward Brady case to Advisory Committee TS 27/181. Also see Patrick Foy's Habeas Corpus Application (March 1920), TS 85. Times, 28 June, 1921.

2 Times, 26 June, 1921.

3 Their decision was given orally in a brief statement - Times, 15 May, 1923 and subsequently in a much longer written judgement, Times, 10 July, 1923.

4 Cabinet Meeting, 14 May, 1923. CAB 23/45.
Britain) on criminal charges is under consideration.\(^1\) and later that day the return of all the deportees, under military escort, was also requested except for a dozen people likely to be subsequently charged.\(^2\)

The House of Commons which had loudly cheered the Lords verdict\(^3\) was informed by the Home Secretary that he had requested the return of all the deportees, though some of these he said might be re-arrested in Britain.\(^4\) Strictly speaking the Scottish deportees did not necessarily have to be released as Habeas Corpus did not exist under its separate legal system and as their deportation orders had been signed by the Secretary of State for Scotland, the Home Secretary was technically exceeding the authority of his office. Fortunately for the Home Secretary, in view of his earlier statements regarding his control over the fate of the deportees, the Irish Minister for Home Affairs, while still maintaining his Government's claim over the internees, had already declared his willingness to send them back to Britain\(^5\); circumstances had substantially changed during their two month long internment, the internal security situation had improved remarkably and with the new

\(^1\) Home Office telegram to Irish Free State President, No. 60 of 15 May, 1923, in O'Malley P17a/195.

\(^2\) Ibid, telegram No. 61.

\(^3\) Times, 15 May, 1923.

\(^4\) 164 H.C. Deb. Col. 246.

\(^5\) Irish Times, 14 May, 1923.
IRA's leadership's order to its units to cease all offensive action from the beginning of May,¹ the Civil War was all but over. With its prisons and internment camps crammed to overflowing with captured IRA men and women, the Irish Government had no objection to releasing people, normally resident in Britain, who could now no longer do it any harm. For the Irish Government, unlike its British counterpart, the deportations and the subsequent legal wrangle had in fact provided a valuable political bonus in reaffirming their authority on domestic matters inside the Irish Free State and gave them an opportunity of refuting those critics of the Treaty who had argued that by its terms the Irish Government had been placed, in all matters, in an inferior position under the British Government.

Art O'Brien was returned to British custody at Hollyhead² and after a physical confrontation with his detective escort, who refused his demand to travel to London first class,³ was brought to the High Court in accordance with the Habeas Corpus Writ requiring the authorities to physically produce him before the Bench. The judges ordered his immediate release from custody but his period of freedom only lasted the length of the walk from the court room to the door. Upon stepping out

¹ O'Donoghue, op. cit, 308-10.
² Freeman's Journal, 14 May, 1923.
³ TS 27/183.
into the street he was immediately re-arrested and taken to Bow St. Court to be charged with "Seditious Conspiracy" and remanded to Brixton. The remainder of the deportees were taken under a large military escort, the following day to Hollyhead and most, after being interviewed by detectives, were permitted to travel home to be greeted by crowds of sympathizers in London, Liverpool and Glasgow. Three of the Liverpool deportees and two from Birmingham were however taken to their home towns to face ammunition and conspiracy charges, while Sean McGrath and two others were brought to London and charged along with Art O'Brien.

From his Brixton prison cell O'Brien continued to create new legal problems for the British Government. Having secured his release through a 17th century law, he now went back another three centuries, through the mists of English legal history, to resurrect Richard the Second's 'Statute of Praemunire', in a bid both to punish the Home Secretary who had deported him and in pursuit of exemplary damages for his illegal arrest. A Conservative back bench MP assured the Home Secretary that the Statute of Praemunire, whose least penalties would have summarily ended his political career and inflicted a

1 Freeman's Journal, 17 May, 1923.
2 Times, 17 May, 1923.
3 Freeman's Journal, 18, 19 May, 1923; Times, 17, 18 May, 1923.
4 Times, 19 May, 1923.
lot more hardship, was not now considered to be legally enforceable and the House generally treated the revival of such an ancient law in a rather frivolous manner. This archaic statute did however, in an oblique manner, achieve its objective in focussing MPs and public opinion on the financial plight of deportees who had lost wages, even jobs, and suffered considerable hardship, including physical brutality which the Government tacitly admitted had occurred in Mountjoy Prison. But one of the effects of the Indemnity Bill (that is an act retrospectively making legal the Government's previously illegal action) which was shortly to be presented before Parliament, was to remove the deportees normal right to sue for damages through the courts.

In an editorial on the deportations the Times observed, "it is hardly necessary to say that no one outside a small group of fanatics and dreamers can have the smallest sympathy with Mr. O'Brien but the Daily News and the Westminster Gazette, two papers which could hardly be said to harbour sympathies for Irish Republicans, both

1 Art. O'Brien sought a declaration that the defendant is disabled from and incapable of holding any office of trust or profit within the realm of England, the dominion of Wales, or the Town of Berwick upon Tweed or any of the Islands, Territories or Dominions thereof belonging. A declaration that the defendant is liable to incur and sustain on Order that he do sustain and suffer the pains, penalties and forfeitures limited, ordained and provided in and by the Statute of Provision and Praemunire, made in the 16th year of King Richard II". He also sought under Act 31 Charles II "a declaration that the defendant is incapable of any pardon from the King, his heirs and successors of the said forfeitures, losses or disabilities or any of them", see TS 27/181.

2 Times, 18 May, 1923.

3 This was acknowledged in a letter, 9 Oct., 1923, from the Colonial Office to the Treasury Solicitor rejecting cont.
denounced the section of the Indemnity Bill which specifically prevented the deportees' recourse to normal legal remedies.⁴ Many, both inside, and outside the House of Commons, while recognizing the legal practicalities that required the enactment of an Indemnity Bill, were perturbed by its denial of financial compensation for those who had been illegally arrested and interned in another country, under very trying conditions. So, nine Liberal and two Labour MPs presented a number of petitions on behalf of their deported constituents "praying" that they be given the right to appear before the Bar of the House to put their claims for financial compensation before the House.² This is a rarely employed procedure and the Speaker refused them the necessary leave to present their petitions in person but it did serve its purpose in focussing MPs' attention on their case.

With Mr. Bridgeman, the Home Secretary, unable to appear before the House until the Indemnity Bill received its first reading, it fell upon the new Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, a somewhat surprising choice to succeed Bonar

cont his application to call the Governor of Mountjoy Prison and other Irish officers as witnesses to refute claims of brutality, TS 27/181, and also see the British and Irish Government correspondence in S 2151, (SPO).

⁴ Times, 26 May, 1923.
² 164 H.C. Debs. 5, Cols. 813-21 and letter from Denton Hall and Burgin, (the deportees solicitors) outlining the procedure of presenting petitions in TS27/181.
Law, to move, as one of his first major tasks as Prime Minister the Restoration of Order in Ireland (Indemnity) Bill. Acknowledging criticisms that the Bill would legally remove the right of compensation, he conceded the deportees had a moral right to at least some financial recompense, and promised to examine ways of making this possible. His observation that as some of the deportees could have secured their earlier release by applying to the Advisory Committee, they therefore could not really expect much compensation, brought an angry retort from Ramsay MacDonald, the Labour leader, who hoped "British citizens and Irishmen had not yet reached the state of servility in which, if unjustly deported they would apply to Advisory Committees to prove that they ought not to have been deported." After considerable modification, forced on the Government by Parliamentary and public opinion, the Indemnity Bill - shorn of its original intent to permit internment outside periods of formal war - was passed with a majority of some ninety votes. 

1 It had been generally assumed that Viscount Curzon would succeed Bonar Law as Prime Minister and that Stanley Baldwin a somewhat, up to then, undistinguished figure was appointed purely at the behest of King George V but it now appears that senior Conservatives did recommend Baldwin's appointment; see Robert Blake The Unknown Prime Minister, (1955), 518-27.

2 164 H.C. Debs. 5, col. 859.

3 Ibid. Col. 943.

4 For the evolution of the Indemnity Bill; see Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (Indemnity) 1923 correspondence - TS 27/180, TS 27/182, and TS 27/181.

5 164 H.C. Debs. 5s. Cols. 354-971.
results of the potentially most serious conspiracy against the British State, to emerge this century, was the enactment of legislation that gravely impeded Government action against similar plots in the future.

The principals in this conspiracy, which had so embarrassed the Government, did not escape scot free. On the 27 June, 1923, Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath were arraigned before an Old Bailey jury at the start of a trial which more than any other event was to effectively lead to the demise of the Anti-Treaty Irish Self Determination League. They were charged that on

"March 31, 1922, and divers other days, thereafter until the date hereof, (they) did contrive and intend to disquiet and disturb the peace of our Lord the King of England and the peace and good order of and within the Free State in Ireland, and to overthrow the Government as by law established in the said Free State; and unlawfully and seditiously conspire with divers other persons being members and officers of a certain combination known as the Irish Self Determination League, to maintain and assist and incite divers evil dispersed persons in the said Free State, known as members of the Irish Republican Party in and towards insurrection and breaches of the peace and the obstruction and prevention by force and arms of the said Government as by law established in the said Free State; and to incite hatred and ill will between different classes of his Majesty's subjects in England and the said Free State against the peace of our Lord the King."

At their earlier committal the Prosecution had pointed out that the defendants could have been charged under the 1848 Treason Felony Act which carried a life imprisonment penalty or even with High Treason, the charge that brought Roger Casement to the Pentonville scaffold, but it had been

1 Times, 28 June, 1923.
decided in "these merciful days" to merely charge them with Seditious Conspiracy. Despite its convoluted terminology and archaic language, the charge was clearly formulated against Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath in the context of their leadership of the ISDL, whose activities even on the purely propaganda and political level, against the Irish Free State, were plainly considered to be illegal actions in so far as they sought to remove a "Government by British Law established". Six other men stood in the dock with the two ISDL leaders but they were merely supporting characters selected to illustrate various examples of the illegal activity the Prosecution alleged Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath were the prime instigators of. Sean O'Mahoney, a member of De Valera's Republican Council of State, was said by the Prosecution to be the link between O'Brien and De Valera. The other five all facing specific arms, explosives and ammunition offences as well as the conspiracy charge, were said to be members of IRA units in different parts of England. Both Anthony Mullarkey, the OC Newcastle IRA, and Thomas Flynn his quartermaster were ISDL members though O'Brien claimed no knowledge of Flynn's membership.\(^2\) Denis Fleming, the OC Liverpool IRA, and his brother Patrick were members of Sinn Fein while Michael Galvin, a captain in the London IRA, appears not to have belonged to any political organization.

1 *Times*, 24 May, 1923.

2 See O'Brien's notes on his defence prepared for his solicitor, Ms 8419.
In the Prosecution case, led by the Attorney General, they were but walk-on characters on a stage dominated by Art O'Brien's presence and to a much lesser extent Sean McGrath's. The Attorney General in his opening speech argued that

"just as De Valera was regarded as the head of the conspiracy in Ireland, the defendant Art O'Brien was regarded by the Prosecution as the head of the whole conspiracy in England."

Documents found in his possession, concerning recent IRA actions in Ireland, were cited as evidence of O'Brien's knowledge of the illegal activities of a movement, he admitted supporting. A notebook containing details of various types of explosives and their particular applications was produced by the Prosecution who claimed it had been found in Sean McGrath's residence, in a search immediately following Sir Henry Wilson's assassination. A Post Office officer gave evidence of covertly opening mail sent to cover addresses, which it was alleged were used by O'Brien and McGrath to communicate with IRA leaders in Ireland. But perhaps the single most damning piece of evidence, incriminating the Irish Self Determination League in illegal activities, was a memorandum from the OC Newcastle IRA to his subordinate officers informing them of his intention of "holding a Battalion Council on Saturday 1st, there is a 'District Meeting' of the Irish Self Determination League on that day so we can carry on with the 'EC' as soon as the ISDL finish". This

1 Times, 28 June, 1923.
2 Times, 2 July, 1923.
3 Cited as 'Exhibit 29', in O'Brien Ms 8419.
memorandum which the Prosecution alleged was written by Mullarkey clearly inferred that at least some of those attending the IRA officers meeting would also be present at the earlier ISDL regional leaders meeting. Great play was made by the Prosecution of Mullarkey's co-option, following a proposal by Art O'Brien, on to the League's Standing Committee, to replace Gilbert Barrington, whom the Prosecution claimed was, the quartermaster of the Tyneside IRA Brigade, until he was forced to flee the country after the discovery of an arms dump. Two Free State Army officers, a colonel and a captain, provided evidence of a substantial arms traffic from Britain to Ireland during the Civil War, an activity O'Brien was alleged to have financed.

Under cross examination Art O'Brien denied any involvement in arms trafficking or funding IRA activities. He claimed that the IRA's actions during the Civil War were not designed to overthrow the Free State Government but merely undertaken to maintain the Government of the Republic. A subtle line of reasoning that did not impress Mr. Justice Swift who observed that the Free State Government had been established by law: a point recognized by O'Brien who also agreed with the judge's view that the political and military wings of the Republican movement were intermingled. O'Brien however strongly denied he had ever advocated the use of force and gave his opinion that the Republic "could not be maintained by force of arms but only by political means". 1 Sean McGrath in

1 Times, 3 July, 1923.
his evidence observed the "Republican forces should have surrendered earlier" and stated that while "to a certain extent he approved of the fighting against the British forces, he disapproved of Irishmen fighting Irishmen".\footnote{1 Times, 4 July, 1923.}

Bernard O'Connor, a Barrister and ISDL member, called as a defence character witness effectively hammered home the last nail in the ISDL's coffin, when he agreed with the Judge that the

"Irish Free State was established by English Law and that according to that law, the Republican movement which endeavoured to overthrow the State was guilty of treason or treason felony\footnote{2}."

All the defendants except Sean O'Mahoney whom the prosecution had claimed had been "imported from Ireland to make speeches"\footnote{3 Ibid, 29 June, 1923.} and Patrick Fleming, acquitted at the direction of the judge, were found guilty as charged. In his summing up the judge described the trial as "a case of very great public importance" and observed

"no doubt it came as a shock to the jury to learn that in connection with this movement, England had been parcelled out into military areas, that dumps were formed and that munitions and guns were being sent over to Ireland"

and praised the country's intelligence services for uncovering the plot.\footnote{4} His sentencing reflected the view that it

\footnote{1 Times, 4 July, 1923.}
\footnote{2 Times, 4 July, 1923.}
\footnote{3 Ibid, 29 June, 1923.}
\footnote{4 Justice Swift spoke of his "relief that the authorities in this country were not so blind or stupid as they were sometimes thought to be and that they knew a little more of what was going on than those who did these things either suspected or imagined. It is well for the country that there is an organization - when it is suspected that a crime is about to be perpetrated - which has the means of watching the suspected persons". - Times, 5 July, 1923. This was a reference to the Post Office Investigation Branch who had secretly intercepted and copied letters, vital to the Prosecution's case.}
was the Irish Self Determination League rather than the Irish Republican Army that was really on trial. The other four convicted, described by the judge as "boys", though they were all in their twenties and thirties, led astray by elder men, were each imprisoned for one year but O'Brien and McGrath, though convicted on only one charge, were given the maximum two years sentence.1

British academics have almost totally ignored the study of 'political trials', their implications and their effects, but fortunately there is a respectable body of American research in this otherwise neglected field. Both Hakman 2 and Kircheimer3 focus their work on the use of legal techniques, designed to buttress a particular ideological form of social structure against a contending ideological threat, opposed to that system. And certainly Justice Swift made no pretence of concealing his opinion that the very objective of the Irish Self Determination League, namely the maintenance of an Irish Republic, no matter how peacefully its methods towards attaining this goal, would inevitably bring it into conflict with the British legal system. His rigid insistence on strict compliance with established legal and courtroom procedures, prevented

1 Times, 5 July, 1923.


the defendants from asserting their political beliefs and substantially thwarted their counsel's attempts to situate the trial within the context of a struggle for political control of the new Irish State in a manner whereby they could morally if not legally justify their actions. So the trial never assumed any of the pronounced adversarial character that Barkan has observed in modern American political trials,¹ let alone turning the courtroom into a political arena to denounce the established legal system as in the 'Chicago 8 Trial'.² Neither did the trial generate favourable publicity for the ISDL or help to build it up in the manner Lefcourt suggests has occurred in the case of some American organizations which have benefitted from anti-trial sentiments.³ The observation by the Special Branch "it is regarded as a matter for congratulation that the newspapers are devoting so little space to the case against them"⁴ in respect of the conspiracy trial, is not strictly correct, for certainly the trial was - as is only to be expected in such cases - extensively reported in the Times and in somewhat less detail in the Glasgow Herald, Manchester Evening News and Liverpool Post etc. but certainly their editorial line, congratulating

¹ Steven E. Barkan, 'Political Trials and the Pro-Se Defendant in the Adversary System', Social Problems, 24(1976/77), 324-36.


the authorities in exposing the conspiracy could hardly have displeased the Government. Detailed coverage of the links between the IRA and the ISDL - an organization ruled to be virtually illegal itself - was very unlikely to encourage new members to join the League. While no doubt many of the surviving rank and file ISDL members were extremely surprised to discover that Art O'Brien had for four years been in receipt of a salary of £750 a year, plus a very generous expense allowance in connection with his post as Republican representative in London.¹ The Catholic Herald made much of this issue and of O'Brien's rejection of the use of arms to achieve the Republic he was paid to represent.²

Dock speeches have sometimes transformed humiliating defeats into a rousing propaganda victory; that has ensured the movement was not forgotten, after the imprisonment or execution of the leader. Fidel Castro, a previously virtually unknown figure, leapt into national prominence with his resounding defence "La historia me absolverá"³ at his trial following the Moncada Barracks debacle. And by his eloquent defence of one of the most bungled Irish revolts ever staged, Robert Emmet ensured his lasting position in Irish history with a speech⁴ still taught

¹ Times, 3 July, 1923.
² Catholic Herald, 14 July, 1923.
³ "History will absolve me" quoted in Marta Rojos Rodríguez, La Generación del Centenario en el Moncada, (Havana, 1964).
⁴ "When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then and not till then let my epitaph be written", quoted in Frank O'Connor (edt), A Book of Ireland, (1959), 110-11.
in Irish classrooms, and one so much part of the national ethos it is still capable of silencing judges today.\footnote{At the 1970 'Arms Trial' in Dublin: where a number of former Irish Government ministers, including Charles Haughey the present Taoiseach, and IRA leaders were charged with importing arms, an IRA leader John Kelly was stopped by the judge when he tried to make a highly political defence speech. But when he informed the judge that if his interpretation had been applied to another trial in that same courtroom three centuries before, then the "most famous speech in Irish history" could never have been delivered, he was permitted to continue his speech. Source - Personal Observation.}

Art O'Brien's performance in the dock was not however in that tradition. In part this was no doubt due to O'Brien's reserved personality and dislike of flamboyant gestures, while the ambiguous nature of the conspiracy charge is one in which the defendants personal demeanour and performance under cross examination often plays a crucial part in determining their guilt or innocence. O'Brien also seems to have been very conscious of the fact it was the ISDL as much as himself that was on trial and aware that much of the organization's activities could, by a strict interpretation of the law, be considered 'seditious' in so far as they were directed towards the replacement of the Irish Free State by a Republican Government. But to many of the surviving members of the Anti-Treaty ISDL, Art O'Brien's low key defence seemed to be no more than a tactic designed to secure his personal release at the expense of the Anti-Treaty cause, whose military tactics he disowned in the dock. This impression was strengthened by the grounds of O'Brien's and McGrath's appeal to the
High Court where they argued unsuccessfully that they should have been tried, separately from the others facing specific arms and ammunition charges. To their former supporters this seemed to be a manoeuvre on O'Brien's and McGrath's part to disassociate themselves from the IRA. They believed that O'Brien, whom they argued was only facing a maximum two year sentence, should have turned his defence speech into a rousing, defiant, reaffirmation of Republican policy and used the court room stage as a platform to revitalize the morale of the Anti-Treatyites badly shaken by the collapse of the Republican military forces. They compared his position and behaviour very unfavourably with the eighty one Republicans executed after the briefest of summary court martials and others killed in mysterious non-combat circumstances.

O'Brien's imprisonment did not end the controversy over his performance in the dock: the argument and counter arguments substantially affected proposals by his remaining supporters to reorganize the ISDL and he emerged from prison a year later to plunge straight into a turbulent froth of allegations that effectively ensured the demise of the Irish Self Determination League.

1 Times, 3 July, 1923.

2 There has been considerable controversy over the actual number of official executions carried out by the Free State Army during the Civil War but this figure of 81 appears to be accurate and was given in the Irish Press, 12 July, 1972.
Part VI The Twilight of Irish Separatism in Britain

Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath had played a major role in the formation and growth of the ISDL. But to some of their fellow Sinn Fein members they had created a Frankenstein and now, with O'Brien and McGrath in prison, their opponents lost no time in destroying their creation, by 'decentralizing' the ISDL as a first step towards incorporating it into Sinn Fein. O'Brien and McGrath had always triumphed in their earlier confrontations with Sinn Fein by appealing to De Valera. But now their ace card was trumped when De Valera for personal and organizational reasons ordered the disbandment of the ISDL. In chapter 23 we will investigate the demise of the ISDL, was it an act of organizational homicide instigated by a conspiracy or simply euthanasia - the termination of an organization that had outlived its usefulness and had no viable future? The ISDL was not the only organization in the Irish community affected by the creation of the Irish Free State and so in Chapter 22 we will examine the UIL's response to the changed political environment.
With the deportations the Irish Self Determination League lost virtually all its first and much of its second tier leadership along with many of its local cadres. Surviving local leaders who had evaded the arrests dragnet, and who were still sought for their IRA activities, were far too concerned with staying free to get involved in the reorganization of the League. Effective control of the organization passed into the hands of an Emergency Committee which was formed by J. Fowler, G. Lowdin, E. Delaney, N. Collins, E. Merryman and P. McBride. This essentially was the somewhat depleted Standing Committee of the London District Committee. Of its membership only J. Fowler could make any claim to national prominence within the League and even he had only been considered a junior leader. This virtual usurpation of the national organization's leadership by local London leaders antagonized branches in other areas who were effectively deprived of any influence in the overall administration of the League and contributed substantially to the pattern of purely localized organizational activities which hastened the demise of the national organization. This sense of grievance stemming from exclusion in the new decision-making and policy-forming body was particularly strongly felt in the Tyneside area which had six branches still active compared to only four in London.

1 Minutes of Standing Committee, 26 March, 1923, O'Brien Ms. 8432.
The Tyneside branches seem to have been so ignored by the new London based leadership to the point where Mrs Prosser, who though as a Vice President of the League was constitutionally one of, if not, the most senior officer left of the original leadership, had not been invited to participate in the Emergency Committee and kept so much in the dark that she was obliged to write to Fowler in an effort to discover if a national organization of the ISDL still existed.¹

The new London-based leadership appear to have done very little in the way of mobilizing the ISDL in such a manner that it might have organizationally benefitted from the considerable support the arrests and subsequent deportations had generated on behalf of those interned in Ireland. With the exception of Manchester where the League still retained considerable strength and organized a large protest meeting,² most of the protest activity sparked off by deportations was carried out under the auspices of the Irish Prisoners Defence Committee, a broad based organization with only tenuous links to the ISDL.³ This organization which changed its name to the Irish Seditious Conspiracy Trials Committee after the return of

¹ See letter, 16 April, 1923, Ms. 8432.


³ There is very little surviving material on the Irish Prisoners Defence Committee which is first mentioned in a note dated 25 March, 1923. O'Brien Ms. 8433.
the deportees raised at least £820 and possibly much more⁴ for their legal expenses in fighting the various actions that secured their release. It conducted a vigorous publicity campaign distributing leaflets⁵ and organizing relatively well-attended protest meetings.¹ A typical joint protest meeting and fund raising dance held under its auspices in a Greenwich Council hall shows the broad nature of support the Defence Committee managed to mobilize. This function was officially supported by the Greenwich, Deptford, Woolwich and Lewisham Labour Parties and the local Communist Party. While speeches were given by such diverse figures as Father Lawlton and Saklatvala, the Communist MP.⁴

The Labour Party officially condemned the deportations but no doubt their leader Ramsay MacDonald subsequently regretted making some of his Parliamentary speeches on the issue and writing a rousing denunciation of the arrests⁵ when he subsequently came under strong and ultimately successful pressure from his party colleagues to release O'Brien.

¹ A Balance Sheet of this organization shows that it raised £821 16s 4d but only part of the sheet survives and it would appear that additional funds were recorded on the missing portion, O'Brien, Ms. 8433.

² See their leaflet: preserved as 'item 78' in Miscellaneous Leaflets 1919-23', ILB 300 (NLI).

³ ROR 199, 28 March, 1923, CP 177(23), CAB 24/159.

⁴ See Irish Army Intelligence Report, S 2156.

⁵ See his article in Socialist Review, April, 1923.
and McGrath after he took office as the country's first Labour Prime Minister early in 1924. The Rev. Dunnico, a Nonconformist Labour MP, organized a petition for their release which was supported by such prominent Labour leaders as J.R. Clynes, Philip Snowden and included the Bishops of Southwark and Portsmouth among its notable signatories. A campaign was also launched at the London Labour Party Annual Conference for the reinstatement of Rose Killeen, the Whitechapel teacher deportee, dismissed for her political views by the London County Council, following pressure from the Hammersmith Ratepayers Association who demanded the sacking of "Irish teachers who are openly disloyal to this country".

But while the ISDL deportations certainly aroused considerable hostility far beyond the Anti-Treaty milieu in Britain, this opposition particularly among the Labour Parliamentary Party was based to a considerable extent on purely tactical considerations and was employed more as a valuable weapon against a Government, which had made a series of blunders affecting basic citizenship rights, rather than as a display of any real sympathy for the Anti-Treaty cause. Interpreted at this basic level of analysis the campaign on

1 Catholic Herald, 22 Dec., 1923.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid., 15 Jan., 1924.
4 Ibid., 22 Dec., 1923.
behalf of the deportees, or rather more accurately against the illegality of their deportation, certainly never attained the dimensions of the American reaction against the Palmer Raids\(^1\) and subsequent deportations;\(^2\) an episode with striking similarities to the ISDL deportations.

Even the Communist Party, which accused the Labour Party of insincerity in its attitude towards the deportations, adopted what, in effect, were double standards in its response to the arrests. While all branches were told in the usual weekly circular from head office to start a new 'Hands off Ireland' movement and hold meetings on the deportations, branch leaders were verbally informed by special messengers "that no member must help, or converse in public with any known members of the ISDL".\(^3\) And the year previously, the

\(^1\) The Palmer Raids - called after their instigator - resulted in the arrests of some 6000 radicals in 1919/20, some of whom were subsequently deported in very dubious legal circumstances; see Patrick Renshaw 'The IWW And The Red Scare 1917-24', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 3, (1968), 63-72.


\(^3\) ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166)23), CAB 24/154.
Communist Party had refused permission to its tiny Irish counterpart to collect funds from the Irish in Britain, though this refusal may have at least partly been motivated by envy that the Communist Party of Ireland was in receipt of funds from the Russian Trade Delegation in London, which the British Communist Party no doubt believed should have been given exclusively to them. Relations between the two parties became so strained that it was reported the British Communists had requested the Moscow based and controlled Comintern to "liquidate" the Communist party of Ireland as a preliminary step towards forming a new party under the control of James Larkin, the veteran Irish Trade Union leader, who had just been released from his long imprisonment in the United States. The British Communists seem to have regarded their Irish counterparts as having been too tainted with Republicanism as a result of their participation in the Civil War which Larkin had opposed. But even in the case of Larkin, influential Communist leaders like J.T. Newbold the MP for Motherwell, preferred to keep the Irish as it were at arms length. He strongly opposed a suggestion that Larkin should be invited to speak on the party's Scottish platforms during the December 1923 General Election on the grounds that they should "fight purely on the class issue" but his observation that "people will just say oh his usual last card,

1 ROR 173, 21 Sept., 1922. CP 4207, CAB 24/139.
2 ROR 206, 17 May, 1923, CAB 24/160.
3 ROR 231, 15 Nov., 1923.
playing up to the Irish" might perhaps be interpreted, with some justification, as a shrewd electoral appreciation of the importance of the sectarian factor in Scottish politics.\textsuperscript{1} Despite this evidence of Communist Party caution in involving itself in Irish activity, British Intelligence appears to have been considerably alarmed by the Communist participation in the deportees release campaign and warned the Cabinet that John McPeake,\textsuperscript{2} whose arrest in Glasgow and subsequent deportation was the subject of a number of Parliamentary questions,\textsuperscript{3} had been sent over to Scotland to improve relations between Republicans and Communists,\textsuperscript{4} though the basis for this assertion was not at all clear.\textsuperscript{5}

Whatever the factual basis of this fear, it certainly could not have been inspired by the strength of the Republican political movement in Britain whose supporters' morale according to Intelligence reports had been badly affected

\textsuperscript{1} ROR 234, 6 Dec., 1923, CP 476(23), CAB 24/162.

\textsuperscript{2} John McPeake was the driver of Collins armoured car and was accused of involvement in Collins death. But Collins' nephew General Collins Powell, who talked to the IRA ambushers, has exonerated McPeake; see Robert T. Reilly, 'The Road to Beal na mBlath', Eire-Ireland, (1966), 3-9.

\textsuperscript{3} 165 HC Debs 5's Col. 2534. 167 HC Deb 5's, Cols. 23, 205-7, 1254-55.

\textsuperscript{4} ROR 213, 5 July, 1923, CP 291(23), CAB 24/160.

\textsuperscript{5} It is more likely that McPeake simply fled to Scotland with the assistance of the IRA to whom he had sold his armoured car, because fellow soldiers were openly accusing him of involvement in Collins death.
by the publication of captured letters from Republican leaders in Ireland to their American allies, revealing their "vanity, greed and furious personal jealousies. The amounts of bickering and graft disclosed has dismayed Irish people in Britain who are sympathetic to the Republicans". The ending of the Civil War in May 1923 with the total defeat of the Republican forces was undoubtedly a major blow to the morale of the remaining ISDL members but one might have supposed that the Appeal Court Habeas Corpus decision and resultant release of most of the deportees would have served as a major confidence boost; yet there is no trace of any such mood in the surviving Emergency Committee minutes which record few details of any activity at all. The Emergency Committee appear to have used the verdict of the Seditious Conspiracy Trial as a convenient pretext to finally dissolve an organization it had done little to preserve as a viable, centrally directed entity. In a circular sent to the remaining branches this Committee claimed that the Old Bailey trial had shown that "no Irish organization here can be constitutional if it sides in any way with any party in Ireland that is in conflict with His Majesty's Government in Ireland".

Recommending the effective dissolution of the ISDL as a national organization the Committee observed that lack of funds prevented the convening of any conference to

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1 Freeman's Journal, 20 March, 1923.
2 ROR 199 28 March, 1923, CP 177(23), CAB 24/159.
3 Circular dated 21 Aug., 1923, O'Brien Ms. 8432.
decide the matter but claimed it had earlier sought the views of all the surviving branches with the result that,

"out of twenty seven branches that by a wide stretch of the imagination might be considered alive, sixteen made no reply at all, four replied there was no branch remaining, two are still writing a reply, three stated their intention to continue as 'Independent Republican Clubs' and two will continue as League branches but cannot support a Central office."

Their advice that the ISDL should now undertake a "decentralization" rather than a "termination" process might seem at first sight to simply parallel the evolution of the 'Committee of 100' which;

"began as a compact, clearly articulated structure with identifiable and responsible leadership and evolved into an amorphous collection of semi-autonomous units with no authoritative leadership at all".1

But in the case of the Committee of 100 the restructuring appears to have been undertaken at local level, in practical pursuance of an ideological change of perspective, whereas there must be a strong suspicion that the decentralization proposal in the case of the ISDL was motivated mainly by a desire to weaken the bonds binding branches together so that they could more easily be absorbed by another organization, Sinn Fein, when the time and conditions were right. Joseph Fowler, who had emerged as the most influential member of the Emergency Committee, was a member of Sinn Fein, as apparently were some of the other members, and appears to have held the view that with the demise of its former mass

support the conditions that, had once necessitated an ISDL type broad based organization rather than the more elitist and sectarian Sinn Fein no longer now applied.

When Fowler took effective control of the ISDL, Sinn Fein was still very inactive in England and was even weaker in Ireland where only sixty branches survived out its former strength of 1500. By June 1923 when the Republicans began to reorganize Sinn Fein as their political party to contest the proposed General Election, its strength had further declined to only sixteen properly affiliated cumainn. With Sinn Fein reduced to such straits, Fowler could hardly have recommended the ISDL should dissolve itself into another organization apparently even more debilitated than itself. So his proposal that ISDL branches should constitute themselves as 'Independent Republican Clubs' was a convenient way of creating the necessary half way house to accommodate Republican supporters until they could be incorporated into a reorganized and revitalized Sinn Fein.

We have observed that the formation of the ISDL was actively opposed by some Sinn Fein members and that they subsequently passed up no opportunity to belittle the League in their unceasing campaign to regain the whip hand for Sinn Fein. In May 1923, the publishers of Eire, the Glasgow based Sinn Fein organ, informed London ISDL branches that they were no longer prepared to continue publishing advertisements on behalf of the League even though despite

1 Freeman's Journal, 16 Feb., 1923.
2 Sinn Fein, 8 Dec., 1923.
3 O'Brien, Ms. 8431.
the chaos caused by the deportations they had managed to push up sales of the paper from an initial order of only 50\(^1\) to over 900 copies per issue.\(^2\) *Eire*, established in early 1923\(^3\), became the major Republican organ in Ireland as well as in Britain and though a major target of the March arrests was still able to continue publication with substantially the same editorial staff\(^4\) despite periodic seizures.\(^5\)

The 900 copies of *Eire* sold in London might have seemed to offer a nucleus of support around which the ISDL could be revitalized even though many of these readers were probably very reluctant to transform their passive sympathy for the Anti-Treaty cause into active membership of an organization whose very goals had been declared effectively illegal by an English judge. Weiss suggests that when the strength of punitive social sanctions outweighs the intensity of belief in a cause, particularly if it is a cause that is seemingly hopeless, then the individual will not transform passive sympathy into active support as expressed in terms of

\(^{1}\) O'Brien, Ms. 8427.

\(^{2}\) ROR 203, 25 April, 1923, CP 219(23), CAB 23/160.

\(^{3}\) O'Brien, Ms. 8431.

\(^{4}\) P.J. Little and George Humphrey, its principal staff managed to escape arrest, ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166(23), CAB 24/159.

\(^{5}\) See *Glasgow Herald*, 9 May, 1923.
joining the actual organization. Joe Fowler expressed this hypothesis rather more bluntly,

"apart from a faithful few, the majority of Irish men and woemn will not touch a movement that is likely to interfere with their bread and butter, although all would like to belong to a patriotic movement in which they were safe and not likely to be molested".²

Yet while acknowledging that most people were afraid to join the Irish Self Determination League, because it supported the Anti-Treaty cause, he was recommending that its branches turn themselves into new organizations with openly Republican titles. Fowler had evidently decided that with virtually no prospects of recruiting new members to the ISDL following the deportations and subsequent trial the League's cadre members should be preserved through Independent Republican Clubs until Sinn Fein had been reorganized and was capable of absorbing them. His recommendations were not however totally accepted for Art O'Brien found on his release from prison, a year later, a number of still functioning ISDL branches which were still loosely linked together even though a new organization under the effective control of Sinn Fein had come into existence.

According to Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek,³ there are three primary types of innovation that an organization can

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1 Robert Frank Weiss, 'Defection From Social Movements And Subsequent Recruitment To New Movements' Sociometry, 26(1963), 1-20.

2 Circular dated 21 Aug., 1923, O'Brien, Ms. 8432.

implement. Both 'Programmed' and 'Non Programmed' - when the organization finds itself suddenly with more resources than it immediately needs and has to find a quick way of "taking up the ensuing slack" - occur in organizations experiencing growth and success. But 'Distressed Innovation' is literally forced on an organization by failure accompanied by a perceived need 'to do something' to alter this state of affairs. The proposal that the ISDL should undergo a 'decentralization' process by branches transforming themselves into Independent Republican Clubs was an example of 'Distressed Innovation'. This same process of 'Distressed Innovation' had also been undertaken a few months previously by the United Irish League, an organization if anything even more affected by declining membership, apathy and no sense of future direction or purpose than the ISDL. There had been virtually unanimous agreement from the local conventions summoned by T.P. O'Connor to mobilize the Irish vote in the previous year's General Election that the UIL, in its present form, had no future and that a fundamentally new organization was required. Despite the Scottish convention's request that members of other organizations should be invited to aid the formation of the new organization,¹ its birth was confined to existing UIL members on T.P. O'Connor's instructions. Only 130 delegates,² many of them representing virtually moribund UIL branches, attended the Leeds meeting.

1 Glasgow Herald, 31 Oct., 1922.
2 Catholic Herald, 26 May, 1923.
which jointly served as the funeral of the UIL, founded there exactly fifty years previously and the birth of the new organization.

T.P. O'Connor, the only President the UIL ever had, explained the organization's virtual lack of activity during the past four years:

"so long as the terrific struggle in Ireland lasted, it was impossible to get Irishmen in Great Britain to concentrate on their own affairs".

His "fear of factionalism and disputes with other organizations" which "would have lingered on for years after" had, he claimed, resulted in a decision not to involve the UIL in any contentious public activity during this period. But now "we are face to face with new conditions" and these, he claimed, required a new organization independent of all British political parties, which would devote itself to "defending the rights and liberties, social, political and religious of Irish citizens in Great Britain" who should be "loyal British citizens (be) prepared to take their share in the political life of the country".

The new organization would campaign, he said, for the peaceful reunification of Ireland but he strongly emphasized that its primary orientation should be focussed on the position of the Irish in Britain, rather than on Irish politics as the UIL had done. It was his hope that the "new organization would provide the opportunity to create a new

1 Catholic Herald, 26 May, 1923.
2 Times, 21 May, 1923.
Ireland in Great Britain" and as a contribution towards this

"he wanted to get hold of some of the poorer children in the Catholic schools when they reached the age of fourteen, take them away from their sordid home surroundings and train them in the arts and professions for four or five years".  

While the delegates appear to have had three different resolutions before them, each advocating a particular strategy - Wimbledon UIL proposed a non-political Irish Federation of Great Britain, while the North-East Lancashire District Council strongly favoured a political organization and the Davitt Branch wanted an United Irish Free State League - it was a foregone conclusion that T.P. O'Connor's stated preference for a non-political Irish Democratic League would be ratified by the delegates. The meeting, attended by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, was generally non-controversial but a Cardiff delegate observed somewhat bitterly that

"it would only have been fitting if the Irish Free State Government had sent over a special representative to thank Mr O'Connor and the United Irish League for all the organization had done for Ireland".

The extremely lukewarm relationship that had existed between the UIL and the new Irish Government was an important influence in determining that the new Irish Democratic

1 Catholic Herald, 26 May, 1923.
2 Freeman's Journal, 14 May, 1923.
3 Glasgow Herald, 21 May, 1923.
4 Freeman's Journal, 21 May, 1923.
League would refrain from involvement in Irish political affairs unless they specifically affected the Irish community in Britain. And so, when early in the following year Cumann na n Gaedheal, the new Irish Governing Party, held its first Convention, the Catholic Herald emphasizing the significance of the event, observed; "it is the first time in the history of national organizations in Ireland when no direct representative from any branch across the water will be present".\(^1\) The link between Homeland and exile political organizations, that had dominated the organizational life of the Irish Nationalist community in Britain for half a century, had been finally severed and only the various small Republican organizations maintained a working relationship with parties based in Ireland.

The Catholic Herald's hope that the new Irish Democratic League would be still-born were not realized but the UIL's offspring was a sickly infant predoomed never to reach maturity. Many of the delegates present at Leeds had come out of a sense of duty and even nostalgia to decently bury an organization which had lingered for years in a comatose state - never having recovered from the traumatic haemorrhage of a generation of future leaders in the War - scarcely aware of the swiftly changing Irish political universe. Most returned home with no intention of doing anything much about establishing the new organization in their areas.

\(^1\) Catholic Herald, 26 Jan., 1924.
A Special Branch officer reported

"T.P. O'Connor's new Irish Democratic League has been launched and at the moment, its fate hangs in the balance, in Lancashire and the North it will probably receive a certain amount of support but the London Irish take very little interest in it".¹

And seven months later he observed "as far as the mass of the Irish population is concerned Irish National life in London is almost extinct."² By that time the Irish Democratic League while making little headway in London had made "fair progress" in South Wales³ and had set up twenty three branches in Yorkshire.⁴ But the real strength of the Irish Democratic League was, like its parent, firmly located in the Lancashire area and particularly in the city of Liverpool where even the UIL, recognizing the 'millet' like indissolubility of ethnic identity and religious belief in a municipal micro-political scene dominated by sectarianism, had reorganized itself as the Irish and Catholic Democratic Federation.⁵ They reluctantly bowed to O'Connor's preferred name and changed the title of their new organization but its particularistic policies remained. P.J. Kelly, still nominally a Nationalist Councillor, gave up his struggle to reorganize a Pro-Treaty Irish Self Determination League in favour of an unsuccessful attempt to form a local alliance of "progressive forces"

¹ ROR 208, 31 May, 1923, CP 256(23), CAB 24/160.
² ROR 236, 20 Dec., 1923, CP 485(23), CAB 24/162.
³ ROR 228, 25 Oct., 1923, CP 430(23), CAB 24/162.
⁴ ROR 233, 24 Nov., 1923, CP 473(23), CAB 24/162.
⁵ Liverpool Post and Mercury, 23 March, 1923. ROR 204 3 May, 1923, CP 232(23), CAB 24/160.
uniting Nationalists, Labour and Liberals in an anti-Tory grouping¹ but Labour was already too far down the road towards becoming the major party in Liverpool and its relations with other Nationalist leaders were embittered by years of conflict to the point of "open war".² Kelly soon defected to the Labour Party and another influential Nationalist Alderman Harford resigned after T.P. O'Connor had insisted that his nominee William Grogan should contest the Exchange Constituency.³ Harford had fought this seat in 1918 but had subsequently been passed over in the first 1923 election in favour of the Northern Irish Nationalist leader Joe Devlin whom O'Connor had wanted back at Westminster.

O'Connor's imposition of his nominee Grogan - a man with a record of minimal involvement hitherto in local Nationalist politics - contributed substantially to the erosion of the local Nationalist Party infrastructure but the December 1923 General Election once again revealed the willingness of the local electorate to support anyone standing as the 'Irish candidate'. Despite a drop of some 2,300 in the Nationalist vote from the year's earlier election, Grogan managed to increase their share of the poll by five percent and came within two hundred votes of defeating the sitting Conservative MP.⁴

¹ Waller, 295-99.
² ROR 232, 22 Nov., 1923, CP 469(23), CAB 24/162.
³ Catholic Herald, 8 Dec., 1923.
⁴ Catholic Herald, 15 Jan., 1924.
what had become an established tradition was returned again unopposed for his Scotland constituency fief. In a manifesto, almost regally addressed to "My People", he advised them to favour the Liberals over Labour but soon crossed the floor to support the new Labour Government. His gesture demonstrated that for all practical purposes - except in the very particularistic situation of Liverpool - the political future of the majority of the Irish Catholic community in Britain lay with the Labour Party. O'Connor had claimed that the introduction of Proportional Representation would give an organized Irish Party twenty five seats in Parliament but as the introduction of Proportional Representation never appeared a feasible hope there was never any reasonable possibility of creating a specifically Irish Parliamentary Party outside of Liverpool. The hope of the old Nationalists that the new Irish Democratic League might become the political voice of the Catholic Church in Britain was emphatically refuted by Cardinal Bourne, a few months after its formation, when the idea of a Catholic Party was discussed and rejected by the National Catholic Congress; and even in Liverpool where this suggestion met with much support it was deprived of any official imprimatur by Archbishop Keating's refusal to allow Catholic Church premises to be used for political

1 Catholic Herald, 8 Dec., 1923.
2 Ibid., 16 Feb., 1924.
3 Freeman's Journal, 19 March, 1923.
4 Catholic Herald, 11 Aug., 1923.
meetings.¹

T.P. O'Connor was not however the sole Parliamentary reminder of the powerful influence the UIL had once exerted. Two members of that first Labour Cabinet underwent their early political socialization in the organization that had for so long represented the interests of the Irish community from which they came. John Wheatley, the new Minister of Health, had been the President of Glasgow District UIL and J.R. Clynes, the Lord Privy Seal, first cut his political teeth in the League.²

On the backbenches there were James Sexton, the Liverpool dockers leader, Joseph Sullivan and Jack Jones. Another former member of the UIL elected in that snap election of December 1923 was John Scurr, the Mayor of Poplar, who had been a prominent member of the Irish Self Determination League until the Civil War split, though he afterwards campaigned forcibly for the release of the deportees. No doubt there were those in the Minority Labour Government, exhorted by the King to "prudence and sagacity";³ who might have preferred to see Scurr back in the Brixton Prison, where he had been confined for six weeks as the leader of the Poplar Rebel Councillors. For the militant who wrote, "I don't care a brass farthing whether we have a Labour Government or not if the game is to be played

¹ *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 5 March, 1923.
² *Catholic Herald*, 7 June, 1924. Wheatley according to *the Catholic Herald* was born in Ireland, 9 July, 1927.
³ Nicolson, op. cit., 387.
under the present rules;¹ constantly embarrassed the Government with his demands that it should retrospectively legitimize the Poplar Rate Revolt and finally played a major role in bringing the Government down by pressurizing the Attorney General to drop charges in a sensitive political case. John Campbell, the acting editor of the Communist Workers Weekly, was charged with publishing an appeal to soldiers not to allow themselves to be used in industrial disputes.² Scurr secretly interceded on his behalf and the charges were dropped but the affair became public knowledge when the Communist Party— for its own reasons — revealed all the details³, thus initiating a major political scandal. This major political row was intensified after it became known that the King had demanded a full scale inquiry into the affair and the opposition put down a motion of censure.⁴ The Government was defeated and obliged to go to the country having only been in power for ten months.

Labour lost 64 seats⁵ and blamed its loss of power on the

¹ Socialist Review, September 1925.
² Workers Weekly, 25 July, 1924, — the 'Open letter to the Fighting Forces' was actually written by Harry Pollitt.
³ The Communist Party claimed that "for the first time the course of justice in the law courts had been changed by outside political forces into a triumph for the working classes over the capitalist classes", Times, 15 Aug, 1924.
⁵ Labour won 151 seats, and the Conservatives took 419; Taylor op. cit., 283.
'Zinoviev Red Scare' Letter\textsuperscript{1}, published shortly before polling, but Alderman Harford claimed that the 'Letter' had actually increased the number of Irish votes for Labour because they knew the "Tories had forged the Zinovieff letter", just like they, had used the forged Piggott letters' against Parnell.\textsuperscript{2} Labour had already so increased its strength in Liverpool that the Nationalists did not bother contesting the Exchange constituency in this election. T.P. 'O'Connor, once more returned unopposed, decided this time against issuing a manifesto - "I do not see the necessity of issuing an election address"\textsuperscript{3} - but some Irish Democratic League branches actively campaigned on behalf of Labour.\textsuperscript{4} Manchester ISDL however

\textsuperscript{1} The 'Zinoviev Letter', published in the Daily Mail, purported to be instructions to the British Communist Party from the President of the Comintern to launch a widespread sabotage campaign. It was undoubtedly a forgery, probably jointly concocted by British and Polish Intelligence; see Sibyl Crowe, 'The Zinoviev Letter: A Reappraisal', Journal of Contemporary History, 10(1975), 407-32. Its impact was not so much on Labour votes - for the party increased its vote by a million though this was partly due to its ninety extra candidates - but on mobilizing an extra two million - who had not voted in 1923 - votes for the Conservatives who also benefited from a surge of Liberal voters anxious to put an end to a Labour Government that had apparently been influenced by Communists; see Taylor, op. cit., 282-3.

\textsuperscript{2} Catholic Herald, 1 Nov., 1924, The Piggott Letter' published in the Times purported to be a letter showing Parnell's sympathy for the Phoenix Park assassinations but a Government Commission exposed it as a forgery; see Kee, op. cit., Vol. 2, 113.

\textsuperscript{3} Catholic Herald, 18 Oct., 1924.

\textsuperscript{4} Ibid., 1 Nov., 1924.
appealed to Irish residents in the city not to vote for Henderson and Clynes, the two local Labour MPs, for serving in a "Government which had refused to release Irish Political Prisoners"; but both of them retained their seats. Saklatvala the Indian born Battersea Communist MP, who had played a prominent role in the deportees release campaign, was aided by an ISDL campaign to mobilize the Irish vote in his interest. This help was also extended to George Lansbury, the leading left winger in the Labour Party and though Saklatvala lost his seat, he actually increased his vote. 

This issue of the Irish Political Prisoners was a particularly sensitive one for the first minority Labour Government, carefully chosen by MacDonald to convey an image of a Party determined to maintain law and order - it contained two Viscounts, three Lords, a Knight and a General, but firmly excluded, at the King's bequest, George Lansbury. Some of these ministers had only an extremely tenuous connection with the Labour Party and two were actually

2 ROR 234, 6 Dec., 1923, CP 476(23), CAB 24/162 and ROR 235, 13 Dec., 1923, CP 478(23), CAB 24/162.
avowed Conservative supporters. Labour's almost Conservative fiscal policy and lack of any real interest in grandiose social reform programmes infuriated its left-wing backbenchers who were appalled that a Labour Government seemed prepared to use the Armed Forces if necessary to break dock and transport strikes and would have been even more so had they known their Cabinet had decided to secretly preserve, intact, the previous Government's elaborate strike breaking machinery, which was to play such an important part in defeating the 1926 General Strike.

In the ordinary course of events the Cabinet would undoubtedly have disregarded the appeals of the Daily Herald and simply ignored the calls of its left wing backbenchers, as it repeatedly did on other matters, for an amnesty for Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath. But a complicating factor in their cases was the petition signed by forty Labour MPs,

1 Viscount Chelmsford, the former Viceroy of India, became First Lord of the Admiralty with the approval of Stanley Baldwin, see A.J.P. Taylor, op. cit., 270.


3 See Ralph H. Desmarais, 'Strike breaking and the Labour Government of 1924', Journal of Contemporary History, 8(1973), 165-78, and also see Josiah Wedgwood, Memoirs of a Fighting Life, (1941). Wedgwood was the proposed Chief Civil Commissioner under this plan.

4 Daily Herald, 9 Feb., 1924.

only a few weeks before they won the General Election for its signatories included J.R. Clynes and Philip Snowden, now Lord Privy Seal and Chancellor respectively. Ramsay MacDonald, the new Prime Minister, had never been very sympathetic to the idea of an independent Ireland and informed Parliament that, "To us, as to them", (his Conservative predecessors), "The Treaty embodies a final settlement of Anglo-Irish relations made once and for all". Indeed MacDonald was very reluctant to implement the Treaty agreement establishing a Boundary Commission and only did so after strong Free State pressure. His Government even opposed the Irish decisions to internationalize the Treaty by depositing a copy with the League of Nations and tried to prevent the appointment of Irish Diplomatic Representatives with their own Irish issued credentials. During his 1931 administration, MacDonald unsuccessfully attempted to enlist the support of the King in an abortive attempt to prevent the Irish Free State Government from using their own Seals of Office and subsequently initiated a full scale economic war. MacDonald however was unprepared to interfere in Northern Irish affairs and informed its Government that "the last thing I desire to do is to indulge in haggling or bargaining" in relation to the subordinate financial position of the Stormont administration.

1 174 "C. Debs 5 Col 1258, MacDonald on Boundary Settlement.
2 See B. Stubbs, op. cit., 114-17.
3 Ibid., 123-26.
4 Cab 7A/4/3, (NI PRO).
MacDonald had however, while still in opposition, denounced the March 1923 Deportations and moreover Labour had officially condemned these deportations which had culminated in O'Brien and McGrath's trial. It was also their misfortune to come to power just as the Compensation Tribunal, that they had in opposition forced the Government to establish, began its hearings. And so for several weeks the press carried numerous details of the ill treatment of the deportees who no doubt somewhat exaggerated their accounts in some cases in a bid to gain increased compensation. The Labour Government Ministers who had, in opposition, waxed eloquently about the rights of the deportees to proper compensation were now privately pressurized by their Treasury officials to make strenuous efforts to keep the awards as low as possible, while being forced publicly into the invidious position of combatting their backbenchers efforts to withhold payment of fees to the former Attorney General for his erroneous legal advice - a course advocated by Labour leaders themselves while in opposition.

All of this supplemented by a vigorous campaign of protest meetings addressed by MPs like John Scurr and appeals from

1 Cabinet 31(23), 13 June, 1923, CAB 23/48.
3 Times, 20 March, 1924.
4 Catholic Herald, 3 May, 1924.
Irish Trade Unions\(^1\) concerning prisoners originally sentenced in Northern Ireland and transferred from its overcrowded prisons to British jails,\(^2\) ensured that the Government could not simply sweep the issues under the carpet of Number Ten. Playing for time it informed its irate backbenchers that it was necessary to set up an internal inquiry to consider the legal position of the proposed amnesty and as a sign of its good faith released Joseph Dowling, whose release the Cabinet had been told in the last ever Report on Revolutionary Organizations circulated to all Ministers, would be "welcomed by many of the Irish in England".\(^3\) Dowling's case showed just how sensitively the issue of the Irish Political Prisoners was regarded in establishment circles. A former British soldier imprisoned in 1918 for espionage\(^4\) his release had been specifically

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1 "Let MacDonald and the British Labour Party live up to the principles of International Labour and open the gaol gates on May Day", telegram from Dublin Trades Council, *Times*, 26 April, 1924.

2 The number of Northern Ireland prisoners in British jails is not precisely known but they appear to have numbered at least forty. There were at least twenty imprisoned in Peterhead in Scotland, see the *Daily Sheet*, 6 Nov. 1923, and another twenty are known to have been transferred to prisons in the South of England - see the Metropolitan Police arrangements for this transfer in March 1923 - MEPOL, 2/1884.

3 ROR 238, 10 Jan., 1924, CP 21(24), CAB 24/164.

4 Dowling was recruited into Casement's ill fated Irish Brigade in a POW Camp in Germany and landed by U boat in Ireland - see the file on Dowling's trial and subsequent prison correspondence - O'Brien, Ms. 8456.
forbidden by the War Office when it reluctantly agreed that the Connaught Rangers should be freed, after an appeal from Cosgrove that without this measure his "Amnesty for British Military Offences Bill" would not be passed by the Senate. And as recently as July 1923 the Cabinet had decided not to release Dowling despite a specific request from the Free State Government.

Dowling's release aroused strong feelings in the Home Office which drew up a position paper listing a number of reasons why O'Brien and McGrath should not be released. Arthur Henderson, the Home Secretary who had served in the Wartime Administration responsible for the execution of the 1916 Rising leaders, agreed with his civil servants' advice, just as he subsequently refused to reinstate the dismissed 1919 Police Strikers even though this had been officially promised by Labour when in opposition. Accordingly he was only prepared to recommend to the Cabinet that O'Brien and McGrath should be upgraded to the status of First Division Prisoners for the remainder of their

1 Cabinet 71(22), 19 Dec., 1922 and Cabinet 72(22), 29 Dec., 1922, CAB 23/32.
2 Cabinet Conclusion, 20 July, 1923, CAB 23/45.
3 'Irish Political Prisoners in Britain', Home Office Memo, CP 214(24), CAB 24/166.
4 'Reinstatement of Dismissed Police Officers', CP 230(24), CAB 24/166.
sentence. But this concession only served, if anything, to intensify the Labour backbenchers campaign to free the two for the category of First Division, with its privileges of no compulsory work and better conditions, was as near as English law has ever got to recognizing the status of 'Political Prisoner' - a category the Home Office was now particularly loath to see preserved. Henderson tried for several months to ride out the backbench discontent but only a fortnight after assuring the House of Commons of his intention to ignore a number of petitions received from Labour organizations, he recommended the Cabinet to release O'Brien and McGrath. His argument that the release of De Valera by the Free State Government now made a similar move possible in Britain, which might substantially help the progress of the Boundary Commission, appear only to have served as a pretext to conceal his surrender to backbench pressure. The other four prisoners sentenced with O'Brien and McGrath for specific arms offences were not amnestied as they had almost completed their shorter sentences and several of the IRA members, imprisoned several

1 Cabinet 30(24), 7 May, 1924, CAB 23/47 and Home Office letter to Geraldine O'Brien, O'Brien Ms. 8427.

2 The category of First Division Prisoner was established under Section 40 of the 1877 Prison Act.

3 CP 214(24), ibid.

4 175 H.C. Debs 5. Col. 2450.

years before, remained in jail until 1930. \(^1\) Henderson claimed that he had no authority to release the Northern Ireland sentenced prisoners as this was a matter for the Northern Irish Government\(^2\) but it was undoubtedly the subordinate legislature and most of these men were in fact released on the instructions of the British Government as part of the 1925 Boundary Settlement.\(^3\)

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1 *An Phoblacht*, 10 May, 1930 and 3 Jan., 1931.


3 The Boundary Commission's proposal that both Northern and Southern Ireland should lose territory found little favour and the Free State agreed to recognize the existing frontier line in return for the reduction of its financial obligations under the Treaty and the release of the Northern Ireland sentenced prisoners in British jails; see Cabinets 55, 56, 57 and 58 of November-December 1925, CAB 23/51, Cabinet 1(26), 19 Jan., 1926, CAB 23/53 and for the Irish see S 1810.
CHAPTER 23

The Death of the ISDL: Murder or Euthanasia?

Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath stepped out of Brixton\(^1\) into a barrage of allegations and recriminations. They emerged to find a very different political scene from the one they had involuntarily left the previous July. Then there had been a moribund Pro-Treaty ISDL and a much reduced but still functioning Anti-Treaty ISDL with a few Sinn Fein clubs scattered across England; now the Pro-Treaty ISDL had apparently gone out of existence, while much of the surviving Anti-Treaty ISDL membership had joined the new Irish Freedom League founded by some of the ISDL Emergency Committee officers and Sinn Fein club members.

Art O'Brien subsequently wrote that he emerged to find the Republican Movement in England had completely disintegrated\(^2\) and while this was certainly somewhat of an exaggeration, his own personal position in the Republican hierarchy had been subject to a devastating series of attacks as a result of his imprisonment in July 1923.

O'Brien's salary as Republican Representative in London had been stopped\(^3\) and then a further sign that this action had been taken not merely because of his inability to continue his duties was provided by the decision of the newly appointed Republican Government, in August 1924

\(^{1}\) *Times*, 24 July, 1924.

\(^{2}\) O'Brien Ms 8460.

\(^{3}\) S1605 (SPO).
i.e. after O'Brien's release, to terminate his appointment as an overseas Representative of the Irish Republic.¹ Brian Hannigan who had temporarily replaced O'Brien was now confirmed as his successor.

The Irish Freedom League, formed in London early in 1924, appears largely to have been Hannigan's initiative, presumably acting on instruction from the Republican leadership in Ireland. In its first policy statement the new League appealed to "all lovers of freedom in Great Britain" for their aid in "assisting to secure the Independence of the Irish nation".² From his prison cell O'Brien immediately wrote to a friend condemning the new organization³ and the following month, along with McGrath, issued a statement claiming that the new organization could not do anything the ISDL was incapable of doing. But O'Brien clearly identified the very different nature of the new organization when he subsequently complained; "A Republican title for the organization was heatedly refused and the constitution of the new organization was drafted studiously avoiding any mention of the Republic".⁴ The organizers of the new Irish Freedom League justified

¹ Gaughan, Stack, op. cit., 219.
² Freeman's Journal, 1 Feb., 1924. Times, 12 Feb., 1924.
³ Letter 8 Feb., 1924. O'Brien Ms 8433.
⁴ O'Brien Ms 8427.
⁵ O'Brien to Sinn Fein Head Office, Dublin, 5 May, 1925, Ms 8431.
their actions by claiming that Justice Swift's remarks, on the probable illegality of any organization openly supporting an Irish Republic, required the dissolution of the ISDL in favour of a new organization constitutionally defined that it would be within the law. Yet Joe Fowler, the Vice President of the Irish Freedom League, had advised the remaining ISDL branches that they should transform themselves into autonomous Independent Republican Clubs. Fowler appears to have held the opinion that the outlook for the Republican movement both in Ireland and Britain was now so bleak that there was no prospect of recruiting new members in any numbers and the most that could be done was to encourage small groups of dedicated Republicans to band together in the anticipation of better days to come.

These better days seemed to be on the way a lot sooner than Fowler and Republicans generally in Ireland had dared to hope. Sinn Fein surprised the press, and no doubt itself, by winning over twice the number of predicted seats in the September 1923 Dail General Election. Their 27% of the poll, giving them 44 seats in the 153 seat Dail, left the Cummann na Gheadheal Government, with only 63 seats, in a minority position and was a particularly impressive performance, especially considering that most of Sinn Fein's candidates were still in prison. The

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Government Party had lost much support through its determination to pay the estimated £47 million the Civil War had cost out of its current expenditure and by its stated policy not to create budget deficits. Reductions in social welfare expenditure accompanied by tough, even chilling, speeches that people might actually have to die of "starvation" cost the Government much of its earlier support but the unexpected rise of the Sinn Fein vote indicated a much stronger basic Republican bedrock support than had previously been realized.

One result of this election was the dramatic mushrooming of Sinn Fein from a mere 106 cumainn at the time of the election to 729 by November 1923. But the expenses of contesting the election had been very high and the further expansion of Sinn Fein required the employment of full time officials, which the organization could not finance by its own fund raising in Ireland, at a time when the Republican Movement desperately needed money to finance the rebuilding of the IRA and aid the dependents of the many members still imprisoned. So Sinn Fein reorganized the American Association for the Recognition of the Irish

1 MacArdle, op. cit., 861.

2 "There are certain limited funds at our disposal, people may have to die in this country and may have to die through starvation". Patrick McGilligan, Free State Minister of Health, Dail Debates, Col. 562, (9 Dec., 1924).

3 Sinn Fein Funds Case, Evidence Book 22, 7, (PRO, Dublin).
Republic to raise funds in America.\textsuperscript{1} Pyne claims that Sinn Fein decided it also needed a much broader based fund raising organization in Britain than the demoralized ISDL and thus created the Irish Freedom League with the "primary function of keeping the Republican Party and Government supplied with funds which were essential if the Movement was to continue to function effectively".\textsuperscript{2}

The formation of the Irish Freedom League coincided with an event in Ireland that momentarily led Republicans to believe that "the death rattle can already be heard in the throat of the Free State Government".\textsuperscript{3} In pursuance of its rigid economy drive the Free State Government slashed its Army by some 43,000\textsuperscript{4} in the first year after the Civil War. Discontent simmered throughout the Army; particularly among officers who had fought in the War of Independence and alleged, with considerable justification, that the guerrilla veterans were being passed over in favour of the more recent recruits who had gained their military experience in the British Army. But the Army Mutiny of 1924

\textsuperscript{1} The new A.A.R.I.R. claimed 25,000 members joined in its first year, \textit{Irish Independent}, 3 Mar., 1925.


\textsuperscript{3} \textit{Eire}, 29 Mar., 1924.

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Catholic Herald}, 31 May, 1924.
involved far more than mere concern for jobs. It was essentially an attempt by the IRB to regain the loss of political influence it had suffered since Collin's death. The leading mutineers, who included some of the most senior officers, indicated their sympathy for a more Republican orientated Government. For a period a new Civil War, with a somewhat different line up than in the previous one, seemed all too possible and although the Mutiny eventually fizzled out without any real bloodshed, the episode resulted in the resignation of two of the most prominent members of the Government who had appeared to sympathize with the Mutineers' cause. The Pro-Treaty section of the IRB, now largely confined to National Army officers, was dissolved by Government order and some months later the IRA also wearying of the presence of a rival secret oath bound organization ordered the dissolution of the Anti-Treaty IRB, an action which both Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath appear to have opposed.

In the event the Irish Freedom League seems to have raised

1 T.D. Williams(ed.), Secret Societies, op. cit., 149.
2 Major General Liam Tobin, The Truth about the Army Crisis, (Dublin, 1924). Report of the Army Inquiry Committee, Mulcahy Papers, P7/C/1 and also see Boxes 69-70.
no substantial funds for Sinn Fein and so it was dissolved a year later. The prevailing circumstances proved highly unfavourable for any new Irish political organization as even the established cultural organizations were having a very hard time. The Gaelic League in London reported its lowest membership for twenty years with hardly any beginners in its language classes while the Gaelic Athletic Association lost a third of its clubs during 1923, and far fewer people than previously were now attending its games. Elsewhere in England the GAA had now no clubs left functioning in Birmingham, Manchester and Newcastle, hitherto strongly organized areas.

Very little material survives concerning the strength of the Irish Freedom League or even its activities, but the organization is unlikely to have had more than a thousand members and probably substantially less than that figure. Hampstead with 150 members appears to have been its largest branch. The new organization did manage to incorporate most of those former ISDL branches which had transformed themselves into Republican Clubs. The IFL also managed

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2 Catholic Herald, 22 Dec., 1923.
3 Ibid., 21 June, 1924.
4 Ibid., 12 Jan., 1924.
5 Eire, 18 Oct., 1924.
to establish some new branches in areas like Pontypridd\textsuperscript{1} where the ISDL had been such a strong force in the pre-Treaty days. Other ISDL branches however refused to affiliate to the new IFL; the six surviving branches in the Tyneside area pursued a virtually autonomous existence but branches in Fulham and Swansea which had ceased to function were reorganized\textsuperscript{2} by O'Brien's supporters in late 1924.

On his release from prison, O'Brien decided he had to, at the earliest opportunity, counter the allegations made against him; word of which had reached him after Brian Hannigan and Tomas O'Sullivan had visited his fellow prisoner Anthony Mullarkey to inform him of De Valera's disquiet over O'Brien and McGrath's evidence at the trial.\textsuperscript{3} This policy led him into a head-on collision with the leadership of the Republican Movement as O'Brien had on his release from Brixton been specifically instructed by their Minister of Foreign Affairs not to make any comment until the Republican Government had fully investigated his conduct.\textsuperscript{4} De Valera himself subsequently wrote to O'Brien:

"you must surely realize that the statements attributed to you in the public press at the time of your trial could have no other end than the destruction of all confidence in you, either as Republican Representative or as President of the ISDL."

\textsuperscript{1} \textit{Eire}, 18 Oct., 1924.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid., 8 Nov., 1924.
\textsuperscript{3} Memo, 'Conversation with Anthony Mullarkey'(Wormwood Scrubs) - O'Brien Ms 8427.
\textsuperscript{4} See letter from O'Brien to De Valera 5 May, 1925. O'Brien Ms 8431.
As well as accusing O'Brien of making these "unworthy and unwise statements" De Valera also complained,

"your plunging widely into extravagant expenses in connection with your legal defence, not only without orders but in direct contravention of this, was equally unwarrantable".¹

The issue of O'Brien's legal expenses was extremely controversial for there does appear to be evidence indicating that at least the earlier expenditure, relating to the Habeas Corpus proceedings, had in fact been authorized by the Republican leadership.² This issue had also produced considerable ill feeling between O'Brien and McGrath and their fellow deportees over mutual allegations that the other party had refused to pay an agreed proportion of their compensation to offset the legal costs not covered by the Tribunal awards.³

In the circumstances O'Brien's action in convening a meeting to unify the Republican Movement in Britain, for the purpose of personally presenting his defence, was in effect a direct challenge to the Republican leadership in Ireland and was seen by them as a bid to appeal to the rank and file membership of the various Anti-Treaty organizations in England.

¹ Letter 10 Sept., 1924, O'Brien Ms 8460.

² P. Rutledge, the Republican Minister of Home Affairs, wrote to the Adjutant General (IRA) advising him that the deportees should take no legal action until the "Art O'Brien test case is concluded" as "proceedings will be very costly" (30 March, 1923). This letter was captured and published in the Freeman's Journal 11 April, 1923.

³ "It is to be regretted that the liabilities incurred by Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath have not been fully discharged" - Irish Deportees Association, Statement of Account 16 April, 1925; ILB 300. 12. (NLI). For O'Brien's position see Obituary written by Sean McGrath in United Ireland, October 1949.
over the heads of most of the local leaders. The extent to which a once united and strong movement had fragmented can be seen from the invitation list. For the ISDL alone, invitations were extended to the new Provisional Executive, which had been organized after the formation of the Irish Freedom League, the pre-deportations Executive Council and its successor the Emergency Committee, together with the London District Committee, almost the one and same grouping. The twenty-four branches known to have been still functioning prior to the deportations were also invited to send delegates, as were any branches still in existence at the time of the meeting. The Committee and branches of the Irish Freedom League were also invited to send their representatives together with London Sinn Fein, which apparently had recommenced its activities after a period of inaction. Invitations were also extended to the O'Donovan Rossa Republican Club, the Deportees Association, their Defence Committee and O'Brien's fellow trial defendants.¹ Such a meeting was unlikely to achieve anything positive for the invitation list included people who O'Brien claimed were "bitterly and maliciously and personally opposed to the President and Secretary of the ISDL" and accused them of assuming control of the Irish Freedom League, the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club, the Deportees Association and their Defence Committee.²

In the event O'Brien's principal opponents, Brian Hannigan

¹ See Report of Meeting to Unify the Republican Movement in Britain (Central Hall, Westminster, Oct. 1924). O'Brien Ms 8432.

² O'Brien to De Valera 5 May, 1925. O'Brien Ms 8431.
and Joe Fowler, the President and Vice President respect­ively of the Irish Freedom League, Seamas Nunan, the Presi­dent of the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club, did not attend the meeting but they sent Thomas O'Sullivan and Fintan Murphy to represent their viewpoint. The meeting was a heated one with O'Brien claiming the ISDL had been deliberately destroyed and O'Sullivan and Murphy suggesting that they had three choices of action before them; the ISDL and IFL could merge together under one of the existing titles, both could end their existence and form Sinn Fein Clubs or they could form a totally new organization. They made it very clear however that whatever happened they were not prepared to work in any organization having O'Brien and McGrath as its officers. The meeting ended inconclusively on a bitter note having only served to publicly highlight the bitter divisions that had developed between O'Brien and McGrath and the new Republican leadership in England. A repeat, if less public, rerun of the controversy occurred the following week at the Roger Casement Sinn Fein Club meeting when George Mortimer defended O'Brien and McGrath who, though members, had not been invited to the meeting. His stance was strongly opposed by Father O'Connell, Fintan Murphy, P.D. O'Hart and Sean Nunan. Another member, Eileen Kennedy complained to the Sinn Fein Head Office in Dublin about the open hostility to O'Brien. The Cathal Brugha Sinn Fein Club in Manchester also intimated their support for O'Brien and McGrath.

1 Report, 1 Oct., 1924. O'Brien Ms 8432.
2 O'Brien Ms 8431.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid., Ms 8419.
In the midst of this controversy the ISDL lost their London premises as a result of a campaign waged against the organization by the right wing publication the **Patriot**.\(^1\) Despite all of this, there were some signs that the ISDL was recruiting some members from the Irish Freedom League as a result of an intensification of branch activities, aided by the decision of **Eire** to accept paid advertisements inserted by the ISDL. But at the end of 1924, **Eire** which had transferred its production to Dublin was discontinued in favour of increasing the circulation of **Sinn Fein** which refused to take any paid advertisements from the ISDL.\(^2\) A letter from Art O'Brien to De Valera complaining of this new policy went unanswered. A letter from the ISDL Executive to Sinn Fein Head Office in Dublin inquiring about Sinn Fein's attitude to the ISDL\(^3\) did elicit the perfunctory reply "it is our intention to organize Sinn Fein curnains all over Britain and so organize all Irish Republicans into one organization in Britain".\(^4\) The ISDL Executive replying "in a spirit of friendly but frank criticism" suggested that

"whilst the Republican Movement here suffered very considerably from the evil results of the Treaty and subsequent attacks of the British Government culminating in the deportations of 1923, the present deplorable conditions has been mainly brought about by the more recent mishandling of affairs and interference from your side of the water"

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2. 10 Jan., 1925, O'Brien Ms 8431.
3. 16 Jan., 1925, Ibid.
4. Sinn Fein to ISDL, 29 Jan., 1925, O'Brien Ms 8431.
and requested an immediate conference between the Sinn Fein and ISDL leadership.¹ When the Sinn Fein leadership refused this request,² the ISDL Executive then demanded a proper reply to their earlier letters³ but were bluntly told that this letter was "intended to be a final and conclusive reply"⁴. De Valera however personally subsequently wrote to Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath informing them that,

"the state of the Republican Movement in Britain has been a constant cause of anxiety to us since July last. The differences that exist over there, their origin and suggested proposals for bringing them to an end have been considered time after time not only by the Standing Committee of Sinn Fein but by the Cabinet and I have to inform you now that both bodies have unanimously decided that they will henceforth recognize but one Republican organization in Britain - Sinn Fein and they hereby revoke whatever recognitions express or implied, they may have at any time accorded to any other organization there including the ISDL."⁵

The specific dating of "July last" as the start of the problems encountered by the Republican Movement in Britain was as O'Brien and McGrath quickly retorted⁶ a definite assumption that their release had sparked off the controversy and fragmented the Movement. But De Valera did end on a conciliatory note by suggesting

"it would be particularly painful were I to believe that any of the members of the ISDL who worked loyally for the cause of the Republic since 1919 would by this decision be cut off from communion with the main body there"

¹ ISDL to Sinn Fein, 25 March, 1925, O'Brien Ms 8431.
² 30 March, 1925, ibid.
³ 8 April, 1925, ibid.
⁴ 5 May, 1925, ibid.
⁵ De Valera to O'Brien and McGrath, 20 April, 1925, O'Brien Ms 8431.
⁶ O'Brien and McGrath to De Valera, 5 May, 1925, ibid.
This was a clear indication that both could expect to remain members of Sinn Fein if they agreed to the remaining ISDL branches becoming Sinn Fein cummains.¹

O'Brien and McGrath were not however impressed by De Valera's appeal to their loyalty and bluntly informed him that

"the question of recognition or nonrecognition of the ISDL is in the condition of relations now existing, rather an academic one"

and accused the Sinn Fein leadership of an attitude

"so discourteous, so obviously hostile and so wanting in any frankness that if we adopted your suggestion we should feel rather like the lamb lying down by the side of the lion."

They also put forward the more pertinent suggestion that the experience of the last few years had shown that for "a political organization to be effective here, it must be self contained and self controlled, though affiliated in some way and working in harmony with the organization at home".²

This was an extremely important observation, but unfortunately the significance of this new evolution in thinking about the nature of the relationship between Homeland and Exile political organizations was lost sight of in the long list of complaints made by O'Brien and McGrath. It however became one of the guiding principles adopted by the Connolly Association, formed in the next decade, and which claimed to be the inheritor of the ISDL's mantle. De Valera very brusquely replied to O'Brien and McGrath's complaints of their

¹ De Valera, 20 April, 1925, O'Brien Ms 8431.
² O'Brien and McGrath to De Valera 5 May, 1925, O'Brien Ms 8431.
treatment by Sinn Fein\(^1\) when they sought his permission to publish their correspondence in a Republican paper\(^2\) but by this time Sinn Fein had been forced itself to cease publication owing to a chronic lack of funds. It is probable that the financial plight of Sinn Fein in Ireland was the decisive factor in the new policy of reorganizing Republican supporters in Britain under the banner of Sinn Fein, with the intention that they should along with the American AARIR.\(^3\) which was supplying 70% of the Irish organization's finances be primarily responsible for the Republican Movement's financial needs. By mid-1924 Sinn Fein in Ireland had over a thousand branches\(^4\) but the process of rapid decay had already started; aided by the inability of the organization to generate enough funds to create the infrastructure necessary to maintain its earlier momentum. The policy of abstentionism from Dail Eireann proved unpopular with the electorate and as Sinn Fein failed to build on its earlier electoral successes (and it in fact suffered considerable reverses in the June 1925 local Government elections, getting only 11% of the seats\(^5\)) many members became demoralized and fell away. With Sinn Fein failing to fulfil its early promise many local IRA officers began instructing their volunteers to withdraw their services from an organization that

\(^1\) De Valera to O'Brien and McGrath 18 May, 1925, O'Brien, Ms 8431

\(^2\) 9 June, 1925, ibid.

\(^3\) Report (leaked) of the 1925 Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, Catholic Herald 21 Nov., 1925.

\(^4\) Sinn Fein, 7 June, 1924.

\(^5\) Voice of Labour, 18 July, 1925.
seemed to have little future. This local practice was formally ratified in November 1925 by the Army Council. Sinn Fein's Director of Organization frankly admitted at its Ard Fheis, held later that month, "the Organization is not in a healthy condition and is moribund in many areas." The number of branches affiliated to Head Office had dropped by over half since the previous year's Ard Fheis and only just over 200 of the 380 branches represented were considered to be really functioning.

It is in this context of an organization undergoing rapid internal decline, in a political environment that had almost overnight become much more hostile, and about to lose the support of its former military ally, that De Valera's bitter attack on O'Brien and McGrath should be interpreted. His action was essentially an attempt by a once powerful leader to reassert an authority that was being steadily eroded on all sides and the unpopular ISDL leaders provided him with an easy target for this exercise. Despite De Valera's claims that O'Brien and McGrath had "let the Republic down" by insisting from the Old Bailey dock the Republic could no longer be maintained by military action; they had in fact more or less only followed the line laid down, over a month before their trial, by De Valera himself in his end of the

1 Irish Independent, 27 Jan., 1925.
3 Catholic Herald, 21 Nov., 1925.
4 Voice of Labour, 28 Nov., 1925.
Civil War message to the:

"Soldiers of the Republic, legion of the Rear-guard. The Republic can no longer be defended successfully by your arms. Further sacrifice of life would now be in vain and continuance of the struggle in arms unwise in the national interest and prejudicial to the future of our cause. Military victory must be allowed to rest for the moment with those who have destroyed the Republic. Other means must be sought to safeguard the nation's right". ¹

From its formation the ISDL had, as we have observed, incurred the hostility of some Sinn Fein members who believed that the new organization had been founded at the expense of Sinn Fein. As long as the ISDL had the personal support of De Valera their hostility remained impotent but once De Valera turned against O'Brien and McGrath then the remnants of the ISDL were exposed to the unleashed fury of its Sinn Fein opponents, particularly at a time when their Irish leadership desperately required funds which past experience suggested might be provided from Britain.

The Irish Freedom League, intended from its formation as no more than a temporary half way house for Sinn Fein, immediately complied with De Valera's instructions and dissolved its branches into new Sinn Fein clubs but many of its members refused to join these new organizations. Austin Stack, the General Secretary of Sinn Fein, travelled to Britain during May 1925 to supervise this process but met with a varying response. He managed to reorganize 16 Sinn Fein branches in Scotland and established a new Lancashire Chomhairle Ceantar to co-ordinate the new branches there. But he was unable to persuade the Pearse and Casement Clubs to establish a similar London committee because of the

¹ Macardle, op.cit., 856.
factionalism that was rife in London. His overall conclusion at the end of his British tour was the rather gloomy but realistic observation that there was "little promise of setting up a really great organization" in the country.¹

It was an observation that might even have been better applied to the organization in Ireland for its position continued to deteriorate. One member accused his party's leadership of showing "far too great a leaning towards the form instead of towards the reality"² but the Sinn Fein leadership were unable to ignore the reality of the Irish political situation for much longer. Already a chronic lack of funds had forced Sinn Fein to give at least de facto recognition to the Irish Free State by initiating legal proceedings in its courts to regain the organization's 1918 and 1921 election deposits and another 10,000 dollars sent from America in 1921 but frozen as a result of the Post-Treaty split. The question of de jure recognition of the Dail was forced upon Sinn Fein when the Boundary Commission crisis developed at the end of 1925. Established under the Treaty, the Commission had been popularly expected to transfer a considerable part of Northern Ireland territory and its population to the Free State but the Commissioners, instead in their unpublished report, recommended a much smaller transfer, accompanied by an award of Free State territory and population to Northern Ireland. It was a highly embarrassing report for the Free State Government and most historians believe

¹ Sinn Fein Funds Case, 2B/82/117. 2B/82/117 (PRO, Dublin).
² Sinn Fein, 21 March, 1925.
that had it been published, and the transfer of territory proceeded with, the Government would have fallen. However both the Northern and Southern Governments agreed to ignore the Boundary Commission findings; the Northern Government agreed to release some of its prisoners and the British removed some of the financial penalties imposed on the Free State by the Treaty. The settlement caused deep tensions within the governing Cumann na Gheadeal party, resulting in resignations among its Dail representatives. A united Dail opposition might well have forced the vote of no confidence which would have resulted in a sudden General Election but the majority of the opposition belonged to Sinn Fein and had consistently refused to take their seats.

Sinn Fein's powerlessness was graphically revealed in this episode and as a consequence of the Boundary Crisis, De Valera decided to take his Dail seat but not the oath of allegiance to the British King. (This was an essential precondition before TDs could vote in the Dail). De Valera's Proposal was however defeated by hard line Republicans at the special Ard Fheis convened to discuss the Dail entry issue. He immediately resigned as Sinn Fein President and as

1 D. Williams, op. cit., 190. Cosgrave himself claimed his Government would "be swept out of office" if the Boundary Commission's proposals were carried out - Cabinet 55(25), 30 Nov., 1925. CAB 23/51.
3 Mitchell, op. cit., 210-12.
4 Irish Independent, 12 March, 1926.
President of the Republican Government when he subsequently was also defeated on the same issue at a meeting of Comhairle na dTeachtaí; a body comprised of all the Republican TDs elected since 1921 and which served as a 'shadow legislature'.¹ So many Sinn Fein members joined De Valera's new Fianna Fail party that by the summer of 1926 there were only 163 Sinn Fein cumainn left and the organization's income had been reduced by almost 85% from its 1924 level.² The following year it lost most of its Dail seats to the new Fianna Fail party³ in the June 1927 General Election and five years later, when De Valera finally won power, the old Sinn Fein party had been reduced to an intransigent rump.

Britain was the area where Sinn Fein was least affected by the 1926 split that followed the special Ard Fheis as all the delegates from the Scottish, Lancashire and London branches voted against De Valéra's proposal to enter the Dail.⁴ Very few members appear to have defected to the new Fianna Fail party; the Roger Casement, London, branch reported that only four of its members had left to join the new party⁵ but this was too little to form a branch, and Fianna Fail never appears to have been in a position to organize in

¹ An Phoblacht, 9 April, 1926.
² O'Brien, Ms 8417.
⁴ An Poblacht, 16 April, 1926.
⁵ Ibid., 24 Sept., 1927.
Britain though some attempts to do so were made. In London, at least, Sinn Fein appears to have met with some modest success and by the summer of 1927 had expanded to three branches, with the Roger Casement Club claiming its most successful year since its formation eleven years before. It claimed a sales figure of 2,000 copies of An Phoblacht a month and the frequency of references in this paper to London Sinn Fein activities indicates that these branches were regarded by the organization in Ireland as playing an important role in the affairs of a much smaller Sinn Fein.

Members of the ISDL, who had refused to join Sinn Fein in the reorganization of early 1925, might have appeared to have offered the new Fianna Fail party its best prospects in England but they had already been alienated from De Valera, as a result of his treatment of Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath, who had resumed their former positions of President and Secretary of the reorganized Provisional Executive. George Mortimer and Mrs Prosser were the Vice Presidents and the remainder of the positions on the Executive were filled by members not previously encountered in this manuscript: Eugene O'Sullivan, Eilis ni Congaile, Maire ni Suillerbain and C.J. Lofmark; a further indication of the decline of the ISDL. By the summer of 1925 only ten

1. It appears that a few, short lived, Fianna Fail branches were established in Scotland and Lancashire. See An Phoblacht, 24 Sept., 1927.
3. Ibid., 17 Sept., 1927.
4. Ibid., 24 Sept., 1927.
branches were submitting reports to the Provisional Executive. Central London with about 50 members was the largest branch left, followed by Fulham with 30 members. Branches in Nelson and Burnley were much smaller. Barrow was reduced to 10 members while the Jarrow and Sunderland branches were barely ticking over, Newcastle and Birmingham ISDL then affiliated to Sinn Fein¹ and by mid 1926 the ISDL was virtually confined to London, with only the reorganized Central London - formed by merging two branches - remaining of an organization that had several hundred branches throughout England and Wales five years before. One revealing sign of the League's chronic poverty was a letter to a publisher from the Central London branch regretting that they were in a position to only pay one pound in part payment for a debt of only five pounds and seven shillings.² Most of the ISDL's activities from 1925 onwards seem to have been orientated towards clearing the organization's £180 debt owed to the Gaelic League, as the rent for premises it had shared with them. The Gaelic League had itself become not only much smaller but was now much less political and even though Art O'Brien remained its President he was unable to persuade its membership to formally support the reception in honour of Archbishop Mannix when he returned to London in 1926.³ Five years previously, Mannix had been greeted by large crowds in every Irish area he had visited throughout Britain. The much lower key reception accorded to him on his return visit indicated the

¹ O'Brien, Ms 8432.
² 19 March, 1925, O'Brien Ms 8433.
³ Catholic Herald, 3 April, 1926.
significant down turn there had been in national sentiment since that first dramatic visit. Only in Liverpool, where the City Council refused the Reception Committee the use of St George's Hall, was Archbishop Mannix welcomed by any sizeable crowds. The venue chosen for the London Reception, Rotherhithe Town Hall, symbolically indicated the extent to which the Irish National Movement in London had moved away from the centre of Community activities. The organization of the preparations for the Reception was further marred by Sinn Fein efforts to exclude the ISDL from the proceedings.

An attempt by the ISDL to run a ballot to clear its debts provoked such an extreme reaction from the Catholic Herald - it made serious allegations about the misuse of funds that Art O'Brien was forced to start proceedings for libel. His legal advisors informed Diamond he had gone too far this time and so he was obliged to pay O'Brien £600, plus his costs, in an out of court settlement. It was the last time the publication ever referred to the Irish Self Determination League during the two years more the League continued to

1 Catholic Herald, 24 Oct., 1925.
2 Ibid., 7 Nov., 1925.
3 Ibid., 14 Nov., 1925.
4 Art O'Brien to Miss M. Flannery, 22 Oct., 1925, O'Brien Ms 8460.
5 Catholic Herald, 9 May, 1925 and 13 June, 1925.
linger on. To all intents and purposes the ISDL had ceased to be a political organization; its 'official' political goal had in Perrow's terminology\(^1\) been totally subordinated to its 'operative' goal, which was simply the clearance of its outstanding debt to the Gaelic League. In this sense the ISDL was still, but only just, an organization, pursuing "continuous purposive activity of a specified kind" as defined by Weber.\(^2\) But once this debt was cleared could the ISDL have any other purpose, sufficiently worthwhile, to justify its continued existence?

Art O'Brien answered this question in a letter read at the May 1923 meeting of the Central London Branch— the League's only surviving one— when he informed the small group that the League had now finally cleared its debts:

"Now that it has been liquidated, certain energies of the organization could in the ordinary course be released for other purposes. During the three years mentioned (a reference to the preceding review of the 1925-28 period) and coincidentally with our efforts to pay off this debt, the political situation in Ireland has undergone very marked changes in directions which have further tended to depress our people and this renders it more difficult for Irish political organizations outside Ireland to devise a programme of work which will satisfy the feelings of their members and tend to keep them still banded together".

Art suggested the ISDL should either cease to exist, or alternatively pursue a new programme of activities geared to

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increasing its membership but above all else he stressed "we must not allow the organization to drift and die of inaction". His argument in favour of ceasing activities centred around the fact "we are a very small body and cannot in the present conditions, hope materially to increase our membership" and because "bodies outside Ireland can only respond to the tune which is played in Ireland at a time of discord, we cannot expect to achieve any very important result in continuing our work at present". It was an argument clearly illustrating O'Brien's insight, gained as a result of some thirty years experience in Irish exile politics, that the success or failure of organizations in Britain were inexorably linked in an ebb and flow tide relationship to events in Ireland. In contrast to this realistic assessment of the unfavourable prospects for the ISDL, if it did decide to continue its existence, the arguments he presented in favour of maintaining the League were all of a sentimental, almost nostalgic, character. "We represent the last remnants of a world wide Irish movement bearing the same name, formed for a purpose not yet achieved" and he suggested some members might think it was "desirable to preserve a name with such an honourable history for the future". Finally he observed "should we disperse, there is no other Irish political organization in London to which we can transfer our membership":¹ a reference to the bitter dispute with Sinn Fein and the unattractiveness of Fianna Fail now set firmly on a parliamentary course.

¹ Letter from Art O'Brien to the Central London ISDL Branch, 17 May, 1928, O'Brien, Ms 8436.
Unfortunately no minutes of this crucial meeting of the Central London Branch of the ISDL survive but as the branch was never subsequently mentioned in either O'Brien's voluminous personal papers or the press, both general or political. It is a reasonable inference that the members did accept O'Brien's recommendations to wind up the Irish Self Determination League which had come into existence nine years before, in a blaze of publicity, flaming from a cauldron of activity but departed with a barely audible sigh, not a bang, leaving few traces of its existence. The Connolly Association which had by incorporating the subsidiary title "and Irish Self Determination League" into its name claimed a rather tenuous line of descent from the earlier organization; observed in a 1950 review of the Irish milieu in Lancashire, "the remnants of the old Self Determination League even now linger in the district". It has proved impossible to verify this claim but it is quite possible that it was a reference to one of the branches which are known to have opted for an autonomous existence, as an ISDL branch, in 1924, rather than become Republican or Sinn Fein Clubs. Such a branch might well still have been in existence even in 1950, though as a social rather than a political organization, particularly if it had its own premises serving as a focal point for the local community of Irish descent. Lancashire has become the 'Atlantis' of Irish organizations in Britain, preserving them in a time warp long after they have ceased to exist elsewhere, as I discovered myself while covering the 1981 Warrington By-Election. In search of some

1 Irish Democrat, September 1950.
'colour' of interest to an Irish readership I walked through a maze of terraced streets, with names like 'O'Leary and Ireland. Streets bearing witness to the mid-18th century Irish immigrants, who were their first inhabitants, until I saw a large building, painted in green, white and gold - the Irish national colours - standing by itself amid a large tract of a recent slum clearance. It was the Warrington Irish National League Club, still a flourishing social club even though there were hardly any Irish born members left. Elsewhere in Lancashire there are other Irish National League Clubs pursuing an independent existence, a century after their formation as part of the United Irish League's predecessor and there is even a Federation of Irish Democratic Clubs loosely linking for social purposes the remnants of the network established by Michael Davitt the Fenian leader. In Chapter 28 we will consider the legacy bequeathed to the subsequent generations of the Irish in Britain by the ISDL and the UIL.

1 For a more detailed account, see my article in the Sunday Tribune, 12 July, 1981. This Warrington Club held a conference to collect funds for Northern Ireland Relief in 1971 - Irish Democrat, November 1971.

2 There are 15 Irish Democratic League Clubs in Lancashire and Yorkshire which according to the Irish Post, 26 June 1976 have started to take a new interest in Irish affairs. The Halifax Irish Democratic League Club has 700 members and was building a large extension, Irish Post, 28 Feb., 1976. The Bradford Irish Democrat League Club claimed that its 1934 rule book required all members to be Roman Catholics when it was taken to court under the 1976 Race Relations Act for refusing a Hindu membership, Guardian 11 June, 1980.
We have so far in this thesis only encountered the IRA units in Britain in the role of walk-on players on a stage dominated by the ISDL. But in any final balance sheet the IRA units in Britain played a much more important role in the creation of the Irish Free State than the much larger ISDL. Moreover it is this creation of 'indigenous' guerrilla units fighting on a 'second front' in the metropolitan country that so separates and distinguishes the historical experiences and the political sociology of the Irish in Britain from other ethnic groups in this country. Because the amount and range of data concerning the IRA in Britain is so large and varied I have decided to group it together in a complete and separate section of this thesis. We have already observed some especially notable IRA operations in Britain but now in Chapters 24 and 25 we will place them in their strategical and tactical context: before assessing, in Chapter 26, their effectiveness and their impact on British society. Finally in Chapter 27 we will complement our investigation, in Chapter 11, of the ISDL membership by examining the socio-economic composition of IRA volunteers in Britain.
CHAPTER 24


In this section it is necessary to depart from our policy of focusing our analysis on the Irish in England and Wales and to include a consideration of the contribution made by the Irish in Scotland to the Irish military activities in Britain. For though the Irish Self Determination League was confined to England and Wales, the respective military organizations, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Republican Army, for operational purposes, regarded the whole of Britain as an integrated command area. In particular the important munitions supply system, with collection points from Scotland to Wales was centralized in Liverpool and the other Northern ports as the principal distributive outlets to Ireland.¹

¹ Much of the background to the munition supply network was obtained from:
   (a) The letters from Michael Collins to Ned Kerr, Steve Lanigan and Peter Daly in Liverpool, Joe Vize in Glasgow and Sean McGrath who organized the system in their respective areas. These letters cover the period 1919-1921 and form 11 bulky files P7/A/1 to 11 in the General Mulcahy papers (U.C.D.).
   A code was employed to conceal - not very successfully - the nature of the communications. In this code Glasgow referred to ammunition as "fairy tales", rifles as "long stories" and revolvers as "short stories" while in London munitions were known as "literature" ammunition as "leaves", revolvers as "volumes", rifles "bound volumes" and machine guns as "super bound volumes". In both codes gelignite was "soft stuff".
   (b) The depositions of Edward Roche, Martin Geraghty, Martin Walsh, Tom McCormick, contained in File P17a/154, O'Malley Papers (U.C.D.).
   (c) The depositions of Hugh Early, file P17b/110, Sean McGrath, file P17b/100, Dennis Brennan, file contd,
The oldest and ultimately most important Irish military organization in Britain was the Irish Republican Brotherhood, a cellular structured organization relying more on quality of personnel than quantity. Virtually from the moment of its origin in 1858, the IRB had maintained a considerable presence in Britain. It or its offshoots had engaged in military activities in Britain in the 1860's and the 1880's.\(^1\)

1 The history of the IRB and its relationship with its American counterpart - the Fenian Brotherhood, later to become Clan na Gael - is extremely complex and it is beyond the scope of this thesis to delineate the tortuous course pursued by the IRB/Clan na Gael between 1856 and 1916. Splits and factions within the organization were not uncommon, particularly in England, where a strong splinter Irish National Brotherhood was established in the 1890's. At the risk of oversimplification the 1867 operations in England, the attempted seizure of Chester Castle, the Manchester Prison Van escape, the Clerkenwell blast can be attributed to the IRB organization controlled from Ireland. On the other hand the 1884/5 Dynamite Campaign in England was basically the work of the American Clan na Gael, or rather a faction of this. The foremost authority on the IRB is Leon O'Broin, who has written two books on this subject, Fenian Fever - An Anglo-American Dilemma (1971) dealing with the 1860's period and Revolutionary Underground - The Story of the IRB 1858-1924 (1976). Also see for the 1884/5 campaign K.R.M. Short, op. cit.
but the IRB had also long recognized the value of infiltrating nominally innocent organizations during periods unfavourable for direct action:

"It watched everything, it was in everything."¹

The apparently constitutional Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain during the 1870's was in fact for a period an IRB controlled organization,² while through a London based cultural front, the Young Ireland Society such famous figures as the poet W.B. Yeats and Maude Gonne were drawn into the IRB.³

Numerically the IRB, or its various splinter groups, was never very strong in Britain. In 1912 it had 307 members in Great Britain,⁴ and by 1914 there were still only 250 IRB members in Scotland and 117 in England. But these apparently insignificant figures should be seen in the context that there were only 1660 members in Ireland itself in 1914.⁵ In any analysis of the influence of small revolutionary organizations the IRB merits a high position. Control of the military organization, the Irish Volunteers,

¹ Quoted in the Preface of O'Broin's Revolutionary Underground, op. cit.

² O'Broin, Revolutionary Underground, op. cit., 12.

³ Ibid; also see P.S. O'Hegarty, 'W.B. Yeats and Revolutionary Ireland of his Time' Dublin Magazine XIV (1939), 22-4.

⁴ O'Broin Revolutionary Underground, op. cit., 86.

⁵ Ibid, 155.
the cultural organizations, the Gaelic League, the political movement, Sinn Fein, ultimately passed into the hands of the IRB, often without the majority of members in those organizations realizing that they had in effect been co-opted by the IRB.

The IRB in Britain was sufficiently important to warrant three seats on the IRB Supreme Council. Recruitment was specifically orientated to sectors of the economy considered to be of potential military value. Docks and shipping lines were key areas for infiltration as was the Postal Service. The young Michael Collins, then a Post Office clerk, was sworn into the IRB in 1909 by a fellow Post Office official.

1 According to Major Price the Director of Military Intelligence, British Army in Ireland Headquarters Staff: "They (the IRB) have obtained practically full control of the Gaelic League and the Gaelic Athletic Association." See Minutes of Evidence Given to the Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, Col. 8311 (1916), 58. O'Broin goes even further than this stating that the IRB so controlled the Gaelic League that they were able to appoint as League organizers men "who didn't even speak Irish" - Revolutionary Underground, op. cit., 164-5.

2 Similarly Frank O'Connor claimed that at the important 1919 Sinn Fein Ard Feis (annual conference), a considerable number of 'delegates' were IRB members "who didn't know until they were told what areas they were representing." - Frank O'Connor, The Big Fellow, (Dublin, 1965), 181.

3 The three 'British' representatives of the Supreme Council which ordered the 1916 Rising were Dick Connolly (Southern England), Joseph Gleason (Northern England) and Pat McCormick (Scotland); see Diarmuid Lynch, The IRB and the 1916 Rising, (Cork, 1957), 28.

4 Rex Taylor, Michael Collins (1958), 45-46.
Sam Maguire. Maguire became such a valuable intelligence agent at a time when virtually all military and police communications went via the mails that Rex Taylor stated "He more than any other man had made Collins, without Sam Maguire, Michael Collins was lost."¹ A Southern Irish Protestant never even suspected by the British Authorities, Sam Maguire died too soon after the War of Independence to leave any written account of his exploits, so it is impossible to determine precisely the accuracy of Taylor's comments. But one indication of his influence in the Irish Republican Intelligence sphere is that he was able to supply Collins with the new 1920 RIC Police cypher two days after it was issued and within four days local units in Ireland had received this, as the case of Terence MacSwiney showed.² Maguire was not the only IRB agent in the London Postal Service. Dick Connolly, the IRB Supreme Council member for Southern England, ran another network.³ Later in the struggle, Crompton Llewellyn Davis, the Solicitor General for the Post Office, supplied information to Collins⁴.

² Rex Taylor, *Assassination*, op. cit., 180, also see Liam O'Doherty, 'Important Participants with the Leaders, 1918-21' *Capuchin Annual* (1976), 112-17.
³ Leoin O'Broin - *Revolutionary Underground*, op. cit., 161 "Half the sorters opened letter for us, at one time I had copies of eleven thousand letters" - deposition of Billy Ahearne, P17/B/99.
⁴ Margery Forster Michael Collins; the Lost Leader (1971), 101. Crompton Llewellyn Davis may have been the high level penetration agent code named 'L' who is referred to on various occasions in the Art O'Brien Papers.
Considering the state of the penetration of the Postal Services in London and other areas by the IRB, it was somewhat ironic that in 1920 British Intelligence, starved of information in Dublin, devised an intelligence gathering scheme centred on the London Sorting Office, where Sam Maguire was employed. Leaflets distributed in Dublin asked for information to be sent to the London Post Office with the guarantee that the sender's name would be protected.\(^1\)

The extent to which the IRB directed intelligence operation in Britain aided the Germans in the First World War is difficult to ascertain. British Government records contain considerable speculation but virtually no hard facts.\(^2\) A search using the *Times Index* for trials involving Irish persons in Britain suspected of collecting information for the Germans

1 The scheme involved what was then considered to be a security safeguard; in that the information letter containing the sender's name and address if they wished to collect any rewards, was to be placed inside an outer envelope addressed to "some well disposed person or known business address in England". These recipients would then forward the inner envelope addressed to D.W. Ross, Post Restante GPO London. See the *Times*, 16 September, 1920.

2 A White Paper intended to show the existence of a Sinn Fein/German plot, *Documents Relevant to the Sinn Fein Movement* Cmd. 1108 (1921) could only show a link between Roger Casement and Kuno Meyer, the former Liverpool University Professor of Celtic Languages, as evidence of German 'intelligence' operations aided by the Irish in Britain. According to Robert Brennan *Allegiance* (Dublin, 1950), 171, German Intelligence did enquire as to whether the London volunteers were in a position to destroy power plants and railway junctions in England.
produced only one such trial and that the inconclusive case of evaluating the extent of air raids in London.\(^1\) And recently there has been speculation that an Irish network in London supplied the information that enabled the German Navy to sow mines along the route taken by HMS Hampshire which was carrying Lord Kitchener to Russia.\(^2\)

The arming of the 1916 Insurgents with one notable exception,\(^3\) was largely the work of the IRB organization in Britain. In one four month period in 1914 they sent 675 rifles to Ireland.\(^4\) We have already investigated the IRB formation of the Irish Volunteers in

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\(^1\) In 1918 a 36 year old London, Irish born engineer was sentenced to six months imprisonment for collecting information on Air Raids in London; see *Times*, 13 May 1918 and 20 May, 1918.

\(^2\) This was suggested on a BBC Radio Four programme on the 'Sinking of HMS Hampshire' (part of a series titled 'Famous Sea Disasters'), transmitted on 27 February, 1978 and repeated on 2 March, 1978. Sean McGrath, the London IRA Intelligence Officer, stated that Sam Maguire had agents in the Home Office and Admiralty; see his deposition, P17/B/100.


\(^4\) See Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland - Minutes of Evidence Cd. 8311, 45. Also see the O'Rahilly's *The Secret History of the Irish Volunteers* (Dublin, 1915), 16.
England in 1913/14 and their subsequent role in the 1916 Rising. After the Rising despite suffering casualties, the IRB organization in Britain remained basically intact, though the Volunteer organization was allowed to lapse. Arms smuggling and intelligence collection did not require many people; indeed the larger the size of the organization the greater the risk of penetration by agents of the State. There was, also, as we have seen, the need to create a fund raising organization in Britain to look after the needs of the 1841 internees though most of these were held for less than a year\(^1\) and the 123 sentenced prisoners\(^2\) captured in the Rising. Fund raising schemes also acted as a transmission belt for recruits into the expanding Sinn Fein organization in Britain and later into the new Irish Self Determination League. From time to time a munitions seizure, usually of explosives, indicated that Irish activists in Britain had once again resumed their traditional role of supplying material to their revolutionary counterparts in Ireland.

In December 1917 a consignment of explosives being carried by two 16 year old Glasgow boys was intercepted,\(^3\) there was a similar case in March, 1918\(^4\) and four men and four women were discovered at Ardrossan

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1 & 2 Figures given in *Documents Relevant to the Sinn Fein Movement* Cmd. 1188 (1921), 14-15.

3 *Times*, 18 December, 1917.

4 *Times*, 23 March, 1918.
to be in possession of a large quantity of explosives, detonators and fuses later that year.¹ Sean McGrath, who had joined the IRB in 1916, was convicted in early 1919 of possessing fourteen revolvers, evidence being given to the court that he had previously purchased a very large number of cartridge cases for charging in a 'home ammunition factory'.² Earlier another individual who later became prominent in the ISDL, a stockbroker's manager C.B. Dutton had also been sentenced for arms offences.³

Following Sean McGrath's release from prison, he, on instructions from Michael Collins, reformed the London Volunteers in October 1919⁴ at a meeting attended by Art O'Brien in his capacity as Dail Eireann Representative. While in some areas the Volunteer organization had never really folded, the decision to reform suggests that even at that date consideration was being given to a more offensive course of action.

The IRA/Volunteers⁵ did not supplant the older IRB, as

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¹ Times, 18 Oct., 1918.

² Freeman's Journal, 13 Jan., 1919.

³ See O'Brien, Ms. 8457, and C.B. Dutton Papers, Ms. 17489(NLI).

⁴ London IRA diary, 17a/51. 200 Volunteers in 1919, and the deposition of Edward Roche, P17a/154. The Liverpool company had 100 Volunteers when it was reactivated in June 1919; P/7/A/1, Liverpool.

⁵ Both terms were used interchangeably at this point of time.
such, with IRB activists like Sean McGrath as the IRA Intelligence officer for Britain and Collins as GHQ Director of Intelligence, the Volunteers were very firmly under IRB control. It is likely that the IRB with a wealth of experience behind it and several failed insurrections as a cautionary reminder of the problems inherent in open warfare with a much stronger enemy, did not wish to commit its British organization per se to overt offensive military activities. There was also the not unimportant propaganda factor of legitimacy. The 'Army of the Republic' even if only belatedly officially recognized by Dail Eireann conveyed a much more prestigious impression than a mysterious, secret, oath bound organization. O'Connor's argument that IRB arms smuggling operations required only a small number of personnel but that open military activities necessitated an IRA in Britain can not be empirically substantiated. Previous IRB operations in Britain like Chester Castle had involved relatively large numbers.

1 In 1919 there were well organized strong "IRB centres in London, Liverpool, Birmingham, Cardiff, Manchester and Glasgow"; see a 'Joint Memo on the Situation in Ireland' by Lord French (Lord Lieutenant) and Mr MacPherson (Chief Secretary), GT. 8227. CAB 24/89. See also Colonel Michael O'Leary on the Liverpool IRB, An t Oglach, Autumn, 1966.

2 On the 11 Feb. 1867, 1,200 Irish Fenians travelled from all over Britain to Chester where they intended to seize the arsenal kept in the castle there and use the weapons to stage a 'rising'. Upon learning that their plan had been discovered they dispersed but 150 crossed over to Dublin to participate in the abortive insurrection. See Leon O'Broin, Fenian Fever, op. cit., 126-139.
The IRA in Britain was probably created by the IRB for reasons of self interest, and a recognition that the traditional concept of the IRB as the military leadership of the Irish struggle was increasingly coming under attack. Dail Eireann's establishment as the elected assembly of the Irish people seemed to quite a few of the new revolutionary leaders to have precluded any future role for the IRB, a view most definitely not shared by that organization. Sixty plus years of existence had created its own dynamic momentum and, in any case, the IRB's constitution, while paying a token homage to the concept of democracy, had much more in common with the Bolshevik's perspective of power than that of political parties like Sinn Fein. Whatever the reasons, by mid-1920 the IRB had 'sponsored' the formation of IRA units in the principal Irish centres in Britain. Most of these IRA volunteers in Britain remained inactive throughout 1919 and almost all of 1920, though a considerable number of the London Volunteers had paraded, in full uniform at the funeral of Terence MacSwiney. The potential power of the organization was however dramatically demonstrated in Manchester in October, 1919. The imprisonment in Britain of many Irish cadres arrested in Ireland¹, including members of the Dail, had resulted in a number of escapes. A TD in the Dail had in fact demanded to know what machinery existed for releasing the imprisoned Irish in England", and Collins with

¹ In 1919 there were 225 Irish internees in Britain; see the Report of the Prison Commissioners for England and Wales, Cmd. 972, (1919), 10.

Boland had absented themselves from the very first Dail session\(^1\) in order to help the escape of the 'two Presidents'\(^2\) from Lincoln Jail.

The escape of Austin Stack, TD, Piaras Besali and fourteen others from Strangeways Prison introduced a new element. Whereas in Lincoln and Usk\(^3\) outside aid by the IRB, had largely been a matter of helping to hide the escapers once they had got away,\(^4\) at Strangeways outside help was the key to the whole plan. Securing a warder, with handcuffs supplied by a Manchester Irish policeman\(^5\), the prisoners escaped over ladders placed against the wall by waiting men while people passing by "who tried to interfere were temporarily detained by small 'Sinn Fein' patrols at either side of the street".\(^6\)

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1 To cover their 'Lincoln exploit', both Boland and Collins were marked as present by the clerk of the First Session of the First Dail; see Robert Kee, *The Green Flag*, op. cit., Vol. III, 63. (The escape occurred on the 3 Feb., 1919).

2 Sean McGarry the IRB President was according to that organization's constitution the 'President of the Irish Republic'. Eamon De Valera was the President of the Irish Republic as elected by Dail Eireann, members of which were titled TD.

3 Joseph Mc Grath TD, and Herbert Mellowes TD and two other Irish Political Prisoners escaped from Usk Prison on the 24 Nov., 1919; see the *Times*, 25 Nov., 1919.

4 The Usk escapers were helped by the Liverpool IRB, Steve Lanigan, who worked in the Custom House, found them a boat to travel to Ireland; see *IRA Jail-breaks 1918-22, (Tralee, ND)*,34. De Valera was hidden in Sheffield and Manchester, in a priest's house, before going to Ireland; see Rex Taylor, *Michael Collins*, op. cit., 112.

5 Richard O'Muirthile Memoir, 7/52 and see Piaras Besali, *'Michael Collins'*, (New York, 1926), 360-72.

6 'Sinn Fein', the English Press and indeed official Government documents tended to attribute all contd,
Thus the *Times* graphically described the operation to a readership not accustomed to mass jail breaks and certainly not to operations involving twenty IRA\(^1\) members taking over a Manchester street. Rather belatedly a Cabinet Paper advised that Irish prisoners in England be kept under a strong military guard,\(^2\) and commented that:

"Outside the prisons they have well organized influential and wealthy friends to devise and assist their attempts at escape."\(^3\)

A few months later the Cabinet was strongly advised to transfer all Irish internees for the benefit of prison discipline\(^4\) as well as security reasons to military camps.\(^5\)

For political reasons it was however considered impossible

\(^1\) 'incidents' to Sinn Fein, a practice, commencing with their description of the '1916 Sinn Fein Rebellion' though in fact Sinn Fein had no part as such in that event.


\(^3\) An Army guard had in fact been mounted in Wormwood Scrubs (London) Prison, since early 1919, where Irish internees were also held; see MEPOL 2/1952.

\(^4\) CP 145. CAB 24/93.

\(^5\) The Governor of Wormwood Scrubs wrote to the Prison Commissioners complaining of: 'The gravest effect on the staff, seeing as they do, day by day the Governor brow beaten and insulted by defiant men'. CP 678. CAB 24/98.
to transfer the internees to military custody. Strangeways did however mark the highpoint of Irish Prison escapes in the period under consideration. The development of actual hostilities impeded any further operations on that scale. The 1920 Hunger Strike in Wormwood Scrubs affords us an indication of the size of the aid operation beyond the prison walls. Many of the internees were temporarily sent to outside hospitals to recover, and shortly afterwards Cabinet Ministers were somewhat amazed to discover that "77 were at large in London".\textsuperscript{1} To secrete this number of people obviously required a considerable organization. The fact that this series of prison escapes did not interfere with the now well established munitions shipments to Ireland was an additional indication of the strength of the Irish military organization in Britain. During 1919-1920 the British Cabinet was several times provided with evidence of the "steady stream of arms going secretly over to Ireland principally in the form of revolvers",\textsuperscript{2} undiminished by the odd arrest and inadequate sentences.\textsuperscript{3} Concern was expressed that non-Irish people were becoming involved in these shipments, the Sailors, Soldiers and Airmen's Union (a particularly worrying development for


\textsuperscript{2} Quoted in ROR 37, 15 Jan, 1920. CP 458. CAB 24/96.

\textsuperscript{3} Thomas Carrol of Liverpool, believed to be one of the organizers of the arms shipments, was sentenced to three months imprisonment for the possession of loaded firearms. Survey of Revolutionary Movements in Great Britain 1920. CP 2455. CAB 24/118.
the authorities) and members of the World Workingmens
Union (Wobblies). However the Cabinet were relieved to
find that the attempt of Capt. John White of the Irish
Citizen Army to get the Glasgow based International
Union of Ex-Servicemen to form a Volunteer Corps to
help the "Irish fight for freedom" had not been very
successful.

Evidence that the IRA in Britain would, at some time
in the future, go over to offensive operations increas­
ingly began to appear in the weekly Cabinet Intelligence
reports. There were indications that the IRA in London
were planning to mount a raid on a Bank of England
bullion van, and reports as vague as "certain Sinn
Feiners are beginning to talk of armed outrage" had
two months later solidified into the firm conviction
that

"If an outbreak on a large scale were to occur
in Ireland or a national strike took place in
this country, there would be outrages by the
Sinn Feiners."  

In December 1919, the Cabinet was informed that a Sgt.
Bruton of the RIC was being transferred to the "Secret
Service Department in this country", evidently to

1 See ROR 9, 26 June, 1919. CAB 24/82
CAB 24/118.

2 ROR 28. 6 Nov., 1919. CP 70. CAB 24/92.

3 ROR 32. 4 Dec., 1919. CP 256. CAB 24/94.

4 Ibid.

5 ROR 40. 5 Feb., 1920. CP 579. CAB 24/97.

CAB 23/18.
improve their surveillance operations of the Irish there.

The situation in Scotland was regarded as being particularly worrying. The Volunteers there ever since their reformation in April 1919 had pursued an alarmingly high public profile policy, combatting the police at a Glasgow meeting, and engaging, unlike their English counterparts, in open drilling as in May 1920 when they were reported as openly drilling in the Bothwell Public Park. The Cabinet discussed a report from the Secretary of State for Scotland dealing with 'illegal drilling in Scotland' in which he stated that several thousand ex-servicemen who had joined Sinn Fein were drilling. A warning that if large scale arrests were made, the police in Scotland might not be able to cope with the situation considerably alarmed the Cabinet. Such public drilling and the searching of pedestrians by armed IRA members at Glasgow outdoor meetings presumably further contributed to public disquiet, particularly in a region where traditional sectarianism periodically

1 FROR, 7 April, 1919. GT 7091. CAB 24/77. A letter to Michael Collins however implies that Volunteers there were reformed in February 1919. See Mulcahy Papers, P 7/A/11.

2 Following the police banning of a Glasgow Public Meeting (28 April, 1920), 'B' Co. Irish Vols, had as a unit fought with the police. See A Survey of of Revolutionary Movements in Great Britain 1920. CP 2455. CAB 24/118.

3 Ibid.


6 ROR 50, 15 April, 1920. CP 1086. CAB 24/103 - contd,
flared into open confrontation. One hundred Volunteers were observed practising 'battle manoeuvres' at Carmunoch,\(^1\) a few days after the most serious incident in Scotland to date, had occurred. Two police officers had interrupted a "score of men armed with rifles, bayonets and pistols", who were trying to break into a Bothwell TA Hall; one policeman was wounded when fire was opened on them.\(^2\)

At the subsequent trial of seven men the judge referred to the Sinn Fein conspiracy in Scotland that "had succeeded in capturing a considerably following".\(^3\) The Bothwell incident, because of its unplanned circumstances, cannot be classified as an offensive action. However its occurrence probably influenced the development of a new offensive strategy for the British units of Ogláigh na hÉireann. An IRA GHQ analysis of the fighting up to July 1920 concluded that in Ireland:

"no matter what strategy we may adopt we will ultimately be beaten in a military sense".\(^4\)

\(^1\) ROR 80, 13 Nov., 1920. CP 2089. CAB 24/114.


\(^3\) Times, 10 Feb., 1921. Four men were sentenced to terms of 8 to 10 years, three were acquitted. Also see Michael Collins correspondence with Glasgow IRA, P7/A/8.

\(^4\) IRA GHQ Documents, undated, sent by the Chief Secretary of Ireland to the Cabinet, and circulated as CP 821. CAB 24/100, and see Giovanni Costigan, 'The Anglo-Irish Conflict, 1919-1922: A War of Independence or Systemized Murder', University Review, V(1968), 64-36.
Given this admission that the IRA was incapable of winning the war, its objective therefore was essentially to survive as a fighting force for as long as possible in the hope that the British forces would eventually realize that they too could not win a military victory. Central to both armies perspectives was the question of public support. The British strategy hoped to turn the population against the IRA, the Republicans ideally sought to produce a sentiment of war weariness among the British population which would force their Government to commence negotiations.

Despite the presence of the various peace/withdrawal movements in Britain, Michael Collins, probably the single most influential IRA policy maker, observed that, "English morale could not be broken by propaganda. He was firmly convinced they had no friends in England." \(^1\)

Given a situation where there was little hope of a mass support or withdrawal movement developing in Britain, the logical military analysis was that the commencement of offensive operations "in the heart of the enemy lines" \(^2\) could not adversely affect the peace/withdrawal movement to any significant extent insofar as their potential contribution to the ending of the war was already of very minor proportions.

\(^1\) Dail Eireann Debates, Vol. 1, 214-5.

To a guerrilla army coming under ever increasing pressures on the Irish front, the logical answer was the opening of a "second front" in the enemy's homeland where, as we have observed, there already existed a reasonably effective Irish military organization. Such a conclusion was moreover reinforced by the history of previous Irish struggles in which operations were carried out in Britain itself, the 1860's Fenian incidents and the 1884/5 Clan na Gael 'dynamite campaign'.\(^1\) Cathal Brugha's\(^2\) response to the British attempt to impose conscription in Ireland was similar to that of O'Donnovan Rossa's\(^3\) response to the coercive legislation of a previous generation, the destruction of the legislature/ministers responsible.\(^4\) Brugha's plan was, however, more complex. With four volunteers, he secretly crossed over to England and with eight other men provided by Ned Kerr from Liverpool they prepared to shoot the entire British Cabinet the moment conscription was introduced.\(^5\)

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1 During the 1885 campaign, the Tower of London, Westminster Hall and the House of Commons itself were all bombed on the same day, see Leon O'Broin, *Revolutionary Underground*, op. cit., 31.

2 Then Chief of Staff of the Volunteers, later Dail Minister of Defence.

3 O'Donnovan Rossa, the Clan na Gael leader sentenced to a long term of imprisonment for his part in the 1884/5 bombing campaign. His funeral in Dublin in August 1915 was the first major demonstration by the revived IRB and the oration by Patrick Pearse became one of the most famous speeches in Irish history.

4 O'Donnovan Rossa planned to spray the House of Commons with osmic gas, see; T.N. Brown, *Irish American Nationalism*, (New York, 1966), 67.

5 Eoin Neeson, *Life and Death of Michael Collins*, (Cork, 1966), 95; but Michael Collins opposed the plan and Brugha was forced to call off the operation, see Leon O'Broin, *Michael Collins*, (Dublin, 1980), 75.
British Intelligence only too aware of the historical precedents, (one Intelligence branch owed its origin to earlier Irish military activities\(^1\)), had by early 1920 decided that such activities were now very likely to re-occur in Britain in the foreseeable future.\(^2\) One report believed the IRA in London alone to be sufficiently strong enough to be capable of launching a 'London Rising' in April 1920.\(^3\) During the long drawn-out hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney, the Cabinet was on several occasions furnished with intelligence assessments that some form of reprisals in Britain, if MacSwiney died, could be expected.\(^4\) It was feared that the King himself would be attacked\(^5\) and extensive precautions were taken throughout the country for some days after MacSwiney's death.\(^6\) No such activity did occur, partly because of the publicity value of a large public funeral march for MacSwiney in London, and of course because the authorities were in a high state of readiness. MacSwiney's death was however a contributory factor in commencing active operations the next month in England. The actual decision regarding military offensive operations in Britain appears to have been taken

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1 The Special Branch was originally formed as the 'Special Irish Branch' in 1883 to deal with the then Clan na Gael bombers in England.


3 ROR 46 (ibid).

4 See ROR 69, 26 Aug. 1920, CP 1809. CAB 24/111, and ROR 73, 23 Sept., 1920. CP 1885. CAB 24/111.

5 ROR 70, 2 Sept., 1920. CP 1830. CAB 24/111.

6 Ibid.
at a conference of senior IRA officers held in Dublin during the weekend of the 13/14 November, 1920.\footnote{C.D. Greaves, *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution*, (1971), 223.} Reports were received of the growing efficiency of the reconstructed British Intelligence system and in particular of the arrival of a new group of officers known as the 'Cairo Gang'. It was decided to eliminate as many Intelligence agents as possible on the same day.\footnote{Ibid.} The other main subject was 'Reprisals', unofficial British Reprisals, eg, the 'burning of Ballbriggan' and Cork had now evolved into an officially sanctioned policy\footnote{Cab. 79A(20), 29 Dec., 1920. CAB 23/23, and Jones, *op. cit.*, 41.} of burning houses, farms etc., owned by Republican supporters. Such Reprisals if they continued might well result in declining support for the IRA, and indeed this seems to have been the hope of the British Government in authorizing that strategy. This 'Reprisal Policy' had already been condemned by influential sectors of English opinion. The *Times* declared them to be a, "National disgrace that must fill English readers with a sense of shame. We are in reality employing lawlessness and disorder as a means of counter-terrorism.\footnote{Times, 30 Sept., 1920.}

The IRA however considered that more than verbal protest was necessary. Rory O'Connor who as well as being Director of Engineering held the appointment of OC Britain pressed the meeting to agree to his offensive strategy in Britain which as documents captured a
week later. show he had been working on for some time. There was considerable opposition to his request, not however on questions of its justifiability etc. but on practical grounds. Several of the officers present had direct departmental interests in Britain, which we have observed was a very important factor in the IRA's logistical system. Sean Russell, the Director of Munitions, had recently visited the Midlands to establish a network to purchase components for the manufacture of grenade cases etc. James O'Donovan, the Director of Chemicals, obtained considerable raw material supplies from Britain and had an actual 'chemical plant' manufacturing explosives, in London. Next to O'Connor however, the officer most concerned with Britain was Liam Mellows who had been born in England. As Director of Purchases, Mellows was responsible for GHQ's supply of arms, and ammunition, much of which came to Ireland from America and Europe. He realized the offensive

1 Published in the Times, 26 November, 1920.

2 See, IRA Chemical Department Report (1919-1923) - P17a/29, O'Malley.

3 Mellows was born at Ashton-under-Lyne on 25 May, 1892, see Greaves, op. cit., 30.

4 All munitions purchased were officially the sole responsibility of GHQ. In practice many local units sent over their representatives to Britain to act individually thereby causing confusion, endangering supply methods and even forcing prices up as rival units outbid each other. Collins' letters to his agents contain frequent criticisms of these "unofficial" operations, while later during the Civil War O'Malley made similar criticisms in his report on 'Arms Sales' - P17a/49. Strictly speaking, Collins himself should not have been involved in arms purchases but as chief of the IRB he effectively controlled that organization's officers even when acting in an IRA capacity.
operations substantially increasing Police activity might seriously jeopardise his logistical\(^1\) operations. Furthermore there were in places considerable tensions between the older IRB logistical operators and the newer IRA volunteers.\(^2\)

Collins as Director of Intelligence also had important interests but believing that important agents like Sam Maguire and John Chartres operated in such a manner that they would be unaffected by increased surveillance etc., he agreed to O'Connor's plans though he opposed the suggestion Brugha again put forward to eliminate the British Cabinet. As a compromise to Mellows' opposition, it was decided that offensive operations would not be undertaken in Scotland for the present.

Ten days later the British public learned of the extent of O'Connor's preparatory work; documents captured a few days previously in Dublin, revealed a plan of wholesale devastation. In Manchester the Stuart St. Power Station, which supplied power to many coal mines as well as factories, was to be attacked by seventy men who would proceed literally to demolish the machinery, the intelligence officers having previously conducted a detailed reconnaissance of the power station under

\(^1\) Logistical - employed in the sense of acquiring munitions, storing them and then arranging for their shipment to Ireland.

\(^2\) P17a/49.
the guise of a 'visiting party'. The operation's engineering experts had in fact familiarized themselves with similar machinery in a Dublin power house. In a subsidiary operation thirty men were to destroy the Clayton Vale Electricity Pumping Station. Simultaneously operations were to be mounted in Liverpool, but here the electricity generating plants were considered to be too well protected. Instead another hundred men using 800 lbs. of gelignite were to destroy the dock gates and hydraulic pumps operating these, thereby effectively closing down for a considerable period, the Port of Liverpool. While these plans sound almost too fantastic to be credible, all the information that I have collected indicates that the IRA could have mobilized the two hundred men required for these operations from their units in Lancashire and the Tyneside area.

The scope of the plans did however appear to be too incredible for even the authorities to take seriously. They were accordingly obliged to witness on the night of the 27/28 November, 1920, the arson of 15 warehouses and timber firms in the Liverpool dock area, causing over two million pounds' worth of damage. Yet even this was only the implementation of the secondary 'Dock operation plan'. Diversions suggested included

1 135 H.C. Debs. 5 Cols. 506-7 and P17b/110.
2 The subsequent arson operation of the 27/28 November 1920, which was itself only part of the original planned operation, involved the mobilization of 130 volunteers from the Liverpool area; see the deposition of Hugh Early, P17b/110, O'Malley.
numerous fires in cotton and other warehouses half an hour before the other operations.¹ A man who tried to help the police chase after one group of volunteers was shot dead and two police officers were shot at by another group at Bootle. The fires started proved to be beyond the capacity of the Liverpool Fire Brigade and firemen were called in from Warrington, Birkenhead and St. Helens. On the same night a London policeman was overwhelmed by six armed men whom he caught trying to burn down a timber yard; they fled leaving behind them an assorted collection of petrol cans, revolvers and cotton wool.²

That weekend's operations in England³ occurred in what was probably the single worst week for the British war effort in Ireland. On the preceding Sunday, 21st. November in a carefully co-ordinated operation fourteen British officers, thirteen of whom were Intelligence

¹ For an account of the Liverpool Operation see; Early ibid; letters to Michael Collins from Ned Kerr, Steve Lanigan. and P. O'Daly, P7/A/3, Mulcahy; Times 29 and 30 November, 1920; Liverpool Post and Mercury, 29 November, 1920.

² Times, 30 November, 1920; also see Transcript of Trial of O'Sullivan, Moran, Kenny, Greeny, Central Criminal Court, Crim 1/190.

³ Ironically IRA GHQ following the capture of their plans had tried to call off the operations fearing that their units would be trapped in the security clampdown they expected. Collins sent an agent to England - "certain plans made by some members of the ISDL had to be cancelled" - but his instructions were disregarded. See J.A. Gaughan, Memoirs of Constable Mee (Tralee, 1975), 188. Also see Collins' letter to Ned Kerr, P7/A/3.
agents, were shot dead in Dublin. The laboriously reconstructed Intelligence apparatus had been dealt a crippling blow from which it never recovered. A resulting reprisal mass shooting of spectators at a football match, may have influenced the timing of the Liverpool operation. On the morning of the Liverpool fires, an entire patrol of the elite counter-insurgency Auxilliary force was annihilated in Co. Cork. Lloyd George remarked to his secretary that the scope of that attack in which seventeen British personnel were killed marked a new dimension in the war. In that single week of the 21st-28th November the twin prongs of British military strategy in Ireland, a new intelligence organization and the hitherto unchallenged power of the Auxilliaries, formed to stiffen a rapidly decreasing RIC, were blunted. The extension of the war

1 A Veterinary Corps officer was shot by mistake. See Kevin Browne, They Died on Bloody Sunday (Dublin, 1970), 11, the Times, 22 November, 1920.

2 The British opened fire on the spectators at a Croke Park football match killing twelve including women and children; see Sean Kavanagh, 'Bloody Sunday' - Capuchin Annual (1969) and an article by Eamonn MacGiolla Iasachta in Misneach, December, 1920. For a fresh perspective on the events; see T. Bowden, 'Bloody Sunday - A Reappraisal' European Studies Review 11, 25-42 and for a more traditional view see Iris Drong ata Cliath 1939 (Dublin, 1939).

3 The Auxilliaries, often confused with the Black and Tans, were experienced British officers formed into special RIC companies whereas the latter served as individual RIC replacements. For an account of the Kilmichael Ambush by its organizer see General Tom Barry's Guerrilla Days in Ireland (Tralee, 1969), 34-46.

4 Jones, op. cit., 41.

5 By May, 1920, RIC resignations were running at a rate of 200 a week, compared to 25 in 1914. See Jones, op. cit., 17.
into Britain itself must have been of considerable psychological importance to a populace who had been vividly provided with evidence that their Prime Minister's confident declaration made earlier in that month, "We have murder by the throat"\(^1\), was as empty of sustaining factual evidence, as the roofless warehouses of the Liverpool dock side.

The *Times* sought to reassure its readership that "It is not believed the campaign will last long".\(^2\) The Government while banning the Manchester TSDL conference endeavoured to minimize the seriousness of the situation, in its public comments. The Home Secretary assured Parliament that the police had sufficient powers under the Defence of the Realm Acts to combat the IRA in Britain though he admitted that when the legislation expired "it may be necessary to come to Parliament for further powers".\(^3\) Privately the Government's Intelligence advisors recommended that "Internment appears to be the only solution".\(^4\) Even before the Liverpool operation the Government had been so sufficiently alarmed at the probable IRA capacity to cause trouble as to ban the public from the Westminster Abbey funerals of the dead Intelligence officers, shot in Dublin. They

feared gunmen would take advantage of the cover provided by large crowds. Interestingly the public were permitted access to the funerals of those agents who were Catholics held in Westminster Cathedral where "a great crowd is not expected." This was perhaps an indication of the differential reaction among the Catholic and Protestant communities in England to the deaths of the thirteen Intelligence operatives. A Cabinet Emergency Committee was established to consider the security of Government buildings and recommended a ban on public admission to Parliament. Barriers were hastily erected across Downing St.

During December there were however no further offensive actions in Britain. The inevitable arrests that followed the Liverpool fires considerably dislocated the logistical supply system between Britain and Ireland; the arrested included the IRB leaders Ned Kerr and Steve Lanigan. It was necessary for Liam Mellows to travel over to England to reorganize the logistical organization. Two men were arrested in Glasgow for the attempted


2 This Committee consisted of the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for War, the Chief Secretary for Ireland, the GOC London Military District, the Metropolitan Police Commissioner and Sir Basil Thompson of the Home Office Special Intelligence Directorate.

3 For their detailed reports see Cabinet Papers 2167 and 2183. CAB 23/23.

4 Greaves, op. cit., 227-228.
purchase of rifles from a soldier but of greater importance was the arrest of the Liverpool IRA adjutant Henry Coyle, seized in Scotland along with three hundred and forty pounds of explosives. Apart from these upsets, the lack of offensive activity during the last weeks of 1920 may have been due to the abortive peace negotiations held in London between Lloyd George and Archbishop Clune of Perth (Australia), in which Art O'Brien served as the communication channel between London and Dublin. While the British police raided ISDL offices and detained lower ranking officials, Art O'Brien, known to the Cabinet to be involved in the importation of munitions, was on the Home Secretary's instructions provided with two police bodyguards to protect him from attack by anti-Irish elements.

The opening month of 1921 was similarly quiet with only one significant action at Salford where a police officer was shot when he interrupted men carrying arms to a

1 *Times*, 9 December, 1920.

2 Ibid, 7 December, 1920; see also Colonel O'Leary *The Liverpool IRA* *Ántóglach*, Autumn and Winter, 1966.

3 For a report of this episode see Tom Barry, op. cit., 178.

4 *Times*, 2 December, 1920.

5 The 'Survey of Revolutionary Movements in Great Britain 1920' (CP 2455. CAB 24/118) circulated to Cabinet Ministers claimed that Art O'Brien's bank accounts were financing the import of arms.

6 Thomas Jones, op. cit., 44. Home Secretary Shortt in fact here refers to O'Brien as "the leader of the Irish extremists".
Surveying operational activity to date, the O.C. Britain, Rory O'Connor, complained of the limitations imposed on his strategy by the Republican leadership: anxious to avoid civilian casualties: "A considerable amount more could have been done in Liverpool were I allowed a freer hand. My instructions were to carry out these operations in a way which will cause the least amount of unemployment... exactly the opposite is required." He was concerned about the standard of training, or rather lack of it, of his volunteers in Britain, and believed that only relatively small scale actions could be undertaken. February saw the start of a campaign directed against 'soft' targets utilizing relatively untrained personnel but which nevertheless fitted into the IRA's overall strategy of countering British reprisals in Ireland. With the particular exception of Dublin, most of the guerrilla activity in Ireland occurred in the rural areas. British official reprisals therefore were mostly inflicted on small communities and individual farms. Farm houses and crops were burnt on a large scale, so the IRA decided upon similar activity in England. Twenty hay

1 Times, 3 January, 1921 and CP 2415. CAB 24/114.

2 Extracts from Document titled 'Operations Abroad' produced in Parliament after its capture. H.C. Debs. 5, Col 632-3. Michael Mackin, Vice-Commandant Jarrow IRA company, says that O'Connor who lived for a short period in 1920 in Jarrow called off the planned destruction of the Tyne Railway Bridge as the operation was likely to cause civilian casualties - Irish Press, 24 June, 1970.
ricks were fired in the Croydon area on the 7th February, 1921; the Cabinet Intelligence advisor reported that a campaign directed against rural targets in areas almost denuded of a regular police presence would be difficult to deal with, for nothing is easier than to fire ricks or cut a telephone wire." An earlier intelligence report commented that an informant stated that Sean McGrath, the ISDL Secretary and London Intelligence Officer, had declared "outrages that will really get publicity will be carried out". McGrath was shortly afterwards deported and in a thinly veiled press statement directed against the ISDL, Scotland Yard claimed an "Irish political organization in London is being urged by the violent faction of Sinn Fein in Ireland to commit outrages in London and other parts of the country." Arson attacks were made, with varying degrees of success on seven Lancashire mills. In pursuance of the already observed Republican Government limitations on emigration from Ireland, the Liverpool IRA units, despite police precautions, entered several boarding houses and seized the passports and money of would be emigrants to America. An intelligence report estimated that thirty armed men were employed

1 Times, 8 February, 1921.
2 ROR 94, 24 February, 1921. CP 2631, CAB 24/120.
3 ROR 93, 17 February, 1921. CP 2602, CAB 24/120.
4 Times, 21 February, 1921.
5 Ibid, 4 February, 1921.
6 ROR 94, 24 February, 1921. CP 2631. CAB 24/120. Also see letter from Daly to Collins outlining the plans for the operation in P7/A/4, and one by Hugh Early who took part in the operation, P17b/110.
in what the *Times* described as a raid which "revealed wonderful organization and exceptional executive ability." \(^1\) A few days later, following a series of arson attacks on farm property in Lancashire and Cheshire during which shots were fired at one farmer, \(^2\) the police were issued with signal rockets to be fired as a warning when arsonists were observed in the area. \(^3\)

In the last days of February and the first week of March, 1921 the arson campaign was extended to the Tyneside area; in Newcastle there was an attempt to destroy an oil refinery and a mill owner was injured when he tried to prevent his premises being attacked. \(^4\) At Crosby a farmer shot and wounded one arsonist. Subsequently an attempt was made to shoot him and his farm premises were burnt. \(^5\) Three farms belonging to the relatives of a 'Black and Tan' officer were burnt to the ground in the Liverpool area. \(^6\) An informant was reported as stating that, "there won't be many more fires, wait until we start on the railway signals". \(^7\)

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1 *Times*, 21 February, 1921. This series of simultaneous farm fires was designed to create a 'ring of fire' around Liverpool, see Early, P17b/110.

2 *Times*, 21 February, 1921.


4 *Times*, 7 March, 1921.

5 Ibid, 25 May, 1921.

6 *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 12 March, 1921.

7 ROR 98, 23 March, 1921. CP 2765. CAB 24/121.
The arson campaign was however intensified during the first weekend of April: in a co-ordinated operation involving fifteen armed men, four hotels, two office blocks and a warehouse were damaged in Manchester with one police officer shot. Acting on information from an agent provocateur a late Saturday night raid on the Erskine St. Irish Club resulted in a gun battle in which one IRA member was killed, another volunteer and three police officers were wounded. Twenty arrests were made, but another forty men escaped, via a ladder placed against a back window as a precaution, in case of such a contingency. Twelve pistols, grenades, ammunition and explosives were found hidden on the premises.¹

Following the discovery of the body of Vincent Fovargue,² shot through the head on Ashford Golf Links, the London ISDL offices were raided and McGrath's replacement - Fintan Murphy deported. It was revealed at the inquest that Fovargue had last been seen alive at a Fulham ISDL dance the night before he was shot. Fovargue was believed to have been a British Intelligence agent with the mission of penetrating the British IRA Brigade; as part of an elaborate cover operation he had 'escaped' from a Dublin police lorry a few months before.³

¹ Manchester Evening News, 4 April, 1921 and ROR 100 7 April, 1921. CP 2811, CAB 24/122.
² Vincent Fovargue a Dublin IRA member who had 'escaped' from custody in Dublin, was believed by the London IRA to be a British agent.
³ Times, 4, 5, 6 and 21 April, 1921.
That same weekend, an organized 'Window Scratching' campaign was commenced, 400 plate glass windows were damaged in Liverpool, in a repetition of the Fenian actions some forty years before. Wholesale window scratching occurred throughout the month of April, across Britain. By the 22nd over 1,500 windows had been damaged in London alone. Windows scored with 'R's (for Republic) were reported in Birmingham, Swansea, Barry, Devonport, Walton-on-Thames, Gravesend, St. Albans, Sheffield, Worcester, Preston, Bournemouth, Leeds, Aldershot, Glasgow, where a thousand windows were damaged in one weekend, Nottingham, Guildford, Cambridge, Portsmouth and Southsea. The Home Office Intelligence Department correctly surmised that the window scoring campaign was the work of groups of women. There were also incidents of acid attacks on London pillar post boxes.

Another new development in the month of April was the disruption of telephone communications by the destruction of poles and wires, which commenced in the Jarrow

1 *Times*, 4 April, 1921. Scoring windows with a sharp instrument structurally weakens them to the point where they have to be replaced.

2 See reports in the *Times* (issues of 21st, 22nd, 25th, 26th and 27th of April, 1921) also the debate on this issue in Parliament, 141* H.C. Debs 5 Col. 170.

3 ROR 102, 21 April, 1921. CP 2859. CAB 24/122. In the London IRA Diary, P17a/51, O'Malley, beside the 'window scoring' account is the pencilled comment "unofficial".

4 *Times*, 26 April, 1921.
area. The level of IRA activity in the Tyneside region had by then reached the point where the Cabinet was informed that the Lord Mayor of Newcastle was recruiting Special Constables for the express purpose of dealing with the Sinn Fein difficulty in the neighbourhood of Newcastle.  

These reinforcements would certainly have been necessary if IRA plans to form semi-permanent mobile 'flying column' rural guerilla units in the West and the East of Scotland regions and in the hilly border regions in the North of England had been activated. Scotland and the potential IRA strength there had, as we have observed, always been a source of concern for the authorities. As a result of the disruption of the Tyneside munitions supply operation following the commencement of offensive operations there, Liam Mellows had successfully argued against offensive activities in Scotland fearing that the all important explosives procurement would be substantially impeded.

Frank Carty the O.C. of the Sligo Brigade while on an

1 Times 11 April, 1921; also see 'Secret Report' Advisory Committee on Deportation of Edward Brady TS27/140.

2 Home Secretary; Memorandum presented to Cabinet 18 (21). CAB 23/23.

3 IRA 'flying columns' were semi-permanent mobile units usually consisting of 20 to 40 volunteers operating in rural areas in Ireland; see Commandant General Hogan 'The Origin of the IRA Flying Column', An Cosantoir VI (1946), 621-6.

4 The subject was discussed at an IRA conference of officers held in Edinburgh in April, the details were reported to the Cabinet in ROR 102, 21 April, 1921. CP 2859. CAB 24/122.
purchasing visit to Scotland was arrested in Glasgow. The local IRA commander ignoring Mellows' advice decided on a direct rescue attempt. Twenty-five men were mobilized on the 4th of May, 1921 to ambush the prison van taking Carty to court. In the heavy exchange of fire that ensued one police detective was killed and another wounded. Twelve of the IRA participants in this gun battle were arrested in a Catholic church and following the arrest of Father McRory, the priest in charge, rioting developed to such an extent that the Army had to be called in to guard the police station. Eventually twenty-four persons were charged in connection with the armed attack and another fourteen with rioting.\(^1\) Mellows' worst fears were quickly realized for in the follow-up operation, explosives, and arms dumps were discovered in eight towns in the West of Scotland.\(^2\)

Throughout the course of the war in Ireland, the members of the RIC had, through a combination of fear and dislike for their new role, been resigning in ever increasing numbers. By July, 1920, weekly resignations were running at about twenty times the number in 1914,\(^3\) and

\(^1\) Sources employed in this reconstruction. *Times* (5th, 6th, 9th of May 1921 and 9th of August, 1921); C.D. Greaves *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution* op. cit., 231-33. John Maclean who was very sympathetic to the IRA however suggested the attack had been the work of "agent provocateurs", *The Socialist* 12 May, 1921.

\(^2\) *Times*, 11 August, 1921 for report of trial.

\(^3\) 560 RIC resigned in June/July, 1920. See Barry, op. cit., 37.
few replacements came forward in Ireland itself. Instead the depleted ranks of the RIC were replenished with recruits from England. IRA mail raids in Ireland and the IRB London postal interception operations produced a number of addresses of RIC relatives in England and a large scale reprisal operation was ordered. The Times of Monday, 16 May, 1921 reported that on the previous Saturday night there had been "Irish raids in England, shooting and burning in London, Liverpool and St. Albans" with a "large number of armed and masked men involved."

In seven incidents in London, the homes of RIC relatives were attacked, three were burned, and three occupants were shot, one of whom subsequently died. An Auxilliary and his wife were shot in St. Albans, while in Liverpool six houses were burnt. Commenting on these incidents a Times editorial was headlined "From Bad to Worse". Six men were subsequently deported from London on suspicion of involvement in these raids. Thirty targets were attacked in the Teesside area on the 21/22 of May resulting in the destruction of lorries.

1 Tom Barry, op. cit., 83.
2 See IRA Diary, P17a/51; Early P17b/110, for Liverpool incidents; Dennis Brennan, ibid and Billy Ahearne, P17b/99, participated in the London operations. The Morning Post, 7 May, 1921 estimated that no less than 160 men were involved in these operations.
3 Times, 18 May, 1921.
4 Times, 21 May, 1921.
a saw mill, and a railway bridge. But the president of the Wallsend ISDL Council was arrested while burning a motor boat shed. Several days later a raid on the Liverpool army barracks was foiled. A raid on a Manchester shed showed the extent of the IRA logistical procurement operation in the Lancashire area, 2,583 high explosive charges, 618 detonators, 1,719 rounds of ammunition, twenty-five rifles and four pistols were found and the Cabinet were subsequently informed that "War material reaches Ireland from Manchester in considerable quantities."

Nineteen volunteers were arrested drilling in Dumbartonshire, while others got away. Another two men in Scotland were jailed for the theft of 348 lbs. of explosives from a colliery, while a police officer was shot in Middlesborough when he stopped four men who fled leaving behind a bag containing seventy lbs. of explosives.

The promised offensive against the railway system

1 Times, 23 May, 1921. ROR 107, 28 May, 1921 CP 2979. CAB 24/123.
2 Times, 25 May, 1921.
3 Manchester Evening News, 27 May, 1921.
4 ROR 108, 2 June, 1921, CP 3010. CAB 24/125.
5 ROR 109, 9 June, 1921, CP 3034. CAB 24/125.
6 Times, 25 June, 1921.
7 Ibid, 4 June, 1921.
commenced with the destruction of fifty railway signal wires around Liverpool on the 3rd of June,\textsuperscript{1} and was the main form of sabotage activity during that month. Police fired on men on the railway lines at Dartford\textsuperscript{2} and two days later following attacks on three London suburban railway stations an IRA volunteer was wounded in a gun battle at a Bromley police road block.\textsuperscript{3} There were further arson attempts on London railway installations on the nineteenth of June and in Manchester a signal man was shot during the destruction of two signal boxes.\textsuperscript{4} But by early July, 1921 negotiations for a truce were well advanced and there was little military offensive activity in Britain. The only possible IRA incident, that I have been able to trace was the discovery of a length of fuse wire found lying outside a Government office in Regents Park which was believed to be a foiled sabotage attempt.\textsuperscript{5}

There were however a number of trials at the Old Bailey: the four involved in the Bromley gun battle of the previous month received ten to twelve year sentences\textsuperscript{6}

\textsuperscript{1} But in this operation after the gun battle with the police, five of the participants were captured leading to Collins to declare: "The losses are very heavy, it is really too bad, so little gained"; letter to P. Daly, 17 June, 1921, P7/A/5.

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Times}, 18 June, 1921, report of incident on the 16th.

\textsuperscript{3} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{4} \textit{Manchester Evening News}, 20 June, 1921.

\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Times}, 2 July, 1921.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid, 4 July, 1921 and trial transcripts CRIM 1/190.
and at Newcastle three men received five to seven years for arson\(^1\) while at Chester another four were convicted of telephone wire cutting and the illegal possession of arms.\(^2\) The truce in Ireland which came into effect at midday on the eleventh of July, 1921, was according to the *Times* report marked at the trial of the Manchester 19 arrested in the Erskine St. raid, when

> "as the clock struck twelve 'Captain Harding' leapt to his feet, commanded 'shun' where upon all the prisoners stood to attention for a few minutes until after a Gaelic command, they resumed their seats.'\(^3\)

The principal prosecution witness was an agent provocateur named Murphy;\(^4\) sixteen of the defendants were found guilty and sentenced to three to twenty years imprisonment.\(^5\)

During the period of offensive activity from the Liverpool fires of 28 November, 1920 to the truce, there were 164 acts of incendiarism and nine attempted acts of arson. There were four gun battles in which shots were exchanged between IRA volunteers and the police, in the course of which each side suffered one fatality with four wounded police officers and two wounded volunteers. One civilian and one volunteer were wounded in two gun battles involving the same

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1 *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 4 July, 1921.
3 *Times*, 12 July, 1921.
4 E. Brady, op. cit., 11.
5 *Times*, 16 July, 1921.
farmer on separate occasions. In the twenty-one other shooting incidents, three civilians were killed, six others and three police officers were wounded; and one man named George Tilson, who had been ordered out of Cork by the IRA for 'spying' was found with his throat cut in the toilet of the Fishguard train when it reached London. I will assess in Chapter 26 whether this IRA campaign in Britain fulfilled any of its objectives and consider the role played by the IRA Cumann na m Ban and the IRB in Britain in the creation of the Irish Free State.

1 Statistics compiled from the Times reports, Reports on Revolutionary Organizations in Britain and the IRA Diary, op. cit..

2 Times, 21 February, 1921.
Comrades Yesterday, Enemies Today; The War of the Brothers, 1922-23.

The cessation of IRA offensive operations did not mark an end to organizational activities, it merely reverted to its pre-November 1920 primary logistical role in supplying munitions. Activities in that sphere were greatly increased as many IRA leaders believed the Truce was only a temporary lull, which afforded the opportunity for the strengthening of their forces.¹ A British Intelligence report in August 1921 observed that, "Arms purchases in England and Scotland have been stepped up."² An accidental blast in a London IRA explosives factory killed Michael McInerney and a month later Michael Hickey who worked in the Woolwich Arsenal was killed while trying to steal explosives from shells. He, his wife and son were all ISDL members.⁴

¹ Martin Walsh, a London volunteer recalled that when he met Collins in London during the truce he "gave orders to expedite the transmission of supplies", P17a/154. The quantity of arms imported into Ireland, mostly from Britain, between July and December of 1921 was much greater than in the previous twelve months. See S.M. Lawlor 'Ireland from Truce to Treaty: War or Peace?', Irish Historical Studies XXII (1980), 49-64. And according to Mulcahy, the number of IRA volunteers increased from 30,000 in July 1921 to 75,000 in December 1921 - P7A/27 and P7A/32

² ROR 119, 18 August, 1921, CP 3252 CAB 24/127.

³ Report IRA Chemical Department P17a/29.

⁴ ROR 124, 22 September, 1921. CP 3333. CAB 24/127.
Britain in the summer of 1921 was crisscrossed by IRA/IRB agents seeking munitions. At the trial of one he was stated to have said: "We want anything from a spring to a cannon."

One mission led by Ernie O'Malley purchased over three tons of explosives base used in the manufacture of cheddite, which after being stored in London warehouses was shipped to Ireland labelled "glass with care."\(^1\)

Michael Collins took time off from the treaty negotiations to establish two new explosives factories in London and to reorganize the units there.\(^3\) Inevitably some of this activity was exposed by the British Authorities and Collins was somewhat embarrassed at a Treaty Negotiation session when the 'Cardiff' issue was revealed by Lloyd George.\(^4\) This affair, said the trial prosecutor, involved a "highly organized system for procuring arms and ammunition."\(^5\)

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2. Ernie O'Malley, *The Singing Flame*, op. cit., 28. Cheddite is manufactured by mixing potassium chlorate, DNT and castor oil over a low heat. It is a medium power blasting explosive.

3. ROR 129 27 October, 1921 CP 3451 CAB 24/129. In a letter to Daly (5 October, 1921) Collins stated "I don't suppose all my time will be taken up with Conference work. It certainly will not, if I can arrange it." P7/A/7.


5. *Times* 29 October 1921. Also see letter Daly to Collins (18 October, 1921) P7/A/7.
Even more embarrassed than Collins was the ISDL; ten of whose members including their Tyneside organiser, Richard Purcell, and their South Wales organizer Joseph Connolly were arrested. Along with other regional ISDL leaders they had constructed a logistical network stretching from Newcastle to Cardiff. The police found twenty-six weapons in one church, three hundred and fifty-five lbs. of explosives in another and discovered evidence that the group had sent machine guns to Ireland. Some of the equipment had been purchased, the rest was the product of raids on magazines. The theft of a hundred and fifty lbs. of gelignite from a Welsh colliery had resulted in the discovery of the ring. Eight were subsequently sentenced to from one to fourteen years at a series of trials.\(^1\)

Despite the arrests the IRA seemed to have little difficulty in recruiting replacements for its logistical operations. An intelligence assessment revealed that since the truce "the IRA in Great Britain has been making strides and that its power and influence among certain class of Irishmen in this country is increasing."\(^2\) The IRB were also reported as having

\(^1\) Times 29 October, 11, 17 November, 1921 .

\(^2\) ROR 133, 1 December, 1921 CP 3526, CAB 24/131.
substantially increased their membership in Britain.\(^1\)
An attempted raid on Perth prison was foiled by the police who surprised the raiders.\(^2\)

The most audacious operations of this first truce period were the raids on Chelsea and Windsor Army Barracks in which with the aid of an Irish Guards sergeant four Vickers and two Lewis machine guns were taken along with fourteen rifles.\(^3\) The Cabinet were informed that with the exception of the soldier, all involved were ISDL members. They were also told that:

> "from many parts of the country, reports are coming in of wholesale chemists receiving orders from Ireland for chemicals which could be used for the manufacture of high explosives."\(^4\)

The previous week the Cabinet had been informed, "Arms, ammunition and explosives are undoubtedly being shipped in not inconsiderable quantities to Ireland."\(^5\)

The seizure of ten Thompson submachine guns in Liverpool at the end of November and another eight at the same port

\(^1\) ROR 135, 15 December, 1921 CP 3561, CAB 24/131 and according to Ahearne, P 17/B/99, the IRB in London had doubled its size to 60. The Liverpool IRA even with its heavy casualties had doubled its size from its formation in 1919 see; P7/A/1 and P7/A/7. The London IRA in this period was 200 strong see IRA Diary P17a/51.

\(^2\) ROR 135. Ibid.

\(^3\) Times 3 December, 1921.

\(^4\) ROR 132, 24 November, 1921, CP3090, CAB 24/131.

\(^5\) ROR 131, 17 November, 1921, CP 3492, CAB 24/129.
in January 1922, substantially thwarted IRA plans for a large scale importation of this new automatic weapon, first used in action by the IRA and destined to become 'the weapon' identified with the IRA for the next fifty years. Importation of this type of automatic weapon must have been particularly alarming for a government which did not issue one to its own army for almost another twenty years. Another thirteen persons were arrested following the seizure of arms and explosives in a Glasgow parochial hall. But the IRA in Britain was strengthened by the return to its ranks of many of the prisoners, sentenced in the pre-truce period following their release in February 1922.

After the Dail's seven vote margin acceptance of the Treaty the IRA had divided on the issue but the cleavage was as yet imperfectly defined and over the next six months the fragmented elements would shift their position and coalesce with previously opposing forces and in some cases split again on new lines of separation. The majority of the IRA GHQ staff had accepted the treaty but the departmental heads who had rejected it had extremely

1 ROR 134, CP 3538. CAB 24/131. and ROR 139, 19 Jan., 1922, CP 3639. CAB 24/132. Also see letter, Daly to Collins, (1 Dec., 1921), P7/A/7.

2 For an account of the IRA's adoption of the Thompson, see J. Bowyer Bell, 'The Thompson Sub-Machine Gun in Ireland, 1921', The Irish Sword, VIII, (1967), 98-108.

3 ROR 137, 5 Jan., 1922, CP 3600, CAB 24/131.

4 Times, 13 Feb., 1922.
close organizational interests in Britain. Mellows was Director of Purchases, O'Connor, the OC British Command, O'Donovan, the Director of Chemicals, Russell the Director of Munitions and they formed in January 1922 a Military Action Committee, later to be renamed the Military Council. The domination of the IRA's British offensive and logistical operative units by opponents of the Treaty inevitably influenced many otherwise doubtful volunteers to declare against the Treaty. Intelligence operations were however controlled by Collins: unquestionably the single most influential Treaty supporter and his personal influence, combined with his effective leadership of the IRB, was sufficient to ensure that the new Free State had reliable undercover military units of its own in Britain, notably in the traditional IRB centres of Glasgow, Liverpool and London. That the situation was confused, that the personal loyalties of senior officers were regarded as doubtful or at least uncertain is indicated by an episode even before the Treaty was signed when Cathal Brugha's arms buying mission were instructed to have no contact

1 Greaves, op. cit., 285.

2 Florence O'Donnoghue however suggests that less than one percent of IRB members actually knew that Collins had become Head Centre, Irish Press, 13 Feb., 1964. The IRB was organizationally speaking neutral until the publication of the new Free State constitution. IRB members who were TDs had a free choice in the Treaty ratification debate, see The IRB and The Treaty, an IRB statement dated 12 Jan., 1922, (NLI). However the majority of IRB Supreme Council members favoured the acceptance of the Treaty including a majority of those who were on the IRA GHQ Staff (of the 13 GHQ officers, eleven were IRB members). See John O'Beirne-Ranelagh, 'The IRB from the Treaty to 1924', Irish Historical Studies, 18 (March 1976), 26-39.
with Sean McGrath even though he later emerged as one of the anti-treaty military leaders in Britain.

Though the available evidence is often of a very fragmented nature, ambiguous, and at best has to be treated with reservation, it would appear that by April 1922, the majority of IRA volunteers in Britain had declared against the Treaty, but there was still a considerable element who were determined to remain neutral. The proscription of the Army Convention in March 1922 by the new Provisional Government ensured that only Anti-Treaty delegates from Britain attended and voted for the Army to revert to its former independent role, owing allegiance only to its own executive. This repudiation of all political control had repercussions in Britain: annoyed by the failure of the ISDL to denounce the Treaty a group of London volunteers visited the ISDL head office and threatened to "blow the place up". And a Lewisham ISDL branch meeting was disrupted by a dozen armed men who fired shots before they forcibly removed one man, in what British Intelligence reported was a general "sauve qui peut". Not unsurprisingly that branch soon folded, other similar disturbances, many simply the product of boredom among volunteers who found difficulty in reverting to a peace time non-

2 ROR 153, 27 April, 1922, CP 3952. CAB 24/136.
3 ROR 152, CP 3945, CAB 24/136.
offensive role, resulted in the court martials of offenders. Despite these internal problems within the IRA, Churchill was by early April sufficiently alarmed to notify the Cabinet that:

"In the event of a collision between British Forces and the Republican Government or even upon the mere establishment of a Republican Government serious outrages might take place in this country."²

The previous month the Government had been informed that "persistent quests for arms in this country, indicates trouble of a serious nature in Ireland at no very distant date".³ After the clashes between Pro and Anti-Treaty forces in Athlone and Annacarty in April 1922, the need for munitions on the anti-treaty side became sufficiently great as to risk their English organization in a series of raids on magazines. A foiled raid on a Birmingham arms factory in early May 1922 uncovered the primary logistical network operated by Mellows. Eleven men were arrested in Birmingham, Liverpool, Yorkshire and London,⁴ but the organization was still sufficiently strong to launch a co-ordinated

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¹ ROR 156, 18 May, 1922, CP 3983. CAB 24/136.
² Para 9c of Churchill's note in Cabinet Conclusions 23(22) 5 April, 1922. CAB 23/29.
³ ROR 149, 3 March, 1922 CP 3917. CAB 24/136.
⁴ Times 6 May, 1922 and ROR 154, 4 May, 1922, CP 3960. CAB 24/136. Most of the men arrested were somewhat surprisingly given bail and when their trial was called, the Prosecution asked for the charges to be dropped as some of the men, he said, were now in prison in Ireland and others were fighting for the Free State Government, Manchester Guardian, 2 December, 1922.
series of raids the following month. During the first weekend in June 1922 explosives were seized from ten collieries and magazines in Lancashire.¹

A fortnight later an incident occurred: the origin of which, due to its ramifications, has since been the source of much controversy and argument. Ostensibly the assassination of Field Marshal Wilson on his doorstep on the 22 June 1922 appeared to be the action of Republicans opposed to the Treaty. Certainly the British Government were so convinced of this (or rather they wanted to believe this) as to issue an ultimatum to Collins either to attack the Republican Headquarters in the Four Courts or else the British Army would intervene and the Treaty would be regarded as nullified.²

In fact ironically the British Government had sought to compel the very men responsible for Wilson's death to revenge what the Times declared to be an "Outrage unparalleled in the modern history of this country."³

The appearance of four Times editorials on the assassination issue in the week of the incident is an indication of how deeply that event affected British public opinion. Therefore it is all the more important that an historically accurate account of the incident

² Cabinet Minutes. 36(22) 22 June, 1922. CAB 23/29.
³ Times, 23 June, 1922.
and its origins be established. Most British historians of this period, Middlemass, and Mowat in particular, have however dismissed the incident as an apparently independent action, by the two involved but in doing so they have ignored a wealth of evidence from many other sources. Soon after Wilson's shooting rumours of a Collins/IRB involvement began circulating in Ireland and one participant at the centre of events, O'Malley, believed that Griffith's cerebral hemorrhage was the result of the shock occasioned upon learning that Collins was implicated. A projected British Government report of the incident never materialized when the investigators discovered that Collins had in fact ordered the shooting. With Collins by now

1 Middlemass records without comment Jones' belief that the men who shot Wilson were "not members of the IRA" - Whitehall Diaries, 213.

2 C. Mowat, Britain Between the Wars (1955), 70, claims Dunne and O'Sullivan were "not connected apparently with any wing of the IRA."

3 Other sources employed in this account of Wilson's death were: (a) Sean MacGrath deposition P17/B/100; (b) Dennis Brennan ibid; (c) Billy Ahearne P/17/B/99 O'Malley; (d) Irish Times 20 May 1961; (e) Transcript of the trial of Dunne and O'Sullivan CRIMI/204.

4 E. O'Malley, Singing Flame, op. cit., 152. He also observed that "Two of Collins' trusted men had been in London before the shooting took place", 85. See also Robert Briscoe For the Life of Me (Dublin, 1959), 165 where he states of Dunne and O'Sullivan "They may have been acting on orders of the IRB."

5 Rose Killean in the course of her evidence to the Irish Deportees Claims Compensation Committee did state that Wilson's death was the result of Dunne and O'Sullivan acting on Free State orders, but her claim was not published in any major English publication. See TS27/187, 21.
dead and regarded as a gallant British ally, such a publication might have proved extremely embarrassing to the British Government. In his book *Assassination* Rex Taylor quotes what may be taken as the official Free State Army line, on the incident: "About a fortnight before Wilson was removed from the scene of operations, word was conveyed to Sam Maguire to carry out the instructions. This order was issued by Michael Collins as Director of Intelligence. The order was promptly executed." Why Collins risked so much to have Wilson killed (discovery of his plan could quite conceivably have produced war between Britain and the Free State) can never be rationally explained. One can perhaps understand why Wilson the man who had effectively masterminded the Curragh Mutiny and thereby foiled the implementation of the Home Rule Bill; who had prohibited MacSwiney's Dublin funeral; who had vetoed Kevin Barry's reprieve; and who now led the B Specials, should be the subject of a Collins' execution order. What is much more difficult to fathom is Collins' behaviour after the event. Instead of trying to obscure all signs of his involvement he ordered one of his staff

1 See my article in the *Sunday Tribune*, 27 June, 1982.

2 Letter to Taylor quoted in *Assassination*, op. cit., 116, by a Free State Intelligence officer.

3 Wilson after leaving the British Army, where he had risen to the rank of Chief of the Imperial General Staff, became a Unionist MP and security advisor to the new Northern Ireland Government.
officers to go to England to try and secure Dunne and Sullivan's escape through the bribery of warders. When this failed he sent over Joe Dolan, a man regarded as Collins' closest confidant and at that time a senior, Free State officer either to take hostages or to attempt a jail break from the outside. An attempt to kidnap the Prince of Wales was foiled and though twenty two men were mobilized to break into Brixton the non-arrival of the promised explosives thwarted this also. This last plan had involved one of the most incredible secret negotiations ever undertaken in Irish history.

At the height of the Civil War Collins had asked his opponent, Liam Lynch, the Chief of Staff of the Republican forces, to lend him the services of some of the London IRA volunteers under Lynch's command. Lynch not only agreed but sent one of his staff officers, Billy Ahern, to organize the London operation, furnished with a Collins' 'safe conduct pass' through the Free State lines.\(^1\)

It is now generally accepted that Wilson's shooting and the resulting British pressure was not in fact the match that sparked off the Civil War;\(^2\) that had been inevitable

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1 See (a) R. Taylor, op. cit., 127-128. (b) an exchange of correspondence between participants in the various plans and members of the London IRA in the columns of the Sunday Press, 27 Sept., 4 Oct., 11 Oct., 1953. (c) Remembrance, London Memorial Committee of Ex-IRA and Cumman na Mban, (no date of publication) for an account of the events summarized.

2 The actual incident that 'started' the Civil War, if such conflicts can in fact be attributed to a single event, is now taken as the seizure of General O'Connell, the Deputy Chief of Staff of the Free State Army, by a raiding party from the Four Courts Garrison which led to the shelling of that institution.
from the moment the Treaty was signed. If however Wilson's death is now regarded by historians as a relatively minor event, albeit one with interesting implications, the incident's significance cannot be underestimated by the sociological researcher. The difficulty of evaluating accurately the involvement and attitudes of the Irish in Britain during that period can be seen in the micro context of that one incident. The Irish born British Field Marshal was shot by two ex British soldiers now IRA volunteers who "were Londoners, both living at home with their parents and there was no evidence that they had ever been to Ireland in their lives." That single incident, so apparently simple in outline, yet fraught with complications for the political sociologist, should itself be sufficient to prevent the formulation of any wide generalizations about the response of the Irish in Britain towards events in Ireland.

For many of the Irish in Britain and in particular in London, life proved somewhat difficult in the period immediately following Wilson's assassination. ISDL members were particularly badly affected. Eighteen were arrested in the first post-incident raids. Mrs Eadie, an ISDL head office clerk and secretary of the Central London branch, was subsequently jailed for the possession of incendiaries. An emergency Cabinet meeting was told

1 R. Taylor, Assassination.
2 Times 27 June, 1922.
3 Ibid 30 June, 1922.
by Police Assistant Commissioner Childs that,

"Thirty dangerous Irishmen were under observation by the police in London. These persons were mostly concerned with the ISDL."1

The position of many Irish persons employed in the Civil Service must have been jeopardized for when it was learnt that O'Sullivan was an employee of the Ministry of Labour the Cabinet ordered: "Departments should make enquiries as to Irish born employees"2

Churchill's fear of "serious outrages" occurring in Britain did not materialize (except for one bank raid3) for a number of reasons. The capture of many of the Republican leaders in the Four Courts, including Rory O'Connor, severely impeded communications between Republican Headquarters or what remained of it, as it transversed the roads of Southern and Western Ireland and their units in Britain. Though the British Command had already been removed from O'Connor's control during the post March Convention Army reorganization and put under the command of the First Eastern Division,


2 Cabinet Conclusions CAB 38(22) Appendix I of 23 June, 1922. CAB 23/30.

3 A Manchester bank was raided by a local IRA unit (whether this was authorized or not is unknown) see Manchester Evening News, 23 June 1922 and two men were subsequently jailed for 10 years for this offence, ibid, 30 November, 1922.
in Ireland, communications were still difficult. Ernie O'Malley O.C. of Ulster and Lenister of which the First Eastern was a constituent element was to find it difficult enough to co-ordinate the action of the Dublin units, as he moved constantly through that city on the run, let alone administer the far reaches of his command in Britain.¹ Volunteers from Glasgow, Liverpool, London and Tyneside made their way over to Ireland individually or in small groups to fight in Ireland² but a Liverpool officer who went in search of instructions for a new offensive in Britain "couldn't get anything definite from anyone in authority and left in disgust".² In the immediate aftermath of the fall of the Four Courts the Republicans could not afford to launch a British offensive with all the increased surveillance that would produce. The decision not seriously to contest with the Free State forces, for the control of Dublin left the Republicans initially controlling large areas of territory in the South, West and North, but with no secure communications between these. It was often easier to send a courier from Cork to Dublin

¹ O'Malley's reports, memos and letters to his Chief of Staff, present a vivid account of the difficulties of organizing activities in a large part of Ireland and Britain from within a tightly controlled Dublin; P7a/81.

² ROR 163, 13 July, 1922. CAB 24/138. A report by the Director of Intelligence (Free State Army) mentions that three Scots were among the persons captured in the Four Courts; see Report 15/6/1923, P17a/182. And ROR 165, undated, CP 4132. CAB 24/135. Hugh Early recalled that a Liverpool volunteer was executed by a Free State firing squad in Tuam see P17b/110.
or Belfast via Cardiff or Liverpool than by a land route through Free State territory.

When in early August the Republicans tried to disrupt the advance on Cork by launching a large scale attack on the Dublin communications system, the hundred and sixty volunteers involved travelled to Dublin from Cork via Liverpool. The apprehension of a courier resulted in the capture in Dublin of all involved in that operation.¹

The Republicans who initially believed that they could hold the Waterford-Limerick line given the availability of sufficient munitions, failed to realize that the possession of Dublin (the largest port in Ireland) had presented the Free State with the necessary shipping to mount a series of landings in the rear of their lines. Munitions were however in short supply, O'Malley was not exaggerating much when he stated "We had little ammunition, practically no explosives."² Since the bulk of Republican explosives had been left behind in Dublin.³ With the abandonment of the last Republican

¹ ROR 169, 24 August, 1922. CP 4171. CAB 24/138. Letter (18 August 1922) from Lynch, Chief of Staff to O'Malley on why the 'isolate Dublin' operation failed - P7a/81. And in a later operation - the attempt to blow up the Oriel House Dublin Intelligence Hq., the arms and some of the volunteers involved came from England. See Free State Army Director of Intelligence Report P17a/182.

² See O'Malley The Singing Flame, 169, also letter from Lynch to O'Malley on lack of explosives hampering operations.

³ 5 October 1922, P7a/81. The central munition dump of the Republican forces was located in the Four Courts; see IRA Chemicals Department Report, P17a/29.
garrisoned towns in mid-August and with the reversal to guerrilla warfare, sabotage operations against economic targets, the source of Free State tax revenue became the paramount strategy. Deprived of the use of any port the supply of arms, ammunition and explosives had to be funnelled through the Free State controlled ports, in smuggling operations which depended on a high volume of traffic for any chance of success. The West coast American traffic was too limited in scale to afford the importation in any significant quantity or with any regularity of the direly needed munitions. As in the War of Independence, these, whether they originated in America or on the continent, had to be shipped via the busy Britain - East Coast of Ireland routes. Hence the Republican leadership could not when they still appeared to have a chance, if not of actually winning the struggle, at least of waging a protracted guerrilla struggle to a stalemate, permit any offensive strategy by their British units which would impede these vital logistical operations. These procurement operations were now much more difficult

1 See the Free State Government evidence on munitions smuggling centred in Britain, given to a British Labour Party Delegation; Parliamentary Labour Party Report On The Irish Deportations (1923). And a Free State Army Intelligence report which stated that arms were being sent from Antwerp, Hamburg, and the USA to Liverpool and from there to Sligo, Fenit, Cork and Dublin. See Intelligence in Britain 1922/23 P17a/182. After the fall of the Four Courts, urgent purchases of chemicals for explosives manufactures were made in Britain. See IRA Chemical Department Report, P17a/29 and letter from O'Malley to Lynch, 28 July, 1922, P7a/81; Report Arms Sales, P17a/49.
to undertake. Some people formerly involved in the earlier struggle, were now in the Free State forces and used their knowledge of the old Irish port smuggling procedures to thwart the new operations. The British Authorities were provided by their former adversaries with all the necessary details relating to the British end of the logistical routes. Three Free State Intelligence officers were posted to Liverpool to help the police combat Republican arms smuggling there.¹ But despite their efforts the British Cabinet were informed in November, 1922 that "the traffic in arms still goes on although greatly hampered by Police and Customs authorities."²

Periodic seizures gave some indication of the scale of the logistical operations; a Free State boarding party discovered three machine guns, twenty rifles and three thousand five hundred rounds of ammunition on board a Glasgow/Sligo steamer.³ And four Republicans were jailed in Scotland for arms procurement in the

¹ See Report of the Advisory Committee in the Case of Mary Leonard (Brixton Prison, 7 May, 1923), TS 27/183. The Free State Executive Council meeting of the 13 January 1923 instructed Commandant General O'Hegarty, the Director of Intelligence, to improve liaison and information sharing with the British: P7/B/245. Also see Department of Intelligence file 'Irish in Britain'. P7/B/378. And 'Intelligence in Britain', particularly letter of 14 December, 1922 from the Director of Intelligence to Commander in Chief on the necessity of increasing the number of intelligence officers stationed in Britain, P17a/182.

² ROR 182, 30 November, 1922, CP 4337. CAB 24/139.

³ Times, 7 October, 1922.
same week as that find.¹

As the scale of warfare in Ireland was gradually reduced in size; with the Republican forces incapable of mounting much more than an ambush or a hit and run raid; as demoralization increased following the adoption by the Free State of a policy of summary execution; so the potential contribution of the Republican forces in Britain became all the more important, constituting the last untapped reservoir of Republican military strength.² At the end of 1922 Pa Murray, who had been appointed to the vacant position of O.C. Britain, arrived in England with several staff officers³

1  ROR 176, 12 October, 1922 CP 4282. CAB 24/139. And ROR 185, 14 December, 1922. CAB 24/140.

2  As soon as the first phase of the Civil War - the battle for the cities of Dublin and Cork, was over, Lynch began to take an active interest in the IRA units in Britain. On the 12 September, 1922, he wrote to O'Malley on the need to ensure that the British units were well organized for "I am only to anxious to have the organization perfected to meet certain eventualities" P7a/81. The importance of the British units is further indicated by the fact that at the first Army Executive meeting to be held since the start of the Civil War, the meeting of 17 October, 1922 the agenda included as item 8 "Action if and when in Britain" and while no firm decision as to offensive action was then taken it was emphasized that the British organization was very important; 'Minutes of Army Executive', P17a/12.

³  Pa Murray, the O.C. 1st Bt. Cork, Brigade was appointed O.C. Britain on 27 September, 1922. Liam Deasy, Deputy Chief of Staff, wrote to the Adjutant of the 1st Southern Division requesting that the Division provide an Adjutant, Engineer and Chemist for "duty in England" (Field Hq. 30 November, 1922, P17a/51). Also see Director of Intelligence (Free State Army) Reports of 15 June, 1923, P17a/182. After the capture of O'Malley it appears that the position of O.C. Britain reverted for a period to the office of the Director of Purchases, Sean Moylan. See 'The Chief of Staff's Report', Frank Aiken, 10/8/1924, P17a/12, until Murray was appointed.
and British Intelligence soon noted "Underground Republican activities in England and Scotland are on the increase."¹

The restrictions on offensive activities in Britain were considerably relaxed, Glasgow volunteers who in September were restricted to "getting information on those joining the Free State Army with a view to having them shot when they land in Dublin";² now commenced a series of shooting incidents against suspected Free State agents ³ who launched their own retaliatory operations.³ In turn the Scottish Police, already concerned about sectarian clashes in the city and clearly not prepared to tolerate the extension of the Irish Civil War to their own volatile area, swiftly struck back. A raid on a Glasgow hall uncovered a munitions dump and resulted in the arrest of twenty-eight people including the O.C. and the Second in Command of the Glasgow IRA.⁴ Another person captured in this raid gave a glimpse of the 'secret war', fought in the back streets of Glasgow and Liverpool in the winter of 1922-23, between the IRA and Free State Intelligence agents, when he told the court that he

¹ ROR 186, 21 December, 1922, CP 4375. CAB 24/140.
² ROR 174, 28 September, 1922, CP 4242. CAB 24/139.
had penetrated the Glasgow IRA, on the instructions of his superior officers in the Free State Army who had ordered "a certain person in Glasgow to be shot".¹ Three more people were arrested in Liverpool following the discovery of another arms dump there² and a month later a search of an Irish ship in the port revealed twelve drums of chemical explosives and twelve thousand rounds of ammunition.³ But another police success in Stockport injured the Chief Constable, an Army Colonel and several others when explosives they were examining blew up in the Police station.⁴

By February, 1923, it had become apparent to even the most determined IRA officers in Ireland that they were losing the war; the Dublin Brigade had effectively been reduced to a few active service units⁵ and the Southern Command, the most important individual IRA formation, was down to only 800 volunteers with its O.C. predicting the imminent defeat of his units unless the pressure on his area could be relieved by increased activity elsewhere.⁶ But the neighbouring

³ Times, 25 October, 1922.
⁴ Manchester Evening News, 4 December, 1922.
⁵ Captured correspondence published in the Freeman's Journal, 9 April, 1923.
⁶ Captured correspondence published in the Freeman's Journal, 9 April, 1923.
units were themselves not very optimistic of their ability to continue the fight much longer. Yet Liam Lynch was still confident that provided he could secure more munitions, especially ammunition—"Many guns are dumped for want of stuff", his units could be relied upon to launch a new co-ordinated offensive that might yet force the Free State Government to seek a non-military end to the Civil War. His arms purchasing teams on the continent and in the United States were instructed to send all the ammunition in their foreign dumps at once to Britain where there "are many channels for shipment" to Ireland.

Lynch had also planned an even more vital role for his units in Britain than merely supplying munitions for a new offensive in Ireland. They themselves were to launch a widespread sabotage campaign with the intention, no less than, forcing the British Army back into the Irish conflict, as De Valera clearly indicated:

"One big effort from our friends everywhere and I think we would finally smash the Free State. Our people have a hard time of suffering before them and we have of course to face the possibility of the British forces coming back and taking up the fight where the others

1 But all the O.C.s of the units concerned, the Cork and Kerry Brigades, were prepared to fight on until they were defeated, see Freeman's Journal, 9 Apr., 1923.

2 Captured correspondence Lynch to Sean Moylan in America and published *ibid* 23 March, 1923.

lay it down - But God is good!”

In a last ditch gamble Lynch, with the active backing of De Valera, was hoping to draw the British back into the conflict with the intention of persuading the Free State Government to sue for a negotiated settlement; otherwise the IRA campaign in Britain would continue with the risk of an infuriated British Government intervening militarily. And perhaps Lynch even believed that a return of the British Army might somehow result in a rapprochement of many of the old IRA members serving in the Free State Army with the Republicans. For, whatever of these motives Lynch believing “his forces in England were sufficiently well organized and equipped to undertake operations in specific areas” issued the necessary operational orders at the end of February, stressing that “days now count in this matter, start at once.”

Unfortunately for Lynch’s final gamble, the Free State

1 De Valera to McGarrity. February 6, 1923, Ms 17,440, McGarrity Papers (NLI).

2 De Valera advised a big first strike and a subsequent series of widespread operations in Britain, see Earl of Longford and Thomas P. O’Neill Eamon De Valera (1970), 213.

3 O’Donnoghue, op. cit., 281.

army was equally aware of the vital role IRA units in Britain were to play in the IRA's spring offensive. They had already drawn up long lists of IRA personnel in Britain whom they wanted the British authorities to try for supplying munitions to Ireland.\(^1\) The British postal monitoring service was also intercepting Liam Lynch's communications to Kathleen Brooks, the Highgate school teacher, who served as his 'post box' with the O.C. Britain.\(^2\) As a result of their combined efforts, the British and Irish authorities ensured that all the ambitious Republican plans came to nothing in March, 1923. The month started badly for the IRA with the seizure of another munitions dump in Liverpool\(^3\) and British Intelligence foiled, a week later, a plot to bring in a million rounds of ammunition from Hamburg to Ireland through Glasgow and Liverpool\(^4\). This was the shipment the IRA in Ireland had placed great hopes on. While the following week the London Police seized 142 'Peter the Painter' pistols\(^5\)

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\(^1\) P7/B/84, P17a/195 and the Papers of Hugh Kennedy, the Free State Attorney General, P4/11/9 (UCD).

\(^2\) See the evidence of the Post Office Special Investigation Branch officer on intercepting mail: given at the trial of Art O'Brien et al and published in the Times, 16 June, 1923.

\(^3\) ROR 195, 1 March, 1923, CP 136 (23). CAB 24/159.

\(^4\) ROR 196, 8 March, 1923, CP 144 (23). CAB 24/159.

\(^5\) ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166 (23). CAB 24/159. The Mauser 1898 model semi-automatic pistol was dubbed 'Peter the Painter' after its use in the 1913 Sidney Street siege by a 'Russian anarchist' who in fact was probably an Okhrana agent provocateur.
which would have been invaluable for a renewed IRA offensive in Dublin.\textsuperscript{1} But the most crucial and decisive action in foiling the planned IRA campaign in Britain was the series of nationwide arrests during the weekend of the 10th-12th March and the subsequent deportation to Ireland of 110 people.\textsuperscript{2}

The arrests and deportations - as we have observed elsewhere in this thesis - were subsequently declared illegal and compensation had to be paid to the deportees but the action certainly totally disrupted the IRA plans and probably helped to shorten the Civil War. Some senior IRA officers in Britain managed to escape the dragnet,\textsuperscript{3} possibly as the result of advance information, but a communication from the O.C. Britain to Lynch revealed the extent of the arrests,

"All officers arrested in Liverpool, Newcastle, The O.C. and Adjutants in Glasgow as well as most of the Battalion officers. The O.C. Birmingham and two London Company Captains also arrested."\textsuperscript{4}

A situation that induced Lynch's Operations officer to

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{1} Despite its heavy weight the powerful Mauser 1898 model was a highly sought after weapon by the IRA: as the addition of its combined wooden holster/butt and a twenty round magazine converted it into a very effective carbine, ideal for close range combat.
\item \textsuperscript{2} ROR 197, 15 March, 1923, CP 151 (23). CAB 24/159.
\item \textsuperscript{3} Patrick Murray O.C. Britain, William Ahearn, O.C. London and Seamas Reader, Second in Command IRA Scotland. Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{4} Captured Correspondence, published in the Freeman's Journal, 11 April, 1923.
\end{itemize}
enclose his own memorandum with the O.C. Britain's communication to the effect that "the chances of operations in Britain are now negligible if not altogether impossible."\(^1\) But Lynch also hopefully noted that, despite the arrests and the removal of most of his strike force in Britain to internment in Ireland, the basic munitions supply network was still functioning\(^2\) — a fact testified by the Dublin Police when they discovered in early May "a ton of explosives recently arrived from Britain."\(^3\) The British Cabinet were informed by their Intelligence Adviser:

> "the deportation of the Republican leaders has had a good effect inasmuch that it has thrown their organization out of gear at a very critical moment: for months past they have been gathering their forces so as to put their full weight behind the blow to be struck against the Free State this Spring. Prominent Republicans in Ireland admit that it is now or never with the Republic and say that all will be over by June next."\(^4\)

Another indication that British Intelligence had penetrated the IRA in Britain was provided by a series of raids in mid April when an attempt was made to organize new IRA active service units in London.\(^5\) But the Cabinet's Intelligence officer was wrong in

\(^1\) *Freeman's Journal*, 11 April, 1923.


\(^3\) *Ibid*, 19 May, 1923.

\(^4\) ROR 198, 22 March, 1923, CP 166 (23). CAB 24/159.

his assumption that the Civil War would drag on until June. Lynch had been counting on a morale boosting IRA campaign of largescale destruction in Britain to exhort his 8,000 remaining troops into one last offensive and now he faced almost irresistible pressure from his officers to end hostilities. On April 10, Lynch was fatally wounded and his successor as Chief of Staff, Frank Aiken, ordered the IRA to suspend all offensive action from the end of the month in an unsuccessful bid to negotiate peace terms with the victorious Free State Government. When they refused to take part in any official negotiations, Aiken then simply ordered his troops to "dump their arms" on May 24.2

In Britain the IRA units decided to keep a very low public profile until the deportees - many of whom were IRA members - had obtained their compensation for illegal arrest3 but this policy did not prevent a wholesale reorganization, especially in the intelligence sector.4 Reorganization was however hampered by the tensions that developed between IRA members released from Irish prisons and those who had not travelled over to participate in the Civil War. These disputes particularly affected the Scottish IRA to the point

1 O'Donoghue, op. cit., 308-10.
2 Irish Independent, 29 May, 1923.
where a Special Branch officer complained,

"The IRA in Scotland appears to be quite out of hand and it is very difficult to keep up with the continual changes being made in both the Brigade and Battalion staffs".

This factionalism reached its peak following the recriminations over the abortive Peterhead prison escape in October, 1923 and its effect was to so disrupt the IRA in Scotland that an intelligence assessment decided,

"no danger is to be apprehended from that direction at present, they appear to be more inclined to shoot each other than any one else there."

These internal problems, almost inevitable in an organization that had suffered a disastrous defeat and appeared to have little prospects in the foreseeable future, paralleled the splits, tensions and personal arguments which effectively ended the existence of the Irish Self Determination League. To some extent the sources of these internal tensions inside the IRA units in Britain were located in the long standing problems of the relationship between the IRA and the IRB, and following the IRA decision to disband its older but now much weaker rival, in November, 1924, the situation somewhat improved

1 ROR 225, 4 October, 1923, CP 412 (23). CAB 24/162.
2 ROR 231, 15 November, 1923, CP 465(23). CAB 24/162. P7a/87a, Mulcahy.
3 ROR 233, 29 November, 1923, CP 473 (23). CAB 24/162.
4 ROR 208, 31 May, 1923, CP 256 (23). CAB 24/160.
5 Patrick Murray, the former O.C. Britain who had become Adjutant General of the IRA issued instructions to disband the rump of the Anti-Treaty IRB in contd,
so that the end of the year IRA 'battle order' listed seven units in Britain, considered as reasonably efficient.¹

But by this time the IRA in Britain had become a shadowy force, little known, even inside the Irish community, save for the occasional discovery of an arms dump and the publicity generated by subsequent trials.² A situation that was to continue until fifteen years later when the IRA recommenced offensive activities in Britain.

contd,

November, 1924, see Raneleagh, op. cit., 38.

¹ P17a/51.

² In February, 1925, Jeremiagh O'Leary, described by the Police as an IRA Intelligence Officer, was convicted with a civil servant of stealing naval dockyard plans, see Catholic Herald, 14 February, 1925. And in 1928 there were two London Court cases involving the possession of arms by known IRA members, during which it was alleged that funds for arms purchases had been obtained through the Soviet Narodny Bank in London, see Times, 20 March, 20 April, 12 June, 1928 and the Catholic Herald, 31 March, 7 April, 1928.
"England is not susceptible to intimidation":¹ An Assessment of the IRA campaign in Britain.

This is probably the most difficult section of my thesis to write. It involves an objective evaluation of what is to many a very subjective phenomenon - one that has a very emotive orientation. I seek here neither to justify or condemn the incidents outlined in the preceding two sections. My purpose is simply to evaluate the extent of their contribution towards the creation of an independent Irish state and their impact on British society in general and the Irish community in particular.

Clutterbuck's observation that;

"Whether the guerrilla is a hero, or a terrorist lies in the eyes of the beholder;"²

is an apt expression of my viewpoint. For most people guerrilla warfare is at best something not quite respectable and usually a form of combat to be condemned outright, with a strong belief that its participants should be treated in a manner different to that of those involved in a more conventional form of warfare.³

The format of warfare may have changed substantially from

¹ Times, 29 Nov., 1920.

² Richard Clutterbuck, Protest and the Urban Guerrilla, (1973), 143.

³ Neither the Hague or Geneva Conventions recognize guerrillas as prisoners of war.
the feudal epoch but the ethics of warfare, the very concept of the 'rules of war', have altered little since the period when warfare was regarded as the supreme social activity to be enacted within a relatively rigid code of conduct. The ideological barriers that so limited Du Gueschin\(^1\) in his campaign to liberate France from English rule still remain strong today though the material circumstances have changed so much. Even when the ideology of warfare has been modified to accord with changed conditions subtle evocations of the original feudal code of ethics remain. For two generations the Irish Republican Brotherhood recruited, organized and trained for open battle against the English army, envisaging a set piece encounter with banners flying, trumpets blowing etc. When it came in the 1916 Rising in Dublin, the result was a military defeat; of such shattering dimensions that a repeat engagement was never contemplated. The 1919-1921 War of Independence was a guerrilla war, yet even in this the feudal code was clearly visible in the public reaction. A clear distinction was made between the exploits of the 'flying columns', engaging in small scale rural warfare of a semi-conventional nature and the urban actions, primarily involving the elimination of enemy intelligence agents and unfriendly Irish people.

\(^1\) Du Gueschin was the French Constable who, following the defeats of Crecy and Agincourt, advocated a guerrilla type struggle. Through this he regained control of considerable tracts of territory but the opposition of those who believed he was flouting the 'rules of war' ensured that no other French leader followed his example.
The former are glorified in song, the latter ignored, though theirs was probably the more important contribution from the military point of view.

The most concise expression of the strategy of successful guerrilla warfare, the motto of the Jeune Ecole:¹

"Shamelessly attack the weak; shamelessly fly from the strong"²

so contradicts our socialized concept of how war should be waged that it requires a conscious effort to accept its a-moralistic pragmatism. To evaluate the significance of the incidents that occurred in Britain in the period under discussion necessitates a similar re-orientation of thought, a deliberate refusal to evaluate guerrilla warfare by the criteria of conventional warfare. Whereas the latter usually has the occupation of territory and or the destruction of the enemy's military capacity, the former, particularly in the context of Irish military operations in Britain, has neither of these strategic objectives, being orientated to more intangible considerations, the limited destabilization of British society, and an overall diminution of the morale and confidence of the British people to win a military victory in Ireland, when their own country was not immune from the attentions of the guerrillas. It is relatively easy to determine the contribution of the non-offensive operations, logistical

¹ The Jeune Ecole was an 18th century group of French naval frigate commanders who formulated a guerrilla type strategy of war at sea.

and intelligence, as opposed to the offensive incidents in Britain, towards the achievement of the July 1921 situation in which the British Government was forced to negotiate with the representatives of the Irish Republican Army. Logistics can be simply measured in terms of equipment sent from Britain as a proportion of that employed in Ireland.

Without the eleven hundred 'Howth Rifles' purchased by the Childers/Rice committee in London, or the munitions supplied by the IRB in Britain, the insurgents of 1916 would have been virtually unarmed, and without the Lanarkshire explosives they would have been bereft of even their homemade bombs and grenades. The Irish logistical operation in Britain made the 1916 Rising possible. Without the munitions supplied by them it is likely there would have been no Insurrection. In the War of Independence the munitions supplied by or through the IRB in Britain were crucial. Probably the most military effective area of Republican strength in Ireland was Co. Cork. Its Third West Cork Brigade had one of the best unit combat records, yet as late as mid-1920 its entire

1 For details of the importation of munitions into Ireland from Britain, see; Naval Intelligence Report, The Political Situation in Ireland, CP 100. CAB 24/92, and Minutes of Evidence - Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland, Cd. 8311, (1916), 4 and 46.

2 130 lbs of explosives were stolen from a Lanarkshire colliery in January 1916 and sent to Dublin; see ibid., 121.
armament consisted of 35 rifles and 20 pistols with thirty and ten rounds of ammunition per weapon respectively.\textsuperscript{1} The thirty four rifles seized in a Liverpool police raid\textsuperscript{2} would effectively have doubled the number of weapons held by the most important Republican unit in Ireland. Appendix 5, a photocopy of the amount of arms dispatched from London alone, graphically illustrates the extent and significance of the munitions network in Britain in a better manner than anything I could write.

Intelligence is vital in any form of warfare but even more so in guerrilla warfare where accurate information as to the opponents plans and intentions can often substantially redress the unfavourable physical and material balance of forces. The IRB, as we have already observed, had penetrated the British postal system at different levels from Compton Llewlyn Davis, the Chief Solicitor in the Post Office who personally supplied information, on a friendship basis, to Michael Collins, to the various networks run by men like Sam Maguire. Through these networks, Terence MacSwiney, the Lord Mayor of Cork and OC of the city's IRA brigade, was able to have in his hands the new RIC cipher only four days after it was compiled in London. At a time when radio was still not considered a reliable means of communication and certainly not a 'secure' one, virtually all communications between the British Army and RIC in Ireland with London were sent

\textsuperscript{1} Tom Barry, op. cit., 14.

\textsuperscript{2} Times, 30 May, 1920.
through the postal system. Anybody with a list of 'interesting' addresses and working in the postal sorting department was literally handling intelligence gold dust. A man like, Dempsey, "the man from Clapham", who worked as a travelling sorter on the Hollyhead to London mail train and who bundled all the "interesting looking" letters into a bag which he handed to Liam Moore when the train stopped briefly at Willesden Junction, on the outskirts of London, was more valuable to the IRA than an entire company, probably even a battalion of volunteers. The letters were taken by Liam Moore, nominally an employee in the Irish Self Determination League Head office to an IRA Intelligence officer who copied the relevant details and then handed them to Sam Maguire and his IRB sorters for insertion back into the normal postal system. An almost foolproof arrangement which must have been an intelligence gold mine. By these means Michael Collins learnt the names of six British Intelligence officers even before they had arrived in Ireland. The IRB, as we have already observed, had agents in the principal Government Departments including the Home Office, the Irish Office and the Admiralty. And according to Liam Ahearne; a Welsh MP who had provided very useful information, furnished the London IRA with the necessary

1 This reconstruction is based on a personal interview with the widow of Sean McGrath who couldn't remember Dempsey's "the man from Clapham" as she called him - first name.

2 P7/A38.

3 I 7/B/100.
information to plan the assassination of Lloyd George himself; the Truce forestalled this particular plot.\(^1\)

The IRA in London and Liverpool appear to have developed useful contacts within the police forces in these areas\(^2\) while an Irish barmaid working in a public house near Scotland Yard was credited with foiling a plan to capture Collins, Mulcahy and Brugha when she overheard a conversation with a group of detectives who were being transferred to Dublin.\(^3\)

The IRA in Britain were responsible for 'two firsts'; they sent so much munitions to Dublin that a special 'O' Company, formed entirely of dockers, was formed to deal with the material\(^4\) and they purchased the first aircraft of the fledgling Irish Army Air Corps.\(^5\)

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1 P17/B/100

2 Collins in a letter (19 January, 1920) to Ned Kerr (Liverpool) mentioned that his London organization was in contact with a CID officer, P7/A/1 and Kerr subsequently informed Collins he had established a very productive contact with a Liverpool police sergeant; see Memo 46a. 29 September, 1921. P7/A/7. Billy Ahearne claims the IRA had agents inside Scotland Yard; see P17/B/99 and a police raid in 1924 on a London IRA dump discovered comprehensive lists of Scotland Yard personnel and the names and career details of many Irish born police officers see the *Freeman's Journal*, 16 April, 1925.


4 See Martin Walsh deposition, P17a/154.

5 The IRA in London purchased an ex RFC plane to enable Michael Collins to get out of London in the event of the Treaty negotiations collapsing; see, T.C. Kelly-Rogers 'Aviation in Ireland - 1784 to 1922', *Eire - Ireland* VI (1971), 3-17.
The contribution made by the IRB and the IRA in Britain in the munitions and intelligence fields is relatively easy to demonstrate but it is much more difficult to evaluate the impact of their offensive operations for this involves a qualitative rather than a quantative measurement. Bowyer Bell, the foremost historian of the IRA, has I believed failed to make this type of assessment when he bluntly dismissed the impact of IRA operations in Britain,

(they)"failed to effect a real campaign of retaliation in England despite a rather impressive Liverpool dock fire";¹ but Mowat has to a certain extent looked beyond the actual incidents and recognized that they may have had a wider though less tangible effect,

"the IRA's rather feeble attempts at terrorism in England may also have moved opinion by bringing the war home to the people, even though they amounted to little more than the burning of a few warehouses in Liverpool and a few hayricks at the Wirral."²

We have already observed a claim by a British Intelligence officer that the "farm fires in Lancashire and Cheshire are causing great alarm and uneasiness in the area".³ And for his part, Denis Brennan, while frankly acknowledging the relatively small scale nature of his London IRA unit's activities, expressed his satisfaction that "the papers play up to our little acts tremendously".⁴

¹ Bowyer Bell, op. cit., 38.
² C. Mowat, op. cit., 76-7.
³ ROR 97, 17 March, 1921. CP 2740. CAB 24/121.
⁴ PI7/B/100.
This I believe is a very important statement and substantially explains why Bell and to a lesser extent Mowat have failed to appreciate the real significance of IRA actions in Britain during 1920-21. Acts of violence undertaken for political reasons can have many motivations and assume many different forms but all have one thing in common; they are committed to draw attention to a cause and so their success or failure is inextricably linked to publicity or the lack of media coverage.

Major General Clutterbuck, an academic with considerable personal experience of counter insurgency methodology, has succinctly analysed guerrilla warfare as essentially, "a propaganda war supplemented by a shooting war". So from this perspective the location of the action is often far more important than the actual nature of the incident itself. Guerrilla warfare and in particular, its urban variety, is basically a 'staged' affair, enacted in an arena chosen by the guerrillas to maximize publicity while demonstrating the impotence of the Government to combat them. Urban guerrilla warfare has acquired its


2 R. Clutterbuck, op. cit., 98.
present importance, in the perspective of liberation movements; even though the tactical environment is often not the most suitable operational area and certainly usually not the safest for the participants, primarily because of the ready access to media coverage. A Guatemalan guerrilla who argued,

"If we put even a small bomb in a building in town we could be certain of making the headlines in the press. But if the rural guerrillas liquidated some thirty soldiers there was just a small item in the back page",¹

illustrates the importance of media coverage while an interview with an Algerian ALN leader dramatically indicates the necessity of evaluating guerrilla warfare by qualitative rather than quantitative criteria:

"Is it better for our cause to kill ten of our enemies in a remote village where this will not cause comment, or to kill one man in Algiers where the American press will get hold of the story the next day".²

Lack of publicity actually led the NLF in Aden to abandon their struggle in rural areas in favour of more intensive operations in the city itself.³

A detailed reading of the Times between November 1920 and July 1921 reveals that time after time the incidents in Britain were given much more prominent coverage than events committed in Ireland even though, these were


3 See Abdul Fatah Ismailif, 'How we liberated Aden', Gulf Studies, April, 1976, 6.
usually more significant militarily.\textsuperscript{1} It was not so much the tiny number of Irish inflicted fatalities—seven as compared to the 1,260 killed in German air and naval attacks on Britain in the First World War,\textsuperscript{2} as the very fact they occurred at all, even though this was not a deliberate policy; for "Volunteers engaged in this work were instructed not to take life except in self defence".\textsuperscript{3} Rory O'Connor in fact complained unsuccessfully that,

\begin{quote}
the officer in charge should not be tied down by considerations such as preserving the lives of enemy subjects.\textsuperscript{4}
\end{quote}

Material limitations, all the explosives obtained in Britain were required for use against the thick walled RIC barracks in Ireland, and operational restraints stemming from a lack of trained personnel, dictated the tactical parameters which resulted in arson becoming the primary form of sabotage. Fire was also symbolic of the reprisal burnings of Irish farm property by the British

\textsuperscript{1} Since I originally drafted this chapter, there has been a considerable upsurge of academic interest in the relationship between political violence and the media see, Richard Clutterbuck, The Media and Political Violence, (1980). Paul Wilkinson (edt), British Perspectives on Terrorism, (1981), and his earlier work, Political Terrorism, (1974).

\textsuperscript{2} See the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into Breaches of the Laws of War, CP 1813. CAB 24/111, 359-61.

\textsuperscript{3} D. McArdle, op. cit., 370.

\textsuperscript{4} Captured document on 'Operations in Britain' produced in Parliament, 135H.C. Debs. 5, Cols. 633.
forces and these operations were conducted in rural areas because of the parallel with reprisals in Ireland and especially in agricultural districts where the police "are not numerous." 1

The lack of a national unified police force in Britain, substantially reduced the effectiveness of the measures taken against the IRA. In 1919 there were 56 separate county police forces and 129 town/borough forces in England and Wales, while Scotland was divided into 31 county and 29 town/borough forces. 2 Many of the IRA sabotage operations and in particular those against the communications system took place on the territorial boundaries of police forces thereby uncreasing their chances of avoiding capture. There was also in 1920 a much smaller number of police specializing in political activities than there are today. One M 15 report reveals that there were only 436 members of the Special Branch in Britain in 1920. 3 The Metropolitan Police, as might be expected, had the greatest Special Branch establishment with 137 officers in 1921 4 as compared to 114 in 1914 5

1 ROR 94, 24 Feb., 1921. CP 2631. CAB 24/120.


3 Information extracted from a letter from Col. Kell, director of MI 5, thanking Special Branch officers for their cooperation during the World War, filed in HO 45/10892/35729.

4 Home Office Report, Reorganization and Augmentation of CID and Special Branch, HO 45, 11000/223532.

5 MEPO 2/1643.
and only 43 in 1909. The Special Branch had in fact been originally formed in 1883 to combat the Clan na Gael bombing faction of the IRB. Even this figure proved insufficient to deal with the potential threat posed by Irish Republicans and, following the assassination of Field Marshal Wilson, when 150 uniformed police officers were attached to the Special Branch for "Protection Duties", the Home Secretary was advised that "priorities will have to be clearly drawn otherwise there will be a severe shortage of police". With insufficient police to provide protection for potential personal targets the police had little hope of guarding adequately the 23,000 magazines, licensed stores and registered premises which were used to keep explosives. The IRA, as shown earlier, had few problems in raiding these stores literally when they chose. The Lord Mayor of Newcastle was forced to recruit Special Constables to protect areas from the IRA. Nor could the Government employ its traditional last resort, the Army to combat the IRA in Britain. Troop shortages in 1921 were so critical that not only could the guard at Woolwich Arsenal—which we have observed was a source of munitions for the IRA—not be increased, but some stores had actually to be

1 MEPO 2/1297.
2 CP 4108. CAB 24/138.
4 Cabinet Meeting, 12 April, 1921. CAB 23/25.
5 Cabinet Meeting, 22(21), 9 April, 1921. CAB 24/116.
6 War Office Memorandum, July, 1921. CP 3189. CAB 24/126.
left unguarded. The potential IRA threat to these military stores was considered so great that just before the Truce the Home Secretary proposed a Special Defence Force of 2,000 should be raised to guard them. A year before this the Cabinet had been warned that the;

"Garrison in Britain is well below the 30,000 Bayonets considered necessary for Internal Security duties;" and this was during a period of intensive undustrial militancy fuelled by the recent victory of the Bolsheviks in Russia. Kendall has described,

"the crisis which British society faced between 1918 and 1920 as probably the most serious since the time of the Chartists." 

In April 1921, the Government was faced with a possible new 'Triple Alliance Strike', and with 51 Infantry Battalions in Ireland was obliged to suffer the diplomatic embarrassment of withdrawing the four battalions from Silesia,

"the risk at home from Sinn Feiners, communists and other dangerous elements was sufficiently great to necessitate their return".

1 We earlier observed that a member of the ISDL was killed while trying to extract explosives from shells in the Woolwich Arsenal where he was employed. There was also an English socialist cell there that supplied the IRA with munitions; see ROR 187, 4 June, 1923, CP 4(23). CAB 24/158, and ROR 191, 1 Feb., 1923, CP 74(23). CAB 24/158, for accounts of resultant trials.

2 Home Secretary's Memorandum, Protection of Munitions, 7 July, 1921, CP 3110. CAB 24/126.


5 Cabinet 17(21), 4 April, 1921. CAB 23/25.
Throughout 1920-1921 Ireland was a constant drain on the resources of the British Army. The reinforcements planned in the event of the failure of the pre-truce talks meant that,

"only a very small number of troops would be left in this country to support the police in case of emergency. Under the present programme the Scottish Command would be denuded of regular troops."¹

Yet only two months previously the Scottish Solicitor General had warned the Cabinet that Irish Republicans were actively helping the rioting Lancashire miners who were on strike, but that no soldiers could be sent to quell them for all the available troops were required in Glasgow where "a well organized armed body of Sinn Feiners existed",² necessitating the use of troops to stop one Republican riot. In these circumstances an Intelligence report that the,

"Sinn Feiners are openly elated at the coal strike and boast that the Volunteers are strong enough to take and hold Glasgow"³

though obviously exaggerated must have caused the Government considerable concern. The Clydeside in the 1917-21 period certainly lived up to its name 'Red Clydeside'.⁴

This the most militant industrial area in Britain had

¹ Cabinet 55(conclusion 2), 29 June, 1921, CAB 23/26.
² Cabinet 22(21), 9 April, 1921, CAB 24/116.
⁴ For a detailed account of the Clydeside in this period see Nan Milton: John MacLean (1973), and Joan Smith, Harry McShane, (1978).
a very influential Clyde Workers Defence Committee which was "more or less an Irish body".¹

The military situation in Britain was actually worse than it appeared for no less than seven of the twenty eight infantry battalions available for use in Britain were Irish units and the Cabinet was informed that it was, "doubtful whether these ordinary Irish battalions are to be depended upon for aid to the civil power."²

Nor could the bulk of the British Army, stationed in Ireland be considered sufficiently reliable for use in all circumstances in Britain. The GOC in Ireland, General Macready, reported that his soldiers were disillusioned by anti-war propaganda in Britain, and even by debates in Parliament concerning their conduct in Ireland.³

Discontent was rampant within the British Army and sometimes burst out into violent protests, a thousand soldiers carrying red flags rioted in Aldershot,⁴ a police officer was killed by rioting soldiers in Epsom.⁵ A Royal Navy Reserve Battalion sent to pump out strike hit mines in Newport mutinied and raised the red flag.⁶

¹ ROR 53, 6 May, 1920. CP 1239. CAB 24/105.
² ROR 67, 12 Aug., 1920, CP 1772. CAB 24/110.
³ 23 May, 1921, CP 2695. CAB 24/123.
⁴ ROR 105, 2 May, 1921, CP 2938. CAB 24/123.
⁶ ROR 105, 2 May, 1921, CP 2938. CAB 24/123.
The British Army in 1921 was a very different organization from 1914. The wave of patriotism which saw twenty per cent of the traditionally militant miners volunteering for the army in 1914 alone\(^1\) vanished in the holocaust of the massed frontal attacks of the Somme and Passenchendale. Three quarters of a million dead, a million and a half wounded\(^2\) or at the individual level the family in Sheffield that had seven sons killed in action and another two wounded\(^3\) transformed traditional concepts of allegiances and loyalties. There were no mass mutinies on the scale of the French 1917 revolt, but individual units rebelled to an extent not usually appreciated.\(^4\) By 1921 the British Army could not be considered reliable in all contingencies and industrial militancy reached heights never again equalled. Even the police stuck in 1919 and in Liverpool "where there is a strong disorderly Irish element"\(^5\) rioting in the policeless city caused

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1 Kendall, op. cit., 149.
3 Catholic Herald, 24 Aug., 1918.
£2m damage.

The preoccupation of the Government with this revolutionary upsurge can be seen in the very existence of the weekly and sometimes daily Reports on Revolutionary Organizations. A penny discovered in South Wales and stamped "Puppet King" resulted in a full scale investigation in an attempt to discover its origins, while great attention was paid to a group of "500 young hooligans" known as the 'Red Guard' in Scotland. In previous periods of acute conflict or potential danger the Government had responded by increasing the size of the Special Constabulary, and in 1920 preparations were made for their large scale arming, and the raising of new auxiliary formations, the Special Defence Forces. But even these were not immune to the germ of subversion. The Secretary for War warned that considerable numbers of,

"Sinn Feiners and militant miners were enlisting in the Defence Forces with a view to deserting with their arms."4

Lacking the numerical strength to quell any sizeable insurrection, doubtful as to the reliability of the security forces under its command, the Government in 1921 found that with the formal "termination of the war" it

1 ROR 2, 7 May, 1919, GT 7218. CAB 24/79.
2 ROR 82, 23 Dec., 1920. CP 2169. CAB 24/115.
3 See Preparation for Emergency. Arming of Loyal Citizens, 31 March, 1920, CP 796. CAB 23/21. 1000 rifles were to be held at each Regimental depot to arm "loyal citizens".
was about to loose virtually all its legislative powers to deal with the industrial militants and political subversives. Sections 42, 51, 53, and 55 of the wartime Defence of the Realm Act gave the Government carte blanche powers to suppress and seize any publication, search any premises, arrest and intern any individual without hindrance from the courts. The Home Office warned that these powers,

"have been and continue to be essential to the efficiency of the action taken by the Police to deal with Sinn Feiners in England and with Bolshevik troubles and revolutionary activities" and stressed the necessity of adequate replacement legislation.

The Cabinet was concerned to hear that the IRB were in contact with Russian agents in London who were rather naively believed to be coordinating a master plan of subversion; that they were working with the 'Wobblies' (Industrial Workers of the World) a particularly feared syndicalist organization, and that IRA members in London were organizing the unemployed to raid labour exchanges. Much of the Cabinet's fear about a 'coming revolution' was self generated. The British workers as an entity never showed the four requirements: revolutionary

1 Home Secretary's Memorandum, Declaration of Termination of the War, 30 June, 1920, CP 3136. CAB 24/126.

2 ROR 40, 5 Feb., 1920, CP 579. CAB 24/97.


4 ROR 95, 31 March, 1921, CP 2667. CAB 24/120.
consciousness, class identity, total opposition to the existing socio-economic system and a perception of an alternative form of social organization that Michael Mann maintains are necessary for the emergence of a mass movement that seeks to fundamentally change society.¹

Large scale industrial militancy was a relatively short lived phenomenon: in 1918 there were 1,252 strikes resulting in six million working days lost, a year later 2,500,000 workers struck in 1,400 separate strikes which dramatically raised the number of lost working days to thirty four million² but by 1923 the total had sharply fallen to ten million³ as the post war recession began to bite. Yet unemployment, which reached two million in mid-1921, never really radicalized the workless who benefited from the new extension of unemployment insurance to cover most industrial categories. Lloyd George was surely the only European leader who paradoxically sought to defuse a potential General Strike situation not by reminding the leaders of the Triple Alliance of the might of the State but of its weakness,

"We are at your mercy, the army is disaffected and cannot be relied upon."⁴

And Lloyd George could take such a gamble, unthinkable

⁴ Quoted in Aneurin Bevan, *In Place of Fear*, (1952), 20.
in France or Germany because he knew that the social
democratic pragmatic Trade Union leaders did not seek
fundamental socio-economic change.

In Germany industrial militancy went far beyond the issue
of wage rates with large groups of armed workers seizing
and temporarily controlling much of the Ruhr. This type
of direct action, challenging the power of the state
itself, was quite foreign to British working class traditions as a result of their very different historical
evolution.¹ Only on the Clydeside and in Liverpool did
industrial militancy express itself in clashes with the
police and these were areas with large Irish communities,
containing many people socialized to regard political
violence as a legitimate tactic in certain circumstances,
for even the United Irish League paid homage to the
'pikemen of the 1798 Rising' and the abortive '1867 Fenian
Rising'. So intelligence reports about "Glasgow Sinn
Feiners who are closely connected with labour extremists"²
clearly worried Cabinet Ministers who knew that Glasgow
was one of the strongest IRA centres in the country and
a place where Republicans seemed to have had little
trouble in shipping arms to Ireland. A similar situation
existed in Liverpool, where the dockers defied their union
leadership and came out in a political strike to pressure

¹ For an account of the relatively tranquil evolution
of British politics see, Tom Critchley, The Conquest

² ROR 116, 28 Aug., 1921, CP 3179. CAB 24/125.
the Government to release IRA prisoners. Periodic discoveries of arms in these volatile areas were reminders to Ministers, that at least in these two cities, there existed the necessary equipment and determined men to make possible the formation of armed workers' groups. So every act of IRA sabotage in Britain was a vivid reminder to the Government of the presence of a potentially extremely dangerous new dimension to industrial militancy and social unrest, particularly as hard core revolutionaries like John MacLean maintained very good relations with their local IRA units. For the Government and much of the population the primary significance of IRA military activity in Britain was that it was occurring in a country which, notwithstanding the social tensions and growth in industrial militancy, was still such a relatively peaceful society that the Metropolitan Police Commissioner reviewing IRA activities in his 1921 Report could state,

"Apart from these cases of a kind which it is hoped will never re-occur, crimes of violence continue to be remarkably few in number."

The foreignness of the IRA campaign in the context of British society was emphasized by Justice Swift at Art O'Brien's trial,

"No doubt it came as a shock to the Jury to learn that in connection with this movement, England had been parcelled out into military areas."

At the start of the IRA campaign, the *Times* warned,"Sinn


Fein" should "clearly understand that England is not susceptible to intimidation". Yet the columns of the press repeatedly revealed the fear the IRA had generated by its activities with even anti-IRA public meetings being cancelled for concern of possible IRA retaliation, while the police were unable to persuade witnesses to some incidents to come forward and give evidence.

The overall impact of IRA activity in Britain 1919-23 should not be seen simply in quantative terms, but rather qualitatively, as a new manifestation of political unrest which embodied the potential of fundamentally changing the traditional nature of protest in Britain. Some Irish writers have sought to dismiss the significance of IRA offensive actions in Britain during the 1919-21 period by arguing they were essentially counter-productive in that they interferred with the logistical and intelligence operations, but this argument: which resembles the constant disputes between the different demands and requirements of the various British Intelligence and covert operations agencies during the Second World War, was largely

1 Times, 29 Nov., 1920,

2 "I understand that in some places, meetings on the Irish question which have been called, have been abandoned, owing to the fear that they would bring about Sinn Fein reprisals in the neighbourhood", Richard Dawson Report No. 18. 18 April, 1921, D. 9895.

3 Times, 7 June, 1921.

4 Intelligence collection essentially requires a relatively quiet environment, if it is to be conducted in the most effective manner, but direct covert and sabotage operations necessarily attract attention which may result in the exposure of intelligence networks. So there was constant organizational disputes between SIS and SOE over their respective tactical needs and contd,
motivated by a desire to enhance the reputation of Michael Collins, the Intelligence and Logistics supremo, at the expense of Rory O'Connor, the officer in charge of directing IRA operations in Britain and a Civil War opponent of Collins.1

IRA objectives in Britain were extremely limited, essentially they sought to respond to British reprisals in Ireland2 and in the context of our discussion: the verdict must be that the IRA did manage to make a reasonably effective response. Their activity in Britain undoubtedly aroused considerable feelings of hostility towards the Irish living in Britain which took many forms. In Rochdale this hostility evolved into a movement, "which has for its objective the organizing of the cotton workers to refuse to work with Irish people, whom they are certain are responsible for the fires":3

However as it is impossible to separate the hostility which arose from these specific incidents, from the general discontent stemming from the Irish anti-conscription campaign and the inability of the British army to crush the IRA, I will discuss this topic in the overall conclusion of my thesis.

operations; see David Stafford, 'The Detonator Concept: British Strategy. SOE and European Resistance After the Fall of France', Journal of Contemporary History, 10 (1975), 185-217, and M.R.D. Foot, Resistance, (1978), 158-60. There were even tensions between the prisoner-of-war escape organization, IS 9(D) and SIS who were concerned at the length of its networks and the number of helpers involved. See Airey Neave, Saturday at MI 9, (1969).


2 Ernie O'Malley, op. cit., 137, is very emphatic that this was the strategic objective of the IRA campaign in Britain.

3 ROR 94, 24 Feb., 1921. CP 2631, CAB 24/120.
CHAPTER 27

IRA Volunteers in Britain: A Socio-Economic Profile.

We have already examined the socio-economic composition of the ISDL branch membership (as recorded in the organization's 1922 branch census) and the leadership cadre (those deported in 1923). We will now consider the socio-economic composition of the participants in the Irish military campaign in Britain. Most of the male participants were volunteers in Oglaigh na h Eireann (IRA) and most of the women belonged to the Cumman na m Ban organization. Some were however merely Republican sympathizers but these were only engaged in providing facilities, accommodation for arms dumps, safe houses, and transport arrangements on the logistical side of operations. Our principal sources of information for our analysis of the socio-economic composition of those participating in the Irish military campaign in Britain are derived from trial reports as published, principally, in the Times, British and Irish Government intelligence reports and a list of the volunteers in a London IRA company. As a number of those listed as participants in military activities, notably in the list of convicted personnel, were deported in 1923 there is therefore some overlap with our earlier analysis of the socio-economic composition of the ISDL leadership cadre.
Table 1. Occupational Analysis of 57 Convicted Persons, Involved in Irish Military Activities in England and Wales 1918-1923

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>As % of total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled/Supervisory as % of Manual</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manual</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals as % of Non-Manual</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Occupational Analysis of South London IRA Company (1923)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>As % of total</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manual</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled/Supervisory as % of Manual</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Manual</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional as % of Non-Manual</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As only one of the convicted persons was female, it is not necessary to make separate tabulations for males and females as we did for the ISDL membership. The average age of the

1 See Appendix 3 for full details.
2 See Appendix 4 for full details.
convicted was 29 years\textsuperscript{1} but with an average age of 19.8 years\textsuperscript{2} the South London IRA volunteers were very much younger than the former. Comparing these two tables with Tables 5 and 6 (Chap 11) in our earlier socio-economic analysis of the ISDL branch membership and leadership cadre, we can readily observe that the manual/non-manual distribution of the convicted and IRA volunteers was much closer to that of the leadership cadre than the rank and file membership of the ISDL. The skilled/supervisory and unskilled division of the manual convicted and IRA volunteers was however closer to the ISDL rank and file membership than the leadership cadre though the percentage of professionals among the convicted was considerably higher than that in the ISDL leadership cadre.

Five of the ten professionals among the convicted were teachers (all male) and the other professionals included a solicitor, two engineers, a journalist and a chemist. There was also one student among the convicted but two of the IRA volunteers were college students and their officer commanding was a teacher. Eight of the convicted and seven of the IRA volunteers were clerks, but two of the convicted clerks were former Metropolitan police officers dismissed for striking. At least three of the convicted ran their own businesses. The relatively high proportion of professionals, particularly teachers, and white collar workers among the convicted and IRA volunteers is confirmed

\textsuperscript{1} Ages given for 53 individuals.
\textsuperscript{2} Ages given for 26 individuals.
by other evidence. An intelligence report concerning 16 men arrested in London and suspected of taking part in IRA activities in 1921, said "for the most part they belong to the lower middle class, minor civil servants and teachers etc.".¹ And Mr Justice Lash when sentencing a teacher, a clerk and a cable operator at the Old Bailey for IRA activities remarked, "it was almost incredible that men of the prisoners education and apparent ability should have even contemplated so grave a crime".²

The high non-manual/lower middle class socio-economic composition of the IRA in England 1918-23 as shown in Tables 1 and 2 may in fact actually underestimate this strata as a result of the type of source material utilized. In a large hierarchically structured guerrilla organization like the IRA those most likely to be arrested and convicted, and thus feature in Table 1, are the personnel involved in offensive or combat type operations and the quartermasters and others involved in the provision of arms dumps and logistical operations concerning the transport of munitions. Personnel with the type of intellectual ability associated with those non-manual occupations requiring literacy and numeracy tend to be engaged in the specialist tasks of intelligence collection, evaluation and operational planning which do not normally involve them in actual offensive operations or bring them into combat type situations. Such

¹ ROR 106. 19 May, 1921. CP 2952. CAB 24/123.
² Times, 19 Feb., 1921.
specialist officers are usually to be found at battalion or brigade rather than at company level and hence again are unlikely to feature in personnel lists as used to tabulate Table 2. I make this observation because most of the recent research attention on European guerrilla groups has tended to focus on the smaller new left, anarchist and ultra right groups who tend not to be organized on the rigid military hierarchical pattern adopted by the IRA. In many of these groups, especially the new left and anarchist groups there is a pronounced tendency not only to oppose the elitism associated with the standard military type mode of organization i.e., a hierarchical structure of graded officers, and rank and file, but to create an 'ultra democratic' structure whereby all, regardless of their ability or specialism are expected to participate in offensive or combat type operations. A popular saying among Belfast IRA volunteers "horses for courses" indicates their very different perspective of how a military organization can best utilize its personnel. And so as the specialist, Intelligence Officers (IO's), and Engineering Officers (explosives, electronics etc.) may often only handle arms during their basic training, and sometimes not even then, they are much less likely to be 'caught red handed' as it were and hence not figure in the trial reports used to construct Table 1.

Ever since Lucien de la Hodde, a French police agent, formulated in 1850 his nine category typology of
revolutionaries, the question of what motivates revolutionaries and particularly those who actively attempt to realize their ideals has fascinated historians, political scientists, psychologists and sociologists; unfortunately with very few tangible results to show for their research. This however is perhaps just as well for many researchers have like Hodde approached the problem - the very use of that term of course indicating a distinct value judgement - with the intention of being able to provide data of use to the state forces to counteract revolutionaries and frustrate their activities. Lombroso, a late 19th century student of revolutionary movements believed he had established a causal link between the violent anarchism of Southern Europe and pellagra, a protein deficiency particularly prevalent among the largely cereal eating Southern Europeans. Today, of course, no researcher worthy of that status, would even entertain such a hypothesis yet equally nonsensical hypotheses have been advanced to explain why some people become armed revolutionaries today. Women, in particular, are especially prone to this type of 'research'. Thus, according to the psychologist Lothar von Balluseck, women guerrillas often tend to be 'rebelling against their father's authority, are aggressive, try to be more masculine than their male comrades and in the process lose their sex drives.

1 Lucien de la Hodde, Histoire de Societies Secrets, (Paris, 1850), and also see Martin Waldman, 'The Revolutionary as Criminal in 19th Century France', Science and Society, 37(1973/4), 31-43.

2 E. Lombroso, Il Delitto Politico e la Revoluzioni, (Torino, 1890).
and become infertile". In this statement we have virtually the entire range of Freudian cliches except for the penis substitute and no doubt some researcher will soon advance the hypothesis that the Kalashnikov AK47 assault rifle serves as the penile substitute for women guerrillas. And lest it be thought that only a man could seriously advance such a ridiculous hypothesis, a Professor Helga Einselle is on record as claiming that women guerrillas in the process of disregarding their female inhibitions (whatever that implies) become "irrational". Both these researchers seem to consider the German Red Army Faction, the Italian Brigate Rosse, as typical of all women guerrillas and see women guerrillas as a phenomenon of recent origin. But many women belonged to the 19th century Russian Narodniks and the Jewish groups fighting the British in Palestine. The vast majority of these appear to have subsequently led 'normal' lives once the desired changes they fought for had been accomplished. No one to the best of my knowledge has yet investigated the growing involvement of women in the current guerrilla warfare in Ireland but my own impressionistic account of the considerable number of women IRA, Cumman na m Ban and Irish National Liberation Army

1 and 2 Both these quotes are from a feature on "How to Spot the Terror Girls", Daily Mirror, 20 Sept., 1978.


volunteers that I have known totally contradicts Balluseck and Einselle's opinions; they are feminists yes but also very feminine.

Nielson has advanced a frustration-aggression hypothesis to explain the psychological factors responsible for recruitment into the IRA. In the same vein of analysis Watson quotes British, Israeli, American and Korean studies of military personnel that appear to indicate certain definite psychological traits in that category of person termed a 'fighter'. Bakunin in his 'Revolutionary Catechism' postulated the concept of the revolutionary as the totally dedicated individual, the man "with no interests but revolution", the "man apart from society". And the novelist Leon Uris has vividly expressed the belief that a minority, and it is a very small minority of people possess the type of personality so strong that they will fight regardless of the hopelessness of the situation:

"He who is left in that ghetto is the one man in a thousand in any age, in any culture who through some mysterious working of forces within his soul will stand in defiance against any master. He is that one human in a thousand whose indomitable spirit cannot bow. He is the one man in a thousand who will not walk quietly to the Unschulglutz." (Assembly point for the Warsaw Jews en route to Treblinka).

McCormack has focussed on the motivations of


revolutionaries\(^1\) as have most psychologists\(^2\) but the social psychologist Davies sees the recruitment of revolutionaries as a response to the 'gap' between their expectations, ideals and the societal reality. His 'J Curve' is an ambitious attempt to formulate a generalized explanation of why revolutions succeed and fail.\(^3\) This issue has also deeply preoccupied many political scientists\(^4\) and sociologists, who have themselves even been blamed by one Old Bailey Judge for the emergence of armed revolutionaries.\(^5\) Relative Deprivation\(^6\) has been a particularly favored sociological concept to account for the growth of political violence in Ireland\(^7\) and America\(^8\) yet as Pinard observes

contd


5 Mr Justice James in sentencing a number of alleged Angry Brigade members in 1973 said, "Undoubtedly a warped understanding of sociology has brought you to the state in which you are" quoted in Christopher Dobson and Ronald Payne, *The Weapons of Terror*, (1979), 59.


"deprivation does not necessarily and often does not generate action".\(^1\) Laqueur quotes a massive study of political violence in 84 countries that concludes by observing,

"political instability is curvilinearly related to the level of coerciveness of the political regime: the probability of a high level of political instability increases with mid levels of coerciveness, insufficient to be a deterrent to aggression but sufficient to increase the level of systemic frustration".\(^2\)

Counter insurgency researchers dispute the extent to which socio-economic conditions and ideological convictions influence armed revolutionary participation. Larkin, the British psychological warfare expert in the 1950's Malayan campaign, argued that people joined the MRLA purely for material and not for ideological reasons\(^3\) but Molnar, who has studied 24 guerrilla wars, strongly suggests that socio-economic factors and ideological convictions are both important\(^4\) while Halperin has called revolutionary guerrilla warfare "a vigorous reaction against economic stagnation and social putrefication".\(^5\) Brigadier Michael Calvert, a counter insurgency expert who founded the Malayan Scouts (the direct ancestor of the 22nd SAS), after conducting a

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2 Walter Laqueur 'Interpretations of Terrorism', Journal of Contemporary History, 12(1977), 1-42.

3 Quoted in Watson, op. cit., 348.


5 Ernst Halperin, Terrorism in Latin America, (Beverley Hills, 1976), 7-8.
wide ranging study of the mobilization process in guerrilla warfare, concluded by observing it is impossible to formulate any generalized pattern of motivation or environmental factors conducive to involvement.\textsuperscript{1} It is a conclusion shared by Laqueur, who frankly confesses "the search for a terrorist personality is a fruitless one" and observes after evaluating a mass of available studies "all that can be said with any degree of confidence is that terrorism was (and is) a pursuit of young people and that in most other respects the differences between terrorists are more pronounced than the features they may have in common".\textsuperscript{2} I share that conclusion although I reject the highly value orientated, subjective, term 'terrorist', believing like Major General Clutterbuck that "whether the guerrilla is a hero or a terrorist lies in the eyes of the beholder".\textsuperscript{3} My supervisor has suggested after reading the preliminary draft of this section that I have not been successful as a sociologist in presenting an adequate sociological explanation for why people join the IRA particularly its units in Britain. The problem is that, unlike most sociologists, I have known quite a number of IRA and INLA volunteers both in Ireland and Britain. And hence find it impossible to construct an adequate typology of these individuals or even to isolate in any meaningful sense

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{1} Mars and Minerva, (Regimental Journal of the SAS), June, 1975.
\textsuperscript{2} Walter Laqueur, Terrorism, (1977), 129-30.
\textsuperscript{3} Richard Clutterbuck, Protest and the Urban Guerrilla, (1973), 143.
\end{flushleft}
the factors involved in their personal mobilization process. For some the decision to join was primarily the result of ideological convictions, the culmination of a political socialization process. For others the decision to join was not made in such a positive manner but rather as a counter-reaction to social and economic injustice and discrimination, together with the repressive activities of the police and army. Many have entered the Castlereagh Interrogation Centre in Belfast without any strong political convictions and have left days later with the firm intention of joining the IRA. A few joined for personal kicks, for them the IRA was just a bigger gang; but this type of individual tends now to be weeded out by the much more stringent selection procedures employed in recent years. A few of those convicted and serving prison sentences for political activities would have probably ended up in prison as ordinary criminals had they not joined the IRA or INLA but the vast majority would not have. Their occupations covered the entire range of the socioeconomic spectrum from unemployed to owning their own businesses, from labourers to priests; their educational levels ranging from elementary school to postgraduate. The IRA has been a fact of life in Ireland for several generations; the insurrectionary tradition from which it springs, for centuries. "Many Irish radicals deplore the

1 See Peter Taylor, Beating The Terrorists?, (1980).

2 Also see Brigadier Frank Glover, Northern Ireland: Future Terrorist Trends (Published by N.I.H.Q., Lisburn, 1979 but distributed by the Belfast Brigade IRA). This very frank assessment of the IRA was intended for a very limited, top level circulation but one copy, numbered no. 39, fell into the hands of the IRA who have made it available to interested parties.
existence of the IRA, for they say it draws the best young men of every generation into its ranks. .... the IRA-Irish Republicanism is a creed. You may disbelieve it, discredit it, say what you will about it; in the end it will elude all your best efforts to destroy it".\(^1\) Dr Cronin the writer of this statement speaks with the considerable authority of a political scientist and historian who himself is a former IRA Chief of Staff (1956-58).

The material used to compile Tables 1 and 2 does not permit an assessment of the extent to which the IRA membership in Britain was not born in Ireland but all the indications point to a high second and third generation involvement as in the case of the ISDL. If so history seems to be repeating itself. The first Chief of Staff of the Provisional IRA was Sean MacStiofain, born in London as John Stephenson. The two permanently London based members of the last IRA active service unit to be arrested in Britain were both English born women in responsible white collar jobs. It would seem that the IRA has embarked on a conscious strategy of entrusting its logistical operations, the provision of safehouses, dumps etc., to second generation people who are thus immune from deportation under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

\(^1\) *Eire-Ireland*, 6(1971), 177.
Part VIII  A Community Apart?: The Irish in Britain and the War of Independence

In this final section of my thesis I will attempt to answer several questions: was the response of the Irish in Britain to the events of 1916-21 unique in the historical experience of the Irish in Britain or have there been similar upsurges of interest in Irish politics? Have any other ethnic communities found themselves in a similar position to the Irish in Britain during their War of Independence and if so, did they respond in a similar manner. In Chapter 28 I will explore the evolution of Irish politics in Britain in the last 60 years but as my primary purpose is to illustrate the ebb-flow sentiment tide of organization development this will inevitably restrict my investigation to particular periods and organizations. In Chapter 29 I will conclude this thesis by comparing the attitudes and responses of the Irish community in Britain, during their War of Independence, to the Jewish and Cypriot communities in Britain and the Algerians in France when these groups found themselves in a similar position to the Irish. The lack of published studies of these groups has forced me to do my own research which of necessity focusses on certain themes. Finally I will reconsider, in the light of my research, some of the theoretical perspectives examined in Chapters 3 and 4.
The Inheritance of the ISDL and the UIL: Irish Politics in Britain 1928-1983

Art O'Brien never again involved himself in any Irish political organization in Britain after the dissolution of the Central London ISDL Branch. The traumatic events of 1923-25 left him an embittered man, brooding over his former colleagues' defections from the ISDL. His alienation from political organizations was so great he refused to accept the Presidency of the Roger Casement Repatriation Committee, when it was formed in 1935, unless the Committee dissolved itself and formed a new organization excluding all political groupings. As O'Brien had feared the presence of Sinn Fein members in this Committee prevented any effective appeal to the British Government concerning the repatriation of Casement's remains and also ensured that the Fianna Fail Government adopted a cautious attitude towards the organization; fearing it could be taken over by its opponents and used in a new anti-Irish Government campaign in Britain. O'Brien's invitation to become the Committee's President did however indicate that he still retained a certain popularity in the Irish community in Britain, sufficiently strong for the Irish High Commissioner in London to advise his Government not to proceed with

1 See the correspondence of the Roger Casement Repatriation Committee, Ms 10,222 (NLI) and its Minute Book, Ms 9516.
2 Casement's remains were repatriated by the 1966 Labour Government.
its plans to bankrupt O'Brien in a bid to enforce judgement against him for the Dail funds spent during the Civil War, as according to Dulanty this action would certainly anger many Irish people in Britain.\footnote{Notes of Conversation with Dulanty', O'Brien Ms 8427.} De Valera himself when he came to power in 1932 ignored a suggestion that O'Brien should spearhead a new Irish Government propaganda drive in Britain but was subsequently persuaded to appoint O'Brien as Irish Ambassador to France and Spain, 1935-36. O'Brien in retirement opposed De Valera's anti-IRA, Offences Against the State Act in 1939 and drifted into the proto-Fascist Alitiri na Aiserge (Architects of Resurrection) organization.\footnote{Alitiri was composed mostly of Gaelic League members who favoured a militant anti-partitionist strategy. O'Brien was never a Fascist as such.} This "devoted soldier of Ireland" was buried with full military and governmental honours in Dublin in 1949.\footnote{See the President of Ireland's oration, \textit{Irish Press}, 13 Aug., 1949.}

Unlike his close colleague, Sean McGrath remained actively involved in the Irish political milieu in Britain after the dissolution of the ISDL. A leading member of the Old IRA Association he devoted much of his energy to having Field Marshal Wilson's assassination recognized as an official action executed on Michael Collins' order.\footnote{Irish Democrat, Feb., 1948.} He also contributed occasional articles on Irish history
to the Connolly Association papers, *Irish Democrat/Freedom* although deeply suspicious about their communist links. Sean McGrath refused to become involved in the Anti-Partition League established in 1938, largely through the initiative of Fianna Fail emissaries. The combination of the 1939-40 IRA Bombing Campaign in Britain and the Second World War effectively forced the new organization on to the shelf for the duration of hostilities. With the return of peace the APL aroused itself from its six year long slumber but it might well have remained just another small Irish political organization, with poor prospects, had not events in Ireland provided it with a forceful relaunch; that almost overnight catapulted it into the forefront of the Irish community in Britain.

After 16 years of uninterrupted office Fianna Fail was finally forced out by an uneasy coalition of former IRA members, sufficiently alienated by De Valera's executions of their comrades to ally themselves with their old Civil War foes. Unable to agree on economic policies the new Inter-Party Government decided to play the nationalist card by mobilizing "all the moral energies of the Irish people at home and abroad towards bringing Partition to an end". A similar appeal 30 years before had resulted in the birth


2 *Dail Debates* 114 (1949), 3; and see Patrick Keatinge, *The Formulation of Irish Foreign Policy*, (Dublin, 1973), 179 and 272.
of the Irish Self Determination League and now backed up by the unprecedented support of both Government and Opposition (Fianna Fail was certainly not going to permit Fine Gael to steal its 'republican' clothes and so De Valera was quickly dispatched on a barnstorming speaking tour of Britain) the Anti-Partition League literally blasted into orbit. Old ISDL leaders, like Sean McGrath, found their earlier personal experience of meteoric organizational growth in demand once again. McGrath became the General Secretary of a much revitalized Anti-Partition League. It quickly established branches in areas devoid of all Irish activity for many years and recruited an influx of members, just as the ISDL had done in its heyday.¹

Moreover the political environment appeared so much more favourable than 30 years previously. In place of an un­challengable right wing coalition there was now a Labour Government, in such strength that it dominated Parliament, and could normally expect to win divisions with majorities of a hundred or so. But once again history repeated itself; Lloyd George built the Partition wall and Labour in 1949 reinforced it with armour plating. Its Government of Ireland Act 1949 guaranteed the continuing presence of Northern Ireland within the United Kingdom for as long as the Stormont Parliament so wished. The Labour Government's

¹ The Anti-Partition League had 120 branches, see Irish Post, 18 July, 1981.
reply\textsuperscript{1} to the Irish Government's decision to proclaim Ireland as a Republic, outside of the British Commonwealth, was to give the Northern Irish Unionists a 'veto' to prevent any political progress in Ireland towards ending a Partition settlement originally, only reluctantly, accepted under the threat of war. The Act did not enjoy a smooth progress through Parliament; some 200 or more Labour MPs are estimated to have voted against or abstained on their Government's measure.\textsuperscript{2} According to Gordon it was probably the biggest backbench revolt on a non-British issue of that Parliament, even surpassing the divisive Palestinian votes.\textsuperscript{3} The revolt was not however confined to the backbenchers, as five junior ministers resigned rather than support what their Home Secretary claimed was a "very great and generous act towards Ireland".\textsuperscript{4}

The Anti-Partition League's response to Labour's generosity was to promise "energetic measure to ensure that Labour MPs who support such a provision would not receive

\textsuperscript{1} For the background to the Labour Government's attitude to the new Republic of Ireland see the Cabinet Minutes in CAB 21/13 and the Northern Ireland Cabinet records CAB 9B/267/6 (PRONI).

\textsuperscript{2} \textit{Daily Mirror}, 1 June, 1949.

\textsuperscript{3} Michael Gordon, \textit{Conflict and Consensus in Labour's Foreign Policy 1914-1965}, (Stanford, 1969), 211.

\textsuperscript{4} 465 HC Debs, Col. 389.
the support of Irish voters". Some local branches, in Scotland and Liverpool, interpreted this statement as authorization to put up anti-Labour APL candidates in the 1950 election, mostly in areas with a very small Irish born population. The result was a series of humiliatedly low votes for the APL candidates and the organization overall never recovered from this debacle. Much of Labour's hostility towards the new Republic of Ireland and its corresponding support for the Northern Unionist regime stemmed from Irish neutrality in the War. Some of the APL leadership, notably Brigadier Gowan-Smith, now tried to link the ending of Irish Partition with future Irish participation in the new Western European Defence Alliance at a time when the Cold War, thanks to Korea and the Berlin Airlift, looked like becoming a 'hot war'. Overtures were made towards the Conservatives and an organizational ban on communist involvement in the League was used to expel the Connolly Association members who had been very active in its activities. By the early 1950's the APL had lost all its earlier momentum, dynamism and promise, with support steadily eroding and branches becoming moribund in many areas. Its sister organization in London was similarly in decline.


2 According to H. Nicolas, The General Election of 1950, (1951), 258, of the four areas where APL candidates stood in 1950, only Gorbals had a sizeable Irish born vote.

3 The 3 candidates polled 5,084 votes.
Northern Ireland itself survived until the 1960's,\(^1\) slowly evolving into the Nationalist Party.

But the Anti-Partition League of Great Britain lingered on for another 25 years after it passed its peak, albeit in a very truncated form. The Irish Self Determination League decided to disband when it finally realized that no one in Ireland or Britain cared whether it existed or not. The Irish Government who had effectively created the APL however kept it artificially alive as a potentially useful organization, should there ever be any future upsurge of political interest among the Irish in Britain. The League's organizer was given a community liason post at the Irish Embassy and became a regular presence whenever a new grouping with potential appeared on the scene.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's Irish Governments had seen no need to maintain a support organization in Britain. It was generally felt that such an organization could well become a two edged sword as it might be taken over by Republicans. The foresight of this policy reversal in maintaining the APL, later the United Ireland Association, paid ample dividends in 1969, when the growth of the Civil Rights Movement in Northern Ireland and the sectarian counter reaction against it, sparked off a new political interest among the Irish in Britain not seen since the heyday of the APL. The United Irish Association speedily

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responded to this new development by sponsoring the formation of an Irish Unity and Civil Rights Committee to coordinate the fund raising activities of some 40 organizations (mostly cultural and social). The existence of this umbrella body to a considerable extent pre-empted similar initiatives by various Republican groups and ensured that most of the funds raised for Northern Ireland Relief between 1969-71 did go only to groups approved by the Irish Government. With the dramatic downturn in the community's interest in Irish politics, following the commencement of a new military campaign, the United Ireland Association has been allowed to virtually lapse.¹

Both the ISDL and APL owed their existence and rapid growth to the stimuli provided by new political developments in Ireland. These external developments dramatically raised the threshold of political involvement in the Irish community in Britain. The operational environments of both organizations were thus effectively beyond their own influence to change when necessary. Both organizations could cite events that effectively functioned as fire extinguishers dampening the fervour of the blaze that had fired their formation; the Treaty, Civil War and the Government of Ireland Act 1949. The joint experiences of both organizations, particularly their relatively short

¹ By 1978 the United Ireland Association had been reduced to "a few hundred members" in its Manchester, Sheffield, Leeds and London branches, see Irish Post, 9 July, 1978.
peak periods would seem to indicate that mass membership Irish political organizations in Britain can only be created and maintained - and then only for a short period - when there is a particularly high level of community interest in political affairs, generated by the emergence of a new political development in Ireland. This ebb-flow tidal relationship between the homeland and exile movements was the crucial factor in the rise and fall of both the ISDL and APL and the equivalent organizations throughout the Irish Diaspora.

The United Irish League does not fit so tightly into this schemata but, unlike the former organizations, it was part of the British political system with both national and local legislative representation. Yet its successor, the Irish Democratic League failed, as we have already observed, to take off. By the time of its founder's death - T.P. O'Connor in 1929 - there appears to have been only IDL branches in Manchester, North East Lancashire and Yorkshire; to judge from the lists of organizational wreaths sent.¹ Irish Democratic League Councillors in Liverpool had four years previously reconstituted themselves as the Centre Party. This development was strongly encouraged by Archbishop Keating eager to create a Catholic defence pressure group, particularly on educational issues.²

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¹ Catholic Herald, 23 Nov., 1929, and Liverpool Post and Mercury issues of 18th - 23rd Nov., 1929.
² See Waller, op. cit., and Roberts, op. cit., for a detailed examination of the Centre Party.
But its membership and supporters gradually drifted into the Labour Party; a process actively encouraged by Keating's successor, Archbishop Downey (in 1928). Sectarian politics were to plague Liverpool's municipal life for another two decades but by the time of T.P. O'Connor's death, in 1929, the principal Irish Nationalist contribution to the political life of their city was to have 'Catholicized' its Labour Party.¹

Protecting the interests of the Irish community in Britain and the defence of Catholic interests in general were the twin planks of the IDL. The second objective was substantially thwarted by the virulent opposition of Cardinal Bourne - who disliked any manifestation of a high Catholic political profile. Yet from the mid 1920's onwards, the idea of 'Catholic Power' did gain some influential support, especially from converts like Charles Diamond who, increasingly concerned about what he called the growth of "communist influence" in the Labour Party, editorially switched his previous blanket support for Labour to specific pro-Catholic interest candidates, irrespective of their party affiliation. As the decade proceeded the Catholic Herald became increasingly "Anglicized";² its coverage of Irish Affairs, both in Britain and Ireland declined so substantially that by 1928 a reference to the "National Feastday"³

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¹ Waller, op. cit., 323.
³ See Irish Independent, 10 Feb., 1934 and 12 June, 1934.
meant St George's Day and not St Patrick's Day as it would have earlier. It would be tempting to assert that Diamond, who after all had always been a convinced assimilationist, had engineered this editorial shift to prevent either a loss of established readers no longer interested in Irish affairs, or to attract a more general Catholic readership. Unfortunately the declining financial fortunes of the Catholic Herald do not substantiate such a hypothesis. It is however, impossible to ascertain to what extent the Catholic Herald chain lost readership and advertising revenue to a basic loss of interest in Irish and Catholic affairs, or to dissatisfaction with Diamond's increasingly eccentric editorial policy, characterized by virulent personal vendettas that often led him into the libel courts. Just before his death Diamond libelled Mrs Sheehy Skeffington - the widow of the 1916 pacifist murdered by a British officer (subsequently found to be insane by his court martial) - by alleging she was collecting a British pension while speaking on Republican platforms. After successfully winning her legal action¹ she was forced to apply for the compulsory liquidation of the Catholic Herald holding company, New Catholic Press², when Diamond's executors refused to pay her libel damages. The ensuing High Court case³ revealed the full extent of

¹ See Irish Independent, 10 Feb., 1934 and 12 June, 1934.
² See the London Gazette, 7 Mar., 1935.
³ See Sheehy Skeffington Papers, Ms 22,278, 24,171 and 24,116 for the court proceedings and correspondence.
how Diamond, largely by his own eccentric editorial policy, poor business judgement in his declining years, together with unwillingness to delegate responsibility, had effectively destroyed the business empire he himself had built up from nothing.  

The United Irish League and its successor, the Irish Democratic League, have left few apparent signs to enable future generations to visualize the extent of the influence they exerted on the Irish community in Britain for half a century. Outside of Scotland, where former Irish nationalist supporters played a major role in fostering the development of modern Scottish Nationalism; traditional Irish nationalist support in Britain was largely absorbed into the Labour Party. Yet I would argue that the particularistic form of Catholic nationalism as pursued by the UIL has continued to exert an influence in British politics in the shape of the Knights of St Columba. Largely based on the pattern of the older established Knights of St Columbanus in Ireland—a Catholic equivalent of freemasonry but with an organizational structure owing much to the Irish Republican Brotherhood's passion for secrecy.  

1 Faced with a decline in newspaper revenue of over half between 1924-1932, Diamond squandered his remaining resources on a paper mill which constantly lost money.  


3 Evelyn Bolster (a nun) has written the official history of the Knights of St Columbanus, (Dublin, 1979). Her conclusion that the Knights have not operated as a covert political pressure group is not however one that many Irish journalists would share.
The Knights of St Columba\(^1\) started off in Glasgow with only 22 members in 1922.\(^2\) The following year they established an outpost in Liverpool where all six of the founding Knights were Irish Nationalist Councillors. By 1923 when they established their first Council in London the Knights had already 13,000 members\(^3\) and increased to 20,000 only three years later.\(^4\) It is perhaps not totally coincidental that the Knights of St Columba first emerged in the traditional Irish Nationalist strongholds in Britain, or that prominent nationalists were involved in the formation of their local councils, or that their period of rapid expansion coincided with the declining Irish interest in political organizations in the aftermath of the Treaty and the Civil War. Formed to protect Catholic schools and morality the fiercely anti-communist Knights have effectively functioned as the right wing equivalent of the Militant Tendency in the Labour Party, particularly in areas with a high Irish Catholic membership,\(^5\) such as Liverpool where T.P. O'Connor's successor David Logan was

\(^1\) It may be of some significance that St Columba was the Irish missionary who brought Catholicism to Scotland.

\(^2\) See W.J. Loughrey, Knights of St Columba, (Glasgow, 1969) - an official Knights' publication.

\(^3\) Catholic Herald, 24 May, 1924.

\(^4\) See Lawrence Seglias, Knights Errant: First Fifty Years of Council 128 (South West London), (1975), another Knights' publication.

\(^5\) In 1925 an Irish Labour League in Cardiff was formed under the influence of the Knights to "protect Catholic interests", Catholic Herald, 24 Sept., 1927, it subsequently merged into the Labour Party.
one of the first recruits to the Knights.

The Knights of St Columba have sought throughout their existence to keep the Irish in Britain firmly on the right of the political spectrum. The Connolly Association have endeavoured, not so successfully, to direct their interests in the opposite direction. I have already remarked, several times, on the extremely tenuous claim that the Connolly Association is the direct successor to the Irish Self Determination League. Unfortunately Jackson has given credence to this claim\(^1\), which is really little more than a tactical attempt to camouflage its real origins. The Connolly Association in fact evolved out of the London Branch of the Republican Congress, formed in 1933 by left wingers who had failed to radicalize the IRA\(^2\) and the Irish Section of the League Against Imperialism, as the Connolly Clubs (named after the Irish Republican Socialist leader). Shortly after their formation in 1938 they published the first issue of *Irish Freedom* which continues as the *Irish Democrat*. A technically well produced publication it has for over 45 years appeared every month, except when a fortuitous Luftwaffe bomb destroyed the July 1941 issue, in which the paper switched to supporting the war, in line with the Communist Party reorientation in the aftermath of the invasion of Russia. It has provided a platform for writers of the calibre of

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1 See George Gilmore, *The Irish Republican Congress* (Cork, 1974).

2 J.A. Jackson, *op. cit.*, 125.
Sean O'Casey, Liam Flaherty and Donal MacAmlaigh together with a consistently high standard of political journalism of a pronounced left wing orientation.

Jackson has also chosen to strongly refute the persistent claims that the Connolly Association is a "Communist Party Front"; but a detailed scrutiny of the Connolly Association's history and its prominent members strongly suggests that it amply fulfils Clew's typological identification of Communist Front organizations. Members of the Association, including virtually all its leaders, were either members of the Communist Party of Great Britain or its Irish equivalents. That is not to say that the Connolly Association has always slavishly followed the Communist Party line; the Association supported Ireland's right to remain neutral during the Second World War, though this did produce some tensions among the more pro-Soviet members. The Connolly Association and the Irish Democrat shares the same relationship with the Communist Party as the Union of Cypriots in England and their paper Vema.

Diligent and consistent soliciting of the Irish vote in Britain for Labour has ensured that the Connolly Association

1 J.A. Jackson, op. cit., 126.

2 Clew, op. cit., 93; he in fact cited the Irish Democrat as an example of a publication produced by a British Communist controlled organization, 281.

is guaranteed a respectable number of Labour MPs, Peers and Trade Union leaders whenever it required sponsors for conferences on Partition etc. Quiet lobbying, rather than the noisy demonstrations favoured by most other Irish political organizations in Britain, is the Connolly Association's preferred mode of operation. While Connolly Association members have played prominent roles in the Irish Labour Party on their return to Ireland, the Association has generally supported Fianna Fail, as the most progressive major party in Ireland, and opposed the periodic Labour Party presence in the coalition governments dominated by Fine Gael (the Southern Irish equivalent of the Conservative Party; "Fianna Fail as a radical populist party has no British equivalent.") But whatever Government has been in power in Dublin, the Association has consistently argued against anti-Irish Government demonstrations in Britain as "fouling their own nest by making a show of their own embassy." In return Irish Governments, particularly Fianna Fail, have adroitly refused Catholic Hierarchy requests to officially condemn the Association as a "communist organization."

This non interventionist tactic and its gradualistic, or 'stages', reformist strategy has often brought the

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1 Both Justin Keating and Michael O'Leary of the 1973-77 Coalition Government had been Connolly Association members.

2 Irish Democrat, Jun., 1962.

3 See Bishop Farren's claim; Manchester Guardian, 13 Feb., 1956.
Association into conflict with the Republican Movement and its British support groups. Irish Republicanism has traditionally disliked competing organizations; particularly, left wing ones, during its rightist period of 1935-65, and at times its supporters have physically attacked Connolly Association members.\(^1\) The Connolly Association has resolutely refused to retaliate in kind; not that its members lack the capability to do so, as some of its staunchest members joined after serving sentences in prison and internment camps in Ireland for IRA membership. But after their release, and emigration to Britain, despairing of sterile apolitical militarism, they preferred to join a more politically orientated organization. These defections, of course increased Republican bitterness towards the Association, which generally was viewed in the same light as Sinn Fein regarded the ISDL. For its part the Association has generally condemned, but not too stridently, IRA military actions as tactically incorrect and substitutions for popular agitation, while often being in the forefront of the various amnesty campaigns, especially when the military actions have ceased.

In his argument with De Valera in 1925, Art O'Brien had argued that organizations in Britain should be totally independent of influence and control from Ireland. The Connolly Association has always stressed this argument

\(^1\) See *Irish Democrat*, Jan. and Sept., 1950 for particular nasty assaults.
and so the unsolicited affiliation of a Belfast branch caused it considerable qualms. But the Association itself played a very important role in the ' politicization of the IRA' following the abortive Border Campaign, of 1956-1962.

Two Connolly Association members, Roy Johnson and Anthony Coughlan formed the Wolfe Tone Society, which as an IRA ' think tank' played a seminal role in formulating the post 1965 Republican strategy, of emphasizing political agitation, and down playing the traditional role of the IRA. In the south of Ireland the new strategy took the form of land reform protests, 'fish ins' (on rivers owned mostly by foreign interests) and the occasional military assistance to workers involved in struggles with multinational companies. In the North the Republicans threw their support behind the Civil Rights Movement. The first Irish Civil Rights marches were actually undertaken by the Connolly Association, in Britain, in the early 1960s, and Association members were active in the formation of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, in Ireland.

1 In 1949 the Old Park, Belfast, Labour Party Branch disaffiliated from the Party in protest against its Partitionist policy and formed a Connolly Association Branch, Irish Democrat, Sept., 1949.


3 Cf. from London to Liverpool, Birmingham and Nottingham.

The strategy of encouraging discontented Catholic workers and unemployed and their socio-economically frustrated middle class on to the streets in 1968/69 was a resounding success as such; but it had failed to adequately predict and prepare for the ensuing Protestant counter reaction. The few IRA units in Belfast were consequently unable to do more than provide harassing fire against the armed Protestant mobs; who followed the RUC armoured cars when they attacked the Falls and Ardoyne areas on the night of August 14th, 1969. In the recriminations that followed, few Belfast volunteers will ever forget the shame of the wall slogans proclaiming "I Ran Away" painted by angry Catholics, who did not realize that their traditional defence force had been deliberately deprived of arms; to ensure they would not engage in military offensive actions and thus disrupt the implementation of the new strategy. Inevitably when the IRA split in the aftermath of this humiliation, the new Provisional Army Council, mostly composed of the older and more right wing elements, specifically singled out the Connolly Association strategists as the authors of the demilitarization policy and accused the Association of deliberately fomenting the split. This, as most

1 See Violence, ibid., and M. Farrell, op. cit. 257-63.
2 For years Belfast volunteers were told by the IRA GHQ staff that there were no arms left in the Southern dumps but they were literally deluged with weapons in the immediate aftermath of the August Pogroms and these arms could only have come from existing Southern dumps.
of the present left wing leadership of the IRA today privately admit, was not true. The Connolly Association in fact condemned the hasty speed with which the new strategy had been foisted on the Republican Movement\(^1\) and tried to promote a re-unification.\(^2\) Subsequently as the former 'Official Republicans' have 'de republicanized' their image;\(^3\) the Connolly Association has become much more sympathetic to the emerging left wing Provisional IRA's conceptualization of an all embracing 'people's war' for the national and economic liberation of Ireland.

Connolly Association members helped to form the Campaign for Democracy in Ulster in 1965, a mostly Labour Party grouping, and the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) but subsequently opposed the establishment of its offspring in Britain.\(^5\) The Association also opposed

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2 Ibid., May, 1971.

3 The 'Officials' have gone through the elaborate pretence of disbanding their military wing and have turned their Sinn Fein into the Workers Party which supports both the existence of N. Ireland and Irish membership in the EEC. Both Coughlan and Johnson severed their connection with the 'Officials' and a subsequent split led to the formation of the Irish Republican Socialist Party and the Irish National Liberation Army who opposed the 'Officials' new strategy.

4 It had the support of 64 MPs.

5 NICRA established 13 branches in London and a few others elsewhere in Britain. The Connolly Association was however involved in the creation of local Civil Rights, and Campaign for Social Justice in Northern Ireland branches.
the creation of Peoples Democracy branches in Britain.¹ Peoples Democracy, the largely student based radical wing of the Civil Rights Movement was regarded with deep suspicion by the Connolly Association as a Trotskyist ultra leftist grouping.² Its most influential leaders were members of the tiny Young Socialist Alliance,³ a grouping closely linked to the small Marxist, London based, Irish Workers Group: a grouping of older former IRA volunteers and younger intellectuals. The Irish Workers Group, of whose existence most of the Irish in Britain were totally unaware of, is a textbook example of the vastly disproportionate influence a tiny exile group can sometimes exercise on homeland politics.⁴

The Connolly Association subsequently accused Peoples

¹ Peoples Democracy established a branch in London and most of the finance for its dramatic 1969 electoral intervention came from British student groups.


³ I was a member of the Young Socialist Alliance but was too young to be involved in the Irish Workers Group. Paul Arthur, The Peoples Democracy, (Belfast, 1974) is a participant observation study by an author who was a member of neither organization.

⁴ The Irish Workers Group was closely involved in the formation of Saor Eire, a left wing military group, utilized by Fianna Fail Government Ministers in 1969-70 to send arms to Northern Ireland. The IWG ideology has subsequently influenced the left wing leadership of the Provisional IRA while the British and Irish Communist Organization, an IWG splinter group, has subsequently influenced some Northern Irish loyalist leaders with its 'Two Nations' perspective.
Democracy of escalating the pace of the Civil Rights struggle to the point where a loyalist backlash became inevitable in August 1969. The events of the summer of 1969 in Northern Ireland generated a dramatic upsurge of interest among the Irish in Britain. But once again the Connolly Association was largely bypassed, its gradualist strategy being overtaken by the pace of events. The Irish Workers Group organized solidarity strikes on several London building sites¹ and sponsored the formation of the Irish Solidarity Campaign, backed by most of the non-Communist Party left wing in Britain. Connolly Association attempts to form an umbrella organization for the Irish in Britain² were brushed aside by the activities of the Irish Unity and Civil Rights Committee, the successor of the Anti-Partition League which a generation before had also so effectively displaced the Association. This Committee's fund raising activities were however soon surpassed by the revitalized Republican support organizations,³ Clann na h Eireann (Officials) and Sinn Fein (Provisionals). Both organizations experienced an influx of new recruits (particularly the Provisionals) as the street rioting against the RUC gave way to guerrilla warfare against the British troops sent in to bolster the Northern State

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³ While the size has obviously fluctuated there have always been IRA units in Britain and support organizations, sometimes not always with obviously Republican titles, in Britain since 1919. See IRA Adjutant General's Report on the Organization in Britain, (1938), McGarrity Papers, Ms 7544, (NLI).
forces.

As widespread guerrilla warfare erupted in the North of Ireland, the Connolly Association found itself, along with the declining purely Civil Rights groups in Britain, soliciting signatures for a Petition calling for a new Bill of Rights in Northern Ireland while the Provisionals were openly soliciting money to buy arms to overthrow that state. The Connolly Association gained only a relatively small number of new members and little in the way of additional funds. The Provisionals took several thousand pounds a week from London pub collections alone in the 71-72 period (the Officials about half that amount). In 1949 the Connolly Association could claim, with considerable justification, that it had been displaced by the Anti-Partition League because it was too left wing. This same argument hardly applied to the situation 20 years later when the known pro-communist Chief of Staff of the Official

1 80,000 signed this Petition, Irish Democrat, June, 1971.

2 The Connolly Association had 12 branches in 1971, see Irish Democrat, Oct., 1971 compared to 17 in 1944 when it was probably at its peak organizational period.

3 The IRA was in fact largely reequipped with money from Britain, not America where it took much longer to revitalize the traditional support organizations. As a person who collected funds for the Republican Movement between 1971-76 I can strongly confirm that a much better response was achieved by openly soliciting funds for arms rather than by appealing for donations for purely political or welfare objectives. As well as pub collections the Provisionals were collecting large sums from a whole range of activities, building site collections, dances and others of a not so legal nature.
 IRA was invited by a London priest\(^1\) to meet a group of Irish businessmen here, who wished to spend many thousands of pounds on arms for the North. Another group of Irish businessmen in London employed Saor Eire as their intermediary in a similar venture.\(^2\)

This period of mass interest in Republican politics was however short lived. 40,000 marched, mostly Irish people who had never been on a demonstration in their lives before,\(^3\) to Downing Street in February 1972 to protest against the British Paratroopers slaughter of 14 Civil Rights marchers on Bloody Sunday (31 Jan., 1972) in Derry. But the mass Irish support movement in Britain collapsed almost overnight following the bombing of the Aldershot Parachute Regiment Barracks later that month and the ensuing military campaign in Britain. Throughout the remainder of the Seventies there was little sizeable Irish public political 

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\(^1\) The religious participation in Republican activities that we noticed in the Twenties has continued. I know of one nun who carried six revolvers in her bag over to Ireland. A priest has recently completed a 12 year sentence for conspiracy to cause explosions in Coventry and for IRA membership. Glasgow Police have a warrant out for a priest who left behind a large quantity of gelignite in his church there, while Scotland Yard believe that an Irish priest made the bomb that killed Airey Neave.

\(^2\) Another group of London Irish entrusted their arms purchase funds to a British agent.

\(^3\) According to a police radio intercept, a senior police officer urgently appealed for reinforcements as the Irish march approached Whitehall, claiming "they are not demo trained" i.e. did not know how to relate to the police on demonstrations. The march ended in a major riot.
activity in Britain,\textsuperscript{1} with the main demonstrations being held by the largely British, left orientated, Troops Out Movement. A noticeable upsurge of interest in Irish politics among the Irish in Britain was however discernible during the recent Long Kesh Hunger Strikes which has culminated in the formation of an umbrella Irish National Council, an Anti-Partition League style organization. Growing hostility towards the wide sweeping powers of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, which while significantly failing to impede IRA actions in Britain has resulted in the detention of over 5,000 people, and a counter reaction to strongly voiced Conservative Party demands to disfranchise citizens of the Irish Republic resident in Britain has contributed substantially to the rapid growth of the new Irish In Britain Representation Group. This may yet achieve what the Irish Democratic League so conspicuously failed to achieve 60 years ago; i.e. a strong organized Irish influence in the British political system.\textsuperscript{2}

According to the Connolly Association,

"if the old Irish Self Determination League had not been constitutionally debarred from entering British politics, the whole force of the British Working Class could have been brought against Lloyd George and Ireland might never have been partitioned.\textsuperscript{3}

\textsuperscript{1} The major exception being the 20,000 people who lined the Kilburn funeral route of IRA volunteer Michael Gaughan, who died on hunger strike in Parkhurst prison in June 1974.

\textsuperscript{2} If Britain changes to a Proportional Representation electoral system, a meaningful Irish 'ethnic vote' may well emerge in Britain.

\textsuperscript{3} Irish Democrat, Apr., 1969.
But we have observed, in some detail, that the British working class was fundamentally disinclined to exert any meaningful influence on its Government's Irish policy. Ever since its formation in 1938 the Connolly Association has itself endeavoured to mobilize the British Labour Movement on Ireland. But it dismally failed to prevent the implementation of the 1949 Government of Ireland Act which strengthened Partition; and on the subsequent occasions it did manage to persuade MPs to raise the Irish issue, they were inevitably told by the Speaker that the Westminster Parliament should not interfere in Northern Ireland issues. Similar attempts to raise the issue at Trade Union conferences were usually thwarted by the combined opposition of the leadership and Northern Ireland delegates. If the ISDL had entered the British political arena, it would have been competing for the same strata of membership as the much more experienced and entrenched UIL, while it would not have attracted the type of person who had been alienated by the UIL's wholesale incorporation into the British political system.

An ISDL which eschewed an isolationist/exclusivist strategy and patterned itself on the Connolly Association mode would have been a much smaller organization in the 1920-22 period; though it might well have survived on after 1928 and perhaps even to the present. The growth of the pre-war

1 The abolition of Stormont in 1972 refuted this traditional argument.
Anti-Partition League was effectively nullified by the onset of an IRA campaign in Britain, while large scale Irish political manifestations in this country vanished almost overnight in the wake of the Aldershot bombing. Yet this schemata of growth and retardation as a result of military campaigns does not apply to the ISDL which actually expanded during IRA offensive activity in this country. However the 1920-21 campaign was comparatively short lived, unlike the present campaign which has already lasted a decade. Moreover the 1920-21 campaign was almost exclusively arson orientated and cost relatively few lives unlike the present campaign; destroying buildings never seems to incur the same hostility as taking life. The political environments of the two campaigns (and that of the 1939/40) were also very different. In 1920/21 IRA actions were legitimized by a Government formed by the party with the proven largest electoral support in Ireland. That is not the situation today when Irish Governments have repeatedly denounced the IRA and its overseas support organizations. In 1921 many resolutely refused to believe that the concept of a separatist Northern Irish state was a sustainable reality. Sixty years later many southern Irish people now question the feasibility of absorbing a large hostile population. All of these factors have collectively operated, to ensure that all the post-1922 Irish political upsurges in Britain have never surpassed the 1920-21 period; and so the ISDL will very likely retain its position as the largest Irish political organization ever to emerge in England and Wales.
CHAPTER 29

Conclusion. Communities at War: Attitudes and Responses

"There is a good deal of anti-Irish feeling in this country" observed Lloyd George in 1921.\(^1\) And indeed there was; right across the country from London where the Pall Mall Gazette demanded the mass deportation of the Irish\(^2\) to Scotland where hundreds of territorial soldiers attacked Irish workers.\(^3\) This was perhaps not really a surprising occurrence in a country whose religious leaders repeatedly demanded action to curb Irish immigration.\(^4\) The Church of England could hardly congratulate itself either on a more Christian attitude than its Presbyterian counterparts.\(^5\) We observed in our introductory chapter on the 'Irish in Britain 1914-19' that the attitude to the war, of Irish people, both in Ireland and this country, had incurred much popular hostility.\(^6\) Yet this level of hostility was merely a heightened manifestation

\(^1\) Quoted in T. Jones, op. cit., 155.

\(^2\) Pall Mall Gazette, 10 May, 1923.

\(^3\) Catholic Herald, 21 July, 1923.

\(^4\) See Church of Scotland Report of the General Assembly (Edinburgh, 1924) 15. In 1928 the Cabinet officially considered Church of Scotland demands to repatriate Irish residents; see Cabinet 42(28) conclusion 10, CP 45(29), CP 46(29) and HO 45 14634/432767.

\(^5\) See Westminster Gazette, 25 January, 1924. Bishop Barnes of Birmingham regularly fulminated against the Irish in Britain; see Church Times, 6 Jan., 1928.

\(^6\) See Harry O'Brien memoir for repeated anti-Irish incidents.
of the prevalent anti-Irish racism, that has characterized British attitudes to Irish Affairs for centuries, for anti-Irish racism was a foundation stone of British colonialism in Ireland.

However rather than repeat myself by selecting already observed anti-Irish incidents or castigate the British for their endemic anti-Irish racism, as if this was a unique phenomenon, I will now try to locate it as a highly regrettable but understandable (in the sense of understanding, rather than tolerating) product of political conflict between two countries. This is particularly the case in the context of an anti-colonial national liberation struggle. We have already observed the wave of hostility that engulfed the German American community in the United States in 1917. In France many Algerian workers were deliberately sacked during that country's attempt to defeat the Algerian national liberation movement. Cypriot produce was widely boycotted and many Jewish shops attacked during the British military conflicts in Cyprus and Palestine. Prejudice, though it

1 See Gilley, op. cit.; D. George, op. cit.; Lynn Hollen, Exiles of Erin (Manchester, 1979); Chaim Bermant, Point of Arrival (1975) 40-2; and Frances Finnegan, Poverty and Prejudice: A study of Irish Immigrants in York, 1840-1875 (Cork, 1983) for a representative selection of works on anti-Irish racism in Britain in the last eight centuries.

2 Times, 24 June, 1958.


4 Times, 5, 6 Aug., 1947.
may have its origins in socio-economic frustrations or historical events, is essentially an irrational manifestation. Thus people often dislike outsiders even though their activities are in fact beneficial to the country of residence. Many Germans intensely disliked the Russian Jewish revolutionary emigres who were effectively aiding the German First World War effort and Polish troops temporarily stationed in Britain to recuperate after Arnhem and Monte Cassino, were widely believed to be 'shirking the war' and 'taking the women' of British troops serving overseas.

Groups given an initially favourable welcome because their active support for the colonial power has driven them into exile, like the South Moluccans in Holland can find that position reversed almost overnight when they try violently to achieve their nationalist demands in their country of exile. Cuban emigres welcomed to the United States as

1 See Robert Williams, 'Russians in Germany, 1900-1914', Journal of Contemporary History 1 (1966), 121-49.


3 12,000 South Moluccan soldiers who had fought in the Dutch colonial army against the Indonesian nationalists were evacuated to Holland in 1949; see H.L. Wesseling, 'Post-Imperial Holland', Journal of Contemporary History 15 (1980), 125-42. According to Christopher Bagley, The Dutch Plural Society (1973), 98-107, the Dutch, one of the most non-racialist people in Europe, lavishly provided (in comparison to Britain) for their former colonials but when the second generation of Moluccans embarked on a campaign of seizing hostages etc. to remind the world of their territorial claims, their actions sparked off much hostility against the whole exile community. See Juliet Lodge (ed), Terrorism, A Challenge to the State (1981), 119-45.
refugees 'fleeing communism' subsequently incurred much hostility when elements became involved in the drug trade and particularly when emigre groups started to kill their political opponents. Similar activities by right wing Hungarians in Canada and Croatian Utashi exiles in Australia have also generated considerable public hostility. Inevitably the greatest hostility is generated when the ethnic group appears to pose a challenge to the state of residence itself during a conflict with the homeland or patria. Thus after Pearl Harbour 120,000 Japanese Americans - two thirds of them American born - were interned even though "not a single documented act of espionage or sabotage or Fifth Column activity was committed by a Japanese American". The Palmer Raids, two decades earlier, were largely motivated by a 'Red Aliens' scare but actual immigrant organized political violence in the United States has been almost exclusively confined to Puerto Rican groups who have pursued a sporadic, and rather ineffectual, military campaign for the independence of their country. Perhaps the Puerto Ricans in the United


4 Quoted from U.S. Congress Report as reported in the Daily Mail, 26 Feb., 1983.

States are indeed fortunate that their militant compatriots in F.A.L.N. have not been able to wage the type of intensive armed national liberation struggle, conducted by the Algerian FLN and the IRA in their respective Metropolitan countries, for the Puerto Ricans are already probably the least liked major immigrant group in the United States.¹

Immigrants and their descendants can often become passive hostages to fate in interstate disputes or actual conflicts. In 1972 after the Bloody Sunday massacre in Derry, almost one in five Britons actually believed there was a realistic prospect of a war between Britain and the Republic of Ireland² and this new down-turn in the relationship between the two countries was reflected in a 'national stereotype' survey which showed a much greater readiness to attribute unfavourable adjectives to Irish people than five years previously.³ A similar, but in this case literally overnight, change of fortunes was experienced by the British community in Argentina during the Malvinas/Falklands conflict.⁴ In response to an unprecedented anti-British campaign, many in the British community formally applied to become Argentinian citizens: a dramatic reversal of their past

² Gallup Report no. 138.
³ Ibid., no. 158.
⁴ The Irish Government's decision not to support British sanctions against Argentina produced a discernible increase in anti-Irish sentiment in Britain.
staunch emotional loyalty to Britain.¹ Renunciation of the citizenship of their country of origin or Patria is a not uncommon practice by immigrants and their descendants whenever they find their status has altered adversely. We observed that many German American organizations speedily 'Americanized' themselves during the 1917 wave of German phobia while many of the Maltese living in London during the 1950s even described themselves as Sicilians - the traditional enemies of the Maltese - to escape the widespread public hostile identification of Maltese with prostitute pimping rackets.² Sometimes this response leads to a condemnation of the Patria itself. Many in the British community in Argentina wrote public letters denouncing the British counter attack on the Malvinas/Falklands: a latter day equivalent of the 1915 Times 'Loyalty Letters' written by German born residents in Britain.³ Members of an ethnic community may attack fellow members who persist in supporting country of origin or Patria linked causes, judged by the majority community opinion to endanger their relations with the country of residence. Thus the large Irish American organizations which had switched from neutrality to supporting the War, following the United States entry in 1917, fiercely opposed the small Irish Progressive League which still opposed the

1 The Headline in the Sun, 24 May, 1982, "Rats Desert Us" was one British view of this process.


War. Seventy years previously many Irish American soldiers enthusiastically supported the mass hangings of the Patricos - fellow Irish soldiers who deserted and joined the Mexican army when it was invaded by the United States in 1847.1

Under attack a minority community may sacrifice some of its own members to placate societal hostility. Thus French Jewry "one of the freest communities in the world... in order to secure peace from anti-semitism and save the community at large... was ready to sacrifice Dreyfus and ostracize Bernard-Lazare (his defender)".2

Similarly the Jewish community in Britain remained silent on the internment of known anti-Nazi Jewish European refugees in 1940, for fear of exciting anti-semitism.3

The experience of the Jewish community in Britain is particularly relevant to a political sociological study of the Irish in Britain as, time after time, I have heard Irish political activists frequently lament that their compatriots do not react towards Ireland in the same way that British Jews support Israel. Throughout the 1940s, and particularly between 1945-48, Jewish groups actively fought the British occupation forces in Palestine, inflicting considerable

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1 The Patricos (Battalion of Saint Patrick) are still annually commemorated as Mexican national heroes; see Wally Power, 'The Enigma of the Patricos', Eire-Ireland, 4 (1969), 7-12.

2 Nelly Wilson, Anti-Semitism and the Problem of Jewish Identity in Late 19th Century France (1978), 279.

casualties. Thus it was a period comparable to the Anglo-Irish War of Independence. The almost total lack of research on the Irish in Britain during the Anglo-Irish War of Independence attracted my interest when I was looking for a thesis research subject. I however thought it would be a relatively easy matter to compare the positions of the Jewish community in Britain, 1945-48 and the Irish in Britain 1916-21. Once having completed my pioneering investigation of the Irish in Britain it would, I thought, simply be a matter of then reading the published studies of the British Jews during this period. I naively imagined that such studies must exist for is not the Jewish community the best documented minority group in Britain; with a wealth of historical, sociological, economic, national and area studies, often undertaken with the active encouragement of the community and its well developed research-orientated institutions? But that very factor is the nub of the problem; most research on British Jews is conducted by fellow Jews, often financed by Jewish institutions, and as I discovered, British Jewry would prefer to forget the 1945-48 period when their community was rent with divisions as a consequence of the conflict between their country of residence and their patria. 1945-48 is for Jewish researchers their equivalent of the Irish Civil War a period to be approached only with extreme

1 223 members of the British Armed Forces were killed in Palestine, 1945-48. See Gregory Blaxland, The Regiments Depart (1971), 59.

2 Writing only 7 years after the end of this period Maurice Freeman (ed), A Minority in Britain (1955) totally ignores it while Armin Krausz's massively documented history of Sheffield Jewry (Jerusalem, 1980), barely notices this crucial period.
caution and best left alone.

So even more intrigued by this 'missing period' I decided to spend some time in constructing a necessarily impressionistic picture of British Jewry and its reactions to Palestinian events in the 1945-48 period by employing contemporary newspaper cuttings, Jewish publications and the memoirs of those active during this period. What emerged from this study was the impression of a very divided community; certainly one very different from the common contemporary perspective of a community wholeheartedly in support of the Zionist cause. The Irish in Britain between 1919-21 were similarly a divided community, or perhaps communities is a better term. Most Irish born Protestants living in Britain and their descendants together with a not insubstantial number of Irish Catholics desired a continuation of British rule in Ireland. Those who desired a changed relationship between Britain and Ireland basically fell into two camps: Nationalists who wanted Irish Home Rule within some wider British political framework and Republicans who wanted total independence. The attitude of British Jewry towards Palestine was just as equally varied and equally divided. As a tactical war measure the British Government in the 1917 Balfour Declaration promised a Jewish Homeland in Palestine. However the idea of an independent Jewish state did not attract sizeable support until the Holocaust three decades later.

The British, however, were now very reluctant to give up such a strategic area of the Middle East, or even to permit the entry of the survivors of the Holocaust lest this antagonize the rulers of their Arab client states. British Jews
were therefore faced with the same dilemma that had confronted the Irish in Britain; should they demand the right of their fellow Jews to enter Palestine and thus oppose their Government's policy, or even support those Jewish groups who had taken up arms against the British?

In 1945-48 there were about 400,000 Jews in Britain. No more than 30,000 of these were token Zionists as defined as those who had paid the Shekalim (about ten pence) which gave them the right to vote for candidates in the World Zionist Congress elections. Of these less than 20,000 actually voted. (These figures should be viewed in the light of the South African situation where the Jewish community, only a quarter the size of that in Britain, sold 43,000 shekalim). The Zionist Federation of Great Britain and Ireland claimed a membership of 31,000 but many of these were en bloc synagogue affiliations. Organized Zionism in Britain was therefore considerably smaller than the Irish Self Determination League membership but whereas the ISDL leaders and the Irish Exile unequivocally supported Irish military operations against the British occupation forces, very few Zionists

1 Zionist Review, 6 Sept., 1946, the target set by the World Zionist Congress for British Jewry had in fact been 125,000 Shekalim, ibid., 18 April, 1947.

2 Ibid., 18 Oct., 1946.

3 Ibid., 11 July, 1947.


5 Only 94 of the 380 synagogues in Britain had however affiliated to the Zionist Federation, ibid., 19 Sept., 1947.
publicly supported their Palestinian counterpart's war against the British. The Zionist Federation and their supporters, whom we have already observed took over the British Board of Jewish Deputies by rather dubious tactics, supported the Yishuv (Jewish Assembly) in Palestine. The Yishuv not only denounced the offensive military operations of the Irgun Zvai Leumi (IZL) and Lehame Herut Israel (Lehi but known to most British people as the Stern Gang) but even ordered its own much larger military force, the Haganah to actively collaborate with the British by handing over Irgun and Lehi personnel, and hounded their supporters out of employment. The Federation and Deputies did not really need the Sunday Times to advise British Jews "collectively, publicly and in language unmistakable" to denounce Irgun and Lehi activities. They had repeatedly denounced these "moral delinquents" and even requested the Haganah to deal more firmly with them.

1 Irgun, commanded by Menachem Begin, The Revolt (1979) was an extreme right wing, almost Fascist organization. Its ideological leader, Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist wing of Zionism, was called the 'Fuhrer' by his members in Germany where his uniformed organization was permitted to exist - the only Jewish one allowed to do so - by the Gestapo until 1938.

2 Lehi was a breakaway from the Irgun by members who disliked the Irgun's initial truce with the British, during the first part of the Second World War. Lehi, however, became a left wing pro-Soviet organization.

3 The Haganah did however mount a series of sabotage operations which resulted in some British deaths in a Yishuv authorized protest against deportations.


5 Jewish Chronicle, 1 Aug., 1947.
The Deputies support for the Yishuv's policy of working relatively peacefully for the creation of a Jewish State was however too much for the 2,000 strong, mostly upper class, Anglo-Jewish Association, which withdrew its representatives on the Board in protest against its relatively mild criticism of British Government policy in Palestine. ¹

The Jewish Fellowship founded under the banner of "Jews by our Faith and not by our Nationality",² with a carefully selected membership of 1,500, had never accepted the need for the Board to exist. It repeatedly supported the British policy in Palestine. The principal Jewish publication in Britain, the long established Jewish Chronicle, was extremely ambivalent about Zionism, even in its relatively peaceful Yishuv manifestation. The Federation published the Zionist Review, pro-Yishuv/Haganah, but violently anti-Irgun and Lehi. The Jewish Outlook, published by the Jewish Fellowship, followed its parent organization's repudiation of Zionism.

According to a 1948 survey of the reading habits of 3,400 British Jews, 2,461 read the Chronicle, 515 the Review and 320 the Outlook.³ Only one person 'wrote in' that they had also read the Jewish Struggle, a pro-Irgun paper whose short existence perhaps indicated a basic lack of readers.

¹ Zionist Review, 2 May, 1947.
² See Jewish Fellowship leaflets, WP 15422 (British Library).
³ Rose Henriques, Survey of Jewish Interests (1949), sent out 40,000 questionnaires but only 3,400 were actually returned.
who supported Irgun.

Irgun had a very small support organization in Britain, the Jewish Legion, but Lehi does not appear to have had a similar support group here. Both Irgun and Lehi followed the example set by the IRA in conducting military operations in Britain itself but on a much smaller scale. Lehi sent letter and parcel bombs from the Continent to a number of prominent Government and Military leaders in Britain. A five strong Lehi unit in London was, however, unable to assassinate Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, but other Lehi members planted bombs in the Palace of Westminster and the Colonial Office which failed to explode. Until mid-1947 Irgun had only one member in Britain but subsequently a small group, led by Ezer Weizman, a recent Israeli Defence Minister, unsuccessfully tried to assassinate General Barker, GOC Palestine, in London. Two Irgun members were subsequently jailed in London for trying to sabotage armoured cars being shipped to Iraq for use against the new Israeli state. The only serious incident involving casualties actually committed in Britain by Jewish groups appears to have been the parcel bomb killing of the brother of Captain Farran, an SAS officer accused of killing Jews in Palestine.

1 Jewish Struggle published only six issues between Dec. 1945-Sept. 1946. Its coverage consisted mostly of Irgun trial speeches and its total lack of information on pro-Irgun support activities in Britain suggest there were none.
3 Ibid., 130-142.
This bomb which appears to have been posted in London\(^1\) was, however, never publicly claimed by either Lehi - the most likely candidate - or Irgun. Despite the lack of military actions in Britain, actually attributable to Jewish groups, the press made much of their reported plans and the intensive police precautions for the Opening of Parliament etc.\(^2\)

I have been unable to find any information about Haganah activities in Britain, but their units undoubtedly were also present in this country.\(^3\) Arms and munitions, probably in some quantity,\(^4\) were certainly sent from Britain to Palestinian Jewish organizations.

While only a tiny minority of British Jewry supported Irgun and Lehi and most, vehemently denounced them, the entire Jewish community in Britain suffered, and quite severely so, as a result of their actions against British forces in Palestine. Lehi's assassination of the British Minister, Lord Moyne, in 1944 substantially raised the level of endemic anti-Semitism in Britain. This was further intensified as British personnel began to die in increasing numbers, particularly in spectacular killings like the destruction of the King David Hotel. The reprisal hangings of two British

\(^1\) See *Mars and Minerva* Autumn 1982, 5.


\(^3\) The standard Haganah histories do not refer to any units in Britain, it is likely that personnel from these formed the nucleus of the new Israel State intelligence operation here.

\(^4\) For example several fighter bombers were smuggled from Britain to Israel in 1948; see Shimon Peres, *David's Sling* (1970), 33-4. Other shipments of munitions were also discovered; see the *Times*, 10 Nov., 1948.
soldiers by Irgun brought this simmering tension\(^1\) to boiling point. A wave of anti-Jewish rioting swept across Britain in August 1947. 3000 people attacked Jewish shops in Salford\(^2\), 700 broke windows in Eccles,\(^3\) a synagogue was burned in Derby.\(^4\) There were also anti-Jewish riots in Glasgow, Birmingham, Hull, Blackpool, Brighton and Liverpool\(^5\) where abattoir workers refused to supply cattle to Kosher butchers.\(^6\) Such rioting paradoxically played into the hands of the extreme Zionists who had been given dramatic proof of their contentions that Jews could only be safe from anti-semitism in their own state.

But in a country where anti-semitism\(^7\) was, according to UNESCO, now greater than in any other country,\(^8\) it is not

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1 See 'Anti-Semitism in Britain', Reynolds News, 27 April, 1947.


3 Ibid., 6 Aug., 1947.


6 Liverpool Post, 6 Aug., 1947.


8 The UNESCO survey covered Britain, Germany, Italy, Mexico Holland, United States, Australia and France; see W. Buchanan and H. Cantrall, How the Nations See Each Other (Illinois, 1953), 140. Also see H.H. Eysenck, 'The Psychology of Anti-Semitism', The Nineteenth Century and After (1948), 277-84 and James Robb, Working Class Anti-Semite (1954), 92. Robb, however, who did his field work in 1948, ignored the Palestine factor.
perhaps so surprising that meetings called to protest against British actions in Palestine, never drew the size of crowd that the ISDL had attracted at its peak. The Zionists held even fewer outdoor protests; their largest London demonstration in July 1946 attracted only 4,000 marchers. This had been called by the Zionist Federation to condemn the mass arrests of the Yishuv leadership. It was a particularly traumatic time for Jewry as violent bloody anti-semitic rioting had also erupted in Poland. British Jews worried about the extent of anti-semitic feeling in this country would have been even more concerned had they known that British SIS agents had played a major role in instigating the Kielce riots.¹

Our necessarily brief but wide ranging survey of the Jewish community in Britain between 1945-48 reveals significant differences between their attitudes towards events in Palestine and that of the Irish in Britain to Ireland in 1919-21. Far fewer Jews in Britain supported the groups actively fighting the British and there was overall a much lower level of public concern expressed by this community. While acknowledging that very large sums of money were raised for a wide range of Palestinian Jewish causes, it would be a mistake simply to interpret this as support for Zionism. Judaism has always emphasized 'Mitzvah', the obligation to give charity, and financially aiding the resettlement of European stateless Jews in Palestine was a way of ensuring that they did not come to England. In the same way

¹ See Stewart Steven, Operation Splinter Factor (1974), 37. SIS fomented anti-semitism in Poland in an effort to destabilize its Government.
the older established Sephardic Jews in Britain had financially aided the 19th century Askenazim to travel on to America.

Cypriots living in Britain found themselves in a similar situation to the 1945-48 Jewish and the 1916-21 Irish communities when Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston (EOKA) was fighting the British forces in Cyprus in 1955-59. At the start of the conflict there were about 30,000 Cypriots living in Britain, but in a bid to deprive EOKA in Cyprus of potential recruits, the British abolished the previous strict affidavit support immigration system. By 1960, over 12,000 Cypriots were annually entering Britain and their population had more than doubled in five years. Four in every five Cypriots in Britain lived in the London area, in tightly knit communities. The four Cypriot Orthodox Churches in London became the principal focus of Enosis support in Britain and one priest was even deported for political activity.

5,000 Cypriots greeted Archbishop Makarios when he came to London to discuss the independence settlement. This was however an unprecedented occasion. The demonstrations during the actual conflict period were much smaller; 1,000 Greek Cypriots took part in a 1955

4 *Times*, 14 June, 1956.
5 Ibid., 23 Feb, 1959.
protest march but most subsequent demonstrations were in
the low hundreds. The pro-EOKA Cyprus Brotherhood grew
from 400 in 1954 to 3,000 in 1960, but most of its activity
was 'internalized' rather than public manifestations of
support. Opposition to EOKA came from the relatively strong
Greek Cypriot Communist Party (AKEL) in London. This how­
ever also protested against British policy. As in Ireland,
Cyprus too, was claimed by two opposing nationalities.
The Turkish Cypriot community in Britain was much smaller
than the Greek Cypriots, numbering only some 8,000 in 1958, but they mobilized 2,000, most in their national costume,
for a 'Cyprus is Turkish' march. Some Turkish Cypriots
were killed by British troops but in general their communi-
ity in Britain strongly supported the tough British policy
against EOKA and thus did not encounter the same degree
of hostility, racism and prejudice that the Greek Cypriots
faced here. 79 British soldiers were killed in Cyprus, the last major conflict involving national servicemen and
very few British people shared Lawrence Durrell's more dis­
passionate view of the war. Over 15,000 British people

1 Times, 29 Aug., 1955.
4 Ibid., 24 Feb., 1958. Other Turkish marches were equally
larger than Greek demonstrations. Membership of the
Cyprus Turkish Association rose from 300 in 1952 to
1,000 in 1958. See Nearchov, op. cit., 165.
5 Ibid., 176-7.
6 Blaxland, op. cit., 328.
7 Lawrence Durrell, Bitter Lemons (1964).
volunteered to replace Greek Cypriots arbitrarily sacked from their jobs in the Cyprus bases.¹ EOKA prisoners sent to British prisons staged hunger strikes² but there were no prisoner support demonstrations comparable to the Irish ones of 1919-21. Plans were made however for the IRA to train EOKA units in Britain but no operations had been carried out by the time of the independence talks.³

We have, however, to look across the Channel to France to find a really comparable situation to the IRA's campaign in the metropolitan country. During the Algerian War of Independence, 1954-61, the Algerian-born population in France of some 400,000⁴ was approximately the same as the Irish born population in Britain during their earlier War of Independence, 1919-21. The Algerian non-first generation population was however much smaller. Modern Algerian nationalism in fact developed among the early 20th century emigres in the metropolitan country⁵ who then exported their

¹ *Times*, 13 Nov., 1958. This was a much greater response than a similar appeal in Egypt several years earlier.

² See MacStiofain, op. cit., 74-9.

³ There were however press reports concerning possible EOKA operations in Britain; cf. *Times*, 21 May, 1956. EOKA claimed that their plans in Britain were thwarted by the death of their organizer Nicolas Ioannou, whom they claimed was killed in 1958 by British Security who then staged a 'cover up road accident'. This claim is substantiated by reliable contemporary IRA sources.


⁵ See A. Heggy, 'The Origins of Algerian Nationalism in the Colony and in France!', *Muslim World*, April 1968, 128-40.
ideas back to the colony. Many of the newer Algerian immigrants to France fled Algeria, with the active encouragement of the French authorities, to escape the effects of a strategy first worked out in Paris cafes. But there was no escape in the metropolitan country from the horrific colonial violence. In 1954, when the modern Algerian liberation struggle commenced, Algerian life in France was dominated by the Movement National Algerien (MNA)\(^1\) just as the United Irish League had dominated Irish political life in Britain up to 1914. But unlike the UIL, the MNA was not prepared quietly to fade away when challenged by the newer Front Liberation Nationale (FLN).

We have observed that UIL meetings, particularly in Scotland, were sometimes disrupted by Sinn Fein and that a few ISDL members used relatively minor violence against nationalist supporters, just as some of the more militant Zionists 'terrorized' Rabbis into remaining silent on violence in Palestine.\(^2\) But none of this remotely approaches the violence of the confrontation between the MNA and the FLN in France as they fought for the control of the Algerian workers in France and to enforce financial contributions from them. Individual deaths were largely unnoticed by the press; only the more sensational mass killings were reported, such as the 7 FLN shot dead by the MNA in a Lyons cafe,\(^3\) 15 killed

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1 The MNA was able to call out 80% of Algerian workers in Mulhouse in a 1956 political strike, *Times*, 4 Apr., 1956.
2 *Jewish Outlook*, April, 1946.
and wounded in a Paris hospital when the FLN tried to finish off an MNA member shot earlier. At first all the Algerian bodies, regularly fished out of the Seine or found lying in the wooded Bois de Boulougne, were the work of rival FLN and MNA killer squads but after 1959 a third force, the police, began to make their own, not insignificant, contribution to the ever growing pile of Algerian corpses.

Facing intensified French military action in Algeria itself, the FLN, like the IRA, decided to open a 'Second Front' in the metropolitan country. The FLN in the first month of their active military campaign in France itself, launched 323 attacks, derailing trains, blowing up fuel dumps etc. and killing 82 people. The French responded by recalling 13,000 police reservists, and by setting up a new Algerian Auxiliary police, mostly composed of former soldiers or Harkis, to patrol Algerian bidonVilles in France, bitterly

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1 *Times* 7 April, 1961.

2 Conflicting figures have been given for the Algerians killed in politically motivated attacks in France between 1954-61. The *Listener*, 26 Oct., 1961 estimated 3,700 dead and Horne, op. cit., 538, estimated 4,300 but Behr, op. cit., 238, claims that 15,000 Algerians were killed in France in "reglements de comptes". Already by 1957 it was said that an Algerian was safer living in the Algiers Casbah than in Paris, *Times*, 2 Nov., 1957.


resented for their brutality towards their fellow countrymen, these harkis were especially singled out for attack by the FLN, seven being killed in a single night in Paris.¹ Algerians were rounded up in huge sweeps, reminiscent of the German 'rattissages', 15 years previously. Many were deported, interned and imprisoned;² others were not so fortunate, and were never seen alive again.

We have observed that deportations and arrests of Irish people in Britain between 1916-23 had certainly made sizeable numbers think twice about publicly displaying their support for an Irish Republic. Repression can often significantly reduce the level of overt support but not always. In Paris in 1961, with the MNA on the verge of extinction and Algerian soldiers stationed in France now joining with the FLN to attack police patrols³ the police imposed a night time curfew on all Algerians living in the Capital. Algerians responded, many it is true under threat from the FLN, by defiantly taking to the streets. In one demonstration alone, over 14,000 including 1,000 women and 550 children⁴ were arrested and herded into emergency detention

² Castles and Kosack, op. cit., 343, claim that 23% of all prisoners in France in 1958 were Algerian. The Times, 3 Nov., 1961 claimed there were over 15,000 Algerian political prisoners and internees in France.
³ 6 Algerian soldiers were killed in one night attack on the Paris police, Times, 6 June, 1961. The Armee Organization Secrete (OAS) had also commenced a series of plastiques in Paris to keep Algeria French.
centres, mostly sports fields etc. 1 2100 were arbitrarily deported, 2 the rest released after appalling brutality. 3 The police officially claimed only 3 Algerians had been killed in quelling this particular demonstration but an inquiry established by the French National Assembly was soon trying to establish just how many of the 60 Algerian corpses, fished out of the Seine or found lying in the woods fringing Paris, had in fact been demonstrators killed by the police.

As bad as the Black and Tans were, their wave of terror in Ireland never came anywhere remotely near the horror inflicted on the Algiers Casbah by General Massu's parachute troopers or the Foreign Legion in the Bled. Just as the degree of repression and prejudice suffered by the Irish in Britain between 1920-23 must be seen in the context of that inflicted on the Algerians, who also took their war for national liberation to the metropolitan country and suffered infinitely more as a consequence. Whether the IRA in Britain would have reacted against the UIL supporters in a manner similar to the FLN's onslaught on the MNA, if the UIL had militantly opposed the ISDL, or even formed the British equivalent of the Harkis, will always remain conjecture. But there were sufficient cases of militant opponents executed by the IRA in Ireland, on not always satisfactorily proven

1 Times, 10 Nov., 1961.
spying charges, to indicate this might well have been a real possibility. The decision by the UIL, repeatedly lamented in British intelligence reports, effectively to opt out of a contest with the ISDL may well have spared the Irish community considerable bloodshed. The situations of the FLN/MNA and the ISDL/UIL were not however directly comparable for neither the ISDL nor the UIL fundamentally challenged the other's primary objectives. Its policy of abstentionism from all levels of the British political system ensured that the ISDL never directly challenged the UIL's parliamentary or local government representation while the UIL had never regarded the Irish in Britain as an important source of funds for its parent organization in Ireland. In addition, whereas the MNA could argue with some justification that its parent organization in the colony had only been displaced by the armed violence of its FLN rival, the Nationalists in Ireland had been democratically, politically eclipsed by Sinn Fein before the armed struggle commenced. So there was not the same degree of resentment on the part of the UIL to the ISDL and Sinn Fein that the MNA felt for the FLN. Irish Nationalism was essentially a pragmatic accommodation to the reality of British rule and as such was liable to switch from its usual emphasis on constitutional politics, whenever the prospects of an armed struggle appeared to be particularly favourable: for as the Chief Secretary of Ireland observed, in 1916, of anti-British feeling (it was) "varying in degree and finding different ways of expression but always there in the background of Irish politics and character". ¹

¹ Rebellion Minutes of Evidence, Cd 8311, op. cit., 21.
It is possible that the FLN in France deliberately invited police repression against Algerians in order to strengthen their hold on the community, in a manner similar to Cohen's 'politics of amplification' whereby consciousness is promoted by 'spiralization'.\(^1\) It is however very unlikely that the IRA campaign in Britain of 1920-21 was inspired by this type of strategy. Certainly all subsequent IRA campaigns in this country and particularly the present one have been motivated simply by the need to create a 'Second Front'.

An IRA assessment prior to the commencement of the present campaign recognized that their operations would inevitably mean 'writing off' their political wing, Sinn Fein, in this country and the loss of its previously substantial fund raising. Repression affects communities in different ways and they similarly respond to it in different ways. It is interesting to observe that of our four case studies, the Algerians in France and the Irish, Cypriots and the Jews in Britain, it was the group most repressed - the Algerians - who responded the strongest against the metropolitan state just as Yugoslavia, the most repressed country under Nazi occupation, developed by far the largest partisan movement. There is however certainly no simple causal relationship to explain why different communities in the same country respond so differently to repression. Waterbury for example suggests that the different types of land ownership and socio-economic systems explain why Oaxaca was such an oasis of tranquility compared to Morelos - the furnace of the Mexican Revolution in the early 20th century.\(^2\)

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2 Ronald Waterbury, 'Non-revolutionary Peasants', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 17 (1975), 416-42.
Trunk identifies primarily psychological reasons to explain why the Jews of Lodz did not emulate the example of the Warsaw Ghetto.¹

Within a community itself the response to repression can be as equally varied. Aberle has constructed a typology to illustrate the variety of responses found within the Navaho tribe, most of which are passive or internalized protest.²

Gross delineates eight types of response to the forcible occupation of a country but, all but one, of these involves some type of collaboration.³ Responses can also vary within a micro group like a family. One of my earliest political socialization experiences was the sight of my father praying after he had been sacked from his building labourer's job because his employer's daughter was standing for Parliament as the Unionist Party candidate on a 'non-employment of Catholics' platform. My subsequent efforts to destroy the state that permitted such discriminatory practices owed much to that early experience: yet, when that state found its very survival was now dependent on the co-option of Catholics, my two youngest brothers enlisted in its paramilitary police force. The whole question of community and individual response to repression is such a complex one, involving the entire spectrum of political, sociological, economic, historical, cultural and psychological factors, that it is very unlikely it can ever be reduced to a workable typology, sufficiently comprehensive to encompass the many varied community and individual responses to repression.

1 Isaiah Trunk, 'Why Was There No Armed Resistance', Jewish Social Studies, XLII (1981), 329-34.
2 David Aberle, The Peyote Religion Among the Navaho (Chicago 1966).
3 Gross, op. cit., 138.
It might appear, considering the widespread 1915 attacks on German property in Liverpool and London and the 1947 onslaught on Jewish property, that the Irish and particularly their property escaped very lightly, especially when one considers the damage inflicted on British property by the IRA. But paradoxically the IRA, while its activities endangered the overall societal position of the Irish in Britain, may well have protected it from 1947 type onslaughts on Jews. For the known existence of IRA units, in many British towns almost certainly acted as a deterrent to would-be attackers of the Irish. It is interesting to observe that contemporary physical attacks on Irish people in England and their property, largely the work of fascist organizations, have never been directed against known Republicans.

With over 25% of all Algerian men in France actively supporting it, the FLN had managed to mobilize an unprecedentedly high proportion of its target population. Certainly the ISDL, admittedly employing very different methods, never mobilized the Irish on anything like this scale. In the post-Treaty and early Civil War phases, Free State emissaries tried with a conspicuous lack of success to transform the pro-Treaty ISDL membership into a support organization for the Dublin Government. Other governments have tried and failed to organize their exiles into support organizations.

1 See A. Marwick, The Deluge (1973), 131.
2 For fascist and loyalist attacks on Irish people in Britain see my article in Hibernia, 31 July, 1980.
3 The Listener, 26 Oct., 1961 quoted French security sources as claiming that 100,000 Algerians actively supported the FLN, as opposed to merely passively paying the high enforced contributions extracted from most Algerians in France, and of these 10,000 could be used for military operations.
Hitler's regime established a special branch of the Nazi party to encourage Germans abroad to actively support the new Germany. But despite a series of films identifying it as a powerful menace and near hysterical reports on its Volksbund activities the Amerika Deutscher (The Bund) was never more than a tiny organization in the United States. Mussolini even went as far as ordering "Italian citizens must remain Italian citizens no matter in what land they live even to the seventh generation". His attempts to transform the existing Italian organizations in the United States into fascist groups deeply divided the community but the Italian fascists never attracted a mass following. A very active enforced recruitment campaign, using threats against relatives still in Italy, did however enrol 1,200 of the 11,300 Italian male aliens living in Britain.

1 The UnAmerican Activities Committee claimed the Bund had 500,000 members and supporters in 1938; see Martinus Nijhoff, Nazi Germany and the United States (The Hague, 1965), 120.

2 The FBI estimated Bund membership at only 6,500 in 1939; see Joachim Remak, 'The Bund', Journal of Modern History 24 (1957), 38-41. According to the German Ambassador there were only 450 Bundists in Chicago, a city of 700,000 Germans, 40,000 of them formally organized; see Alton Frye, Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere (New Haven, 1967), 86. Also see David Kahn, Hitler's Spies (1980), 313-22.

3 Quoted in Gerson, op. cit., 109.

4 See Luciano Iorizzo, The Italian Americans (New York, 1971), 197.

5 Ibid., 205-8. Only 1,228 Germans and 232 Italians were interned in the United States in 1941; see Oscar Barck America since 1900 (New York, 1974), 487.

6 Figure given in Home Secretary's memorandum, 17 May, 1940. WP(40)128(PRO).
Normally ethnic groups are very reluctant to organize and join homeland support organizations, especially when the societal environment is distinctly unfavourable. The ISDL did manage to do so and mobilized a much greater membership than the Anti-Partition League subsequently did during a more favourable period, that is when there was no IRA military activity in Britain and when the Irish born population had almost doubled. Charles Diamond was, we have observed, a convinced assimilationist and a bitter critic of the ISDL and Sinn Fein in Britain. Yet a London court jailed him for six months for writing a highly philosophical editorial on the war in Ireland.\(^1\) In a societal environment like that, it is remarkable that the ISDL managed to recruit over 38,000 members. Rex suggests that immigrant associations are functional and beneficial for immigrants\(^2\) but Pearson, in his study of West Indian activism, has found very low political involvement levels.\(^3\) Indeed as study after study has found, very low levels of active political involvement in the British political system overall,\(^4\) it does seem rather paradoxical that the ISDL managed to enrol so many members in support of an organization actively fighting Britain.

\(^1\) Its title, "Killing to Murder", Catholic Herald, 27 DEc., 1919 did not reflect its contents.

\(^2\) John Rex, op. cit., 22.

\(^3\) David Pearson, 'Race, Class and Respectability', Sociology, 12 (1978), 491-502.

\(^4\) For a wide range of these studies see Geraint Parry (ed) Participation in Politics (Manchester, 1972).
Berry argues that political participation is socially integrative but while participation in the ISDL may have helped to integrate people inside the ethnic group it could hardly be said to have integrated them into British society. Both Kornhauser and Berry argue that involvement in non-normative politics entails a high risk of social ostracism and isolation within the peer group. ISDL members were, however, an integral part of the Irish community. While it may seem a very distasteful comparison one could argue that many of the Irish Republican sympathizers in Britain saw their position as somewhat similar to those whose countries were occupied by the Germans during the Second World War, particularly in the Channel Islands and Denmark where the occupation was relatively non violent. The basic conclusion of most of the studies dealing with wartime occupation is that the collaborators greatly outnumbered those resisting and that most of the people who disliked the occupation nevertheless did nothing, actively, to hinder it. Thus it is not so surprising that ISDL leaders repeatedly referred to sympathizers who would not actually join and that the number of ISDL members who graduated into the ranks of the IRA was relatively

1 Berry, op. cit., 110.


3 Berry, op. cit., 127.

4 According to Norman Longmate, If Britain Had Fallen (1972), 219, there was no real resistance in the Channel Islands but much active collaboration, so much so that its scale precluded embarrassing post war trials.


If the ISDL flourished so strongly between 1919-21, why then did it collapse almost overnight? According to Tobias and Woodhouse, "the greatest shock suffered by revolutionary movements occurs in the blossoming of revolution or in its defeat," while Wilson bluntly asserts that "frustration is the fate of all social movements." The ISDL experienced the conflicting emotions of defeat and depression, victory and triumph, with the signing of the Treaty in 1921. The top leadership regarded the imposition of Partition as a defeat but the majority of the rank and file membership regarded the creation of the Free State as a victory, which gave Southern Ireland a degree of freedom they had never contemplated as really attainable until recently. For them Britain's determination to prevent the continued existence of the Irish Republic, could be lamented but not opposed with any hope of success, and as Yeats so evocatively puts it, "too long a sacrifice can make a stone of the heart." Gross suggests that all revolts are shortlived unless they evolve an ideology. The Anti-Treaty ISDL did however have an ideology, or at least the rudiments of one, but it was of such a conventionally anti-democratic nature as to appeal only to committed Republicans. De Valera's sharp warning that

2 J. Wilson, op. cit., 360.
4 Gross, op. cit., 82.
"the majority have no right to do wrong" summed up the contradictions inherent in Irish Republicanism: the assertion of the nation's right to self determination, as the expression of the people's will, but incorporating an elitist preconception of the parameters within which that right must be exercised. In chapter 6 I observed that the scaffold of self determination, on which the ISDL was constructed was so inherently unstable it was bound sooner, or later, to collapse and bring down the organization with it.

Very few sociologists have investigated the manner in which organizations finally collapse and perish as a result of adverse environmental changes. It is a process with so many variations that it is impossible to construct an adequate typology given the limited theoretical constructs available at present. Some organizations disappear almost immediately after the situation which has created them changes. The Keep-America-Out-of-the-War Congress which had enjoyed considerable support was speedily wound up after Pearl Harbour had made its continued existence meaningless. Anti-Zionist organizations, formerly quite influential in the British Jewish community, effectively disappeared after

1 Quoted in Curran, op. cit., 231.
4 See Justus Doenecke, 'Non-Intervention of the Left', Journal of Contemporary History 12 (1977), 221-36.
the creation of the Israeli State. With some organizations their effective disappearance is, however, harder to explain than others. No one could really have expected the Nazi Werewolves to continue fighting, after the formal surrender, but many French people mistakenly worried that the million Pied Noir, who fled Algeria, would bring with them an active OAS who would effectively destabilize France. Believers in a lost cause may however swim against the tide of opinion and try to create new organizations which seem doomed to frustration from the moment of their formation. Thus an effort by the Irish Unionists in London to form a new organization "to promote the reunion of Southern Ireland with Britain" was doomed from its inception, but in Brazil a Japanese organization emerged in 1945, which not only refused to accept that Japan had surrendered but answered its fellow ethnic critics by launching a terror wave against them.

We have already discussed the views of Freeman and Hannan and of Price that, as most organizations never attain their

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2 M. Freeman, op. cit., 123.

3 See William Cohen, 'Legacy of Empire', Journal of Contemporary History 15 (1980), 97-123. The OAS smuggled 20,000 weapons back into France but only a very small number continued their militant anti-De Gaulle struggle. Some former OAS have joined the extreme right wing Spanish Basque battalions.

4 D 989 A/9/20 (PRO NI).

stated objectives, it is much more useful to analyse their existence in terms of their organizational effectiveness. The demise of an organization therefore does not necessarily imply that it has been a failure. All success is relative, and so by this criterion the ISDL was a very successful organization during the 1919-21 period. In South Africa the Ossewabrandwag (OB), formed to keep the country out of World War II, ceased to exist after the war ended. Yet the OB's existence was not a total failure for many of its members graduated into the Broederbond, the real influence behind post-1949 South African Governments.

Why then did both the Anti and especially the Pro-Treaty ISDLs fail to build reasonably sizeable organizations, perhaps not necessarily using that name? The Treaty may have been greeted with a mixed reaction by the Irish in Britain but the ensuing Civil War produced nothing but despair, leading to a near total communal alienation from Irish politics. With prophetic prescience the Catholic Herald had warned:

"The day that sees the first shot fired in civil war between Republicans and Free Staters will witness such an alienation of the Irish people outside of Ireland as will bode ill for any further help in establishing Ireland's position".

1 See George Visser, OB: Traitors or Patriots (1976).


3 Catholic Herald, 1 April, 1922.
This indeed occurred, as we have observed, in Britain and throughout the Irish Diaspora, in the United States, and in Australia, where Bishop O'Farrell wrote in November 1922: "you can form no idea of the depression and humiliation in the sentiments of the Irish Australians at the state of things in Ireland." We have observed that the attempt to create Fine Gheadheal, to co-ordinate the Diaspora organisations, perished in the flames of the Civil War. The only tangible outcome of the Paris Congress, the Tailteann Games were postponed in 1922, on account of the fighting and the first Games held in 1924 were marred by the post-war bitterness, with many of the overseas organizing committees degenerating into Republican versus Free Staters confrontations.

The Civil War was the most traumatic event to occur in Ireland during this century. The twelve months of fighting have decisively influenced the subsequent 60 years of Irish political life. Both Ireland's two major parties grew out of the Civil War and even the IRA, intransigent as ever, has constitutionally recognized the traumatic effect of that conflict in its General Order No. 9, forbidding offensive action against the Irish Armed Forces. Its bombing campaign in Britain in 1939 was launched because the IRA Army Council recognized that "Ireland has had enough and to spare of Civil War." The subsequent Anti-Partition League in Britain

1 See Consul Gloster Armstrong reports; FO 371/7261.
2 Quoted in O'Farrell, Catholic Church, op. cit., 235.
3 Catholic Herald, 28 June, 1924.
4 Wolfe Tone Weekly, 19 April, 1939.
was only possible because of the tacit truce between the Irish political parties on the issue.) While all the Irish community organizations, County and Parish Associations etc., formed by the post-World War II immigrants, constitutionally forbade political involvement as the only way of organizing people brought up on the politics of the Civil War.\footnote{This has effectively prevented the largest Irish community organizations from functioning in the role of ethnic pressure groups but more recently these constitutional impediments have been flexibly redefined to enable initiatives on the Hunger Strikes, and Prevention of Terrorism Act, etc.}

The American Friends of Irish Freedom was able to survive the aftermath of the Civil War by forming the All American National Council "to forestall British interference in American concerns and safeguard American sovereignty'\footnote{S. Plain, op. cit., 253-4.}. A series of legal cases throughout the 1930s, on the ownership of the frozen 'Irish funds' in the United States, helped to maintain a diminishing FOIF interest in Irish affairs.\footnote{Carroll, op. cit., 208.}

The rival American Association for the Recognition of the Irish Republic, unlike the FOIF, supported the anti-treaty cause but lost so much of its support that it, like the American UIL in 1917, was actually forced to appeal for funds from Ireland to keep going.\footnote{Ibid., 184.} After the Civil War it was revitalized by Sinn Fein but lost much of its new membership when De Valera founded Fianna Fail. The already noted attempt by the Irish Unionists in London to form an organization...
to reunite the Free State with Britain never really got off the ground, though sporadic "drawing room meetings" were held for another 15 years; but the companion Southern Irish Loyalist Relief Association gave itself a new lease of life, by extending its scope to look after British ex-servicemen in Ireland, and so managed to continue its London organization until 1957. The ISDL, opposed to the Irish Government, found itself in 1925 repudiated by the Republican leadership in Ireland and so, without any external support or raison d'être, dissolved itself three years later by which time it had been reduced to literally a handful of members. Unlike the American FOIF, AARIR and the London Unionists, the ISDL had found itself in a cul de sac where it could not formulate a new strategy to prolong its existence.

Zald and Ash have suggested that 'inclusive organizations' are much more subject to ebb and flow tide sentiment factors than 'exclusive organizations'. They are also much more likely to develop faster but also to decline more quickly than exclusive organizations. The ISDL generally approximated to the typology of an inclusive organization. It owed its existence to Sinn Fein and as Zald and Ash suggest, an organization founded on the initiative of another is least likely to survive. They also suggested that organizations with specific goals are also least likely to survive.

1 D 989A/9/20.

2 See its Minute Book, D989 B/1/1-4. The organization then transferred its office to Dublin and continued there until 1963.
and this too occurred with the ISDL. The leadership of the
ISDL was generally more radical than the rank and file mem-
bership and as a result, the organization did, as Zald and
Ash predict, become more radical. But whereas Zald and Ash
have suggested that inclusive organizations are more split
resistant, in the case of the ISDL this was not so. However
their proposition that there is a positive relationship bet­
ween organizational goal and tactical transformation is at
least partly substantiated by the case of the ISDL. When
the sentiment tide was flowing strongly in its direction
the ISDL could afford to have its 'Isolationist/Exclusivist'
orientation but with declining support we observed the ISDL
having formal talks with the Communist Party. Zald and Ash's
proposition that the ideal conditions for organizational
growth are the combination of a strong sentiment base and
low societal hostility towards the organization were only
partly met in the development of the ISDL. There was cer­
tainly strong support within the Irish community but also
much hostility from the broader society. British Zionists
paying their Shekalim did not expect their contribution would
be employed to buy arms for use against the British Army
during the Mandate; but ISDL members must have realized that
even funds collected, ostensibly to help the families of
imprisoned IRA volunteers released other funds for the pur­
chase of arms: and as Lord Trevithin sternly admonished an
ISDL fund collector "many people have been hanged drawn and
quartered for less treason than trading money to a Republican
fund in a Monarchy".¹

¹ TS 27/183.
However both the Zionist Federation and the ISDL required far less personal commitment than the FLN. The Zionist Review and the Irish Exile might fulminate against members' reluctance to actively sell organizational publications or promptly pay their financial dues but unlike the FLN, 'defaulting' members and supporters knew they would not find themselves floating, dismembered, in the Thames. The Irish Exile might 'advise' ISDL members to boycott British goods but failure to comply with this request involved no sanctions; whereas Muslims in France who ignored the FLN ban on alcohol often found themselves, literally, drinking their last drink. The FLN, unlike the ISDL, sought to totally control the ethnic community's life in a manner similar to the control a fundamentalist religious sect exercises over its followers. Sects
\footnote{See B. Scharf, The Sociological Study of Religion (1970) and R. Mehl, The Sociology of Protestantism (1970).} are classical examples of exclusive organizations and though both sects in particular and exclusivist organizations in general are usually thought of as relatively small organizations, the FLN, the largest by far of our four case study organizations, belongs to the category of exclusivist organizations; whereas the ISDL, Zionist and Cypriot organizations were definitely inclusivist, though occupying different places in that typological spectrum.

The growth and subsequent decline of the ISDL refutes Michel's 'iron law of oligarchy'\footnote{Op. cit.} and Dawson and Getty's 'natural
history model\(^1\) whereby institutionalization is seen as an inevitable outcome of organizational evolution. My case study of the ISDL therefore supports Bank's contention that many organizations do not undergo bureaucratization.\(^2\) As for the 'routinization of charisma' argument, Art O'Brien could hardly have been described as a charismatic leader, "autocratic and dictatorial\(^3\) certainly, but clearly not charismatic. T.P. O'Connor, who once proclaimed himself as the "Irish Boss in Great Britain\(^4\) and who referred, almost regally, to "My People" in his election manifestos, until finding himself beyond electoral challenge, he ceased to issue them, would seem to be a much better candidate for a charismatic Irish leader in Britain. However his autocratic manner and refusal to share power, contributed substantially to the demise of the UIL. Weber argued that the charismatic leader must bring the organization success or his influence will decline\(^6\) but T.P. O'Connor, presiding over the demise of the UIL, was still able to decisively influence the formation of the replacement, the Irish Democratic League. Leadership\(^7\) plays a very important part in organizational

\(^{1}\) Op. cit.


\(^{3}\) ROR 164. 20 July, 1922. CP 4115, CAB 24/137.

\(^{4}\) Quoted in the Catholic Herald, 8 Dec., 1923.

\(^{5}\) John Scurr MP claimed that he left the UIL because of "T.P.'s Bossism", ibid., 15 Jan., 1924.


life particularly during the early mobilization phase and subsequent goal displacement processes. Yet leaders, particularly in voluntary organizations, cannot persuade their followers to act in ways members consider are against their best interests. Daniel O'Connell's appeal for money for the homeland organization met with much success in America but his plea to Irish Americans to support the abolition of slavery fell on barren ground; for free black labour was perceived as constituting a threat to the socio-economic status of the Irish immigrants.

Art O'Brien and Sean McGrath had considerable popularity within the Irish community and even the personal respect of their political opponents but they could not transform this intangible asset into the practical assistance necessary to rebuild the post-Treaty ISDL.

Yet people are not always motivated by materialist interests and may indeed act altruistically, in ways opposed to their own individualist socio-economic interests, in pursuit of a societal or communal goal. James O'Connor, a convinced assimilationist and supporter of the link with Britain, observed "the national policy of secession based upon the concept of an economic and cultural isolation from Britain was in its essence antagonistic to the interests of the Irish in Britain whom it now leaves almost voiceless in the Parliamentary struggles that lie before them, the struggle


against any state recognition of birth control and that for State aid in the erection of Catholic schools. The paradox is that the Irish in Britain were led to support and still actively support the secession claim." 1 Hickey, 2 O'Day 3 and Scott 4 all support O'Connor's observations as to the extent to which the struggle for Irish self determination absorbed the interests of the Irish in Britain during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. A preoccupation which could not, as Mullin observed of Irishmen in South Wales at the turn of the century, conceivably benefit them in any material sense,

"Sunday after Sunday, year in, year out, (they) sacrificed their only day of rest to meet in a dingy room to discuss the affairs of Ireland and contribute their hard earned pence to a cause that brought no material benefit to them". 5

It is people like these who are the essential nucleus, the hard core activists, who make possible the creation of organizations like the ISDL and APL and who proved invaluable in the rebuilding of the IRA in 1970. People with the commitment to organize and stay organized, no matter how unfavourable the immediate societal environment, awaiting the external stimuli, the blast of air that will revive barely glowing embers; which may dramatically raise the popular involvement threshold level; thereby mobilizing a large

1 Times, 17 March, 1928.
2 John Hickey, Urban Catholic (1967), 158.
3 O'Day, op. cit., 125.
4 George Scott, The RCs (1967), 38.
5 James Mullin, The Story of a Toiler's Life (1921), 16.
influx of recruits in a very short period. Such people the 'politicos', often by the strength of their personal commitment are able to keep together small local branches after the national organization has withered away, awaiting once more a more favourable societal environment. Thus a small group of IRB and Sinn Fein members made possible the creation of the ISDL and then kept it going in some areas long after it had died out elsewhere.

Yet other equally committed Sinn Fein members opposed the creation of the ISDL, harried it during its period of mass membership and finally inflicted a near mortal blow on a badly crippled organization after the Civil War. While their own organization had conspicuously failed to mobilize the new upsurge of political interest among the Irish in England and Wales during 1919-21, they refused to internally locate their failure and instead blamed the ISDL for depriving them of recruits. As I discovered, when I took over the leadership of London Sinn Fein in 1975, it is very difficult to persuade members that their long established organization is no longer suited to changed circumstances and should be replaced by a new organization.¹

¹ I quickly decided that, with so little Irish community support for the IRA campaign in Britain, there was no longer any real role for an organization so closely identified with the IRA as Sinn Fein. However, traditional concern for the welfare of political prisoners and their families indicated the feasibility of establishing new front organizations to mobilize this interest. The old guard members, still dreaming of a dramatic reversal of fortunes and a return to the glory days of the 1970-73 period, refused to accept these proposals and so I left Sinn Fein, along with a sizeable minority of the membership. This experience tends to confirm the hypothesis that organizations like the ISDL, which have known success find it much harder to adjust after defeats, failures, contd....
Intensely committed people often find it difficult to conduct a reasoned dialogue with the much less committed and usually find it difficult to comprehend the latter's apathy. Chen Yung's dictum that Communist Party members must exhibit "unlimited devotion to the revolution and the Party (and) sacrifice unhesitatingly individual interests" bears the same relation to most people's personal degree of political commitment as a Trappist monk to the Catholic laity. Catholics may admire the vocationalism and self sacrifice involved in monastic life but few wish to emulate it or even really comprehend such altruistic devotion. I have, several times in this thesis, suggested that people who involve themselves in organizations like the IRA possess a type of personality only found among a minority of any societal population. This observation is strongly confirmed by Inkeles while Bettelheim has drawn attention to the high survival rates of political activists in Nazi concentration camps, which he attributes to the strength of their personalities.

setbacks and general loss of support; whereas organizations like the Connolly Association, with their minimalist, short term expectations and long term gradualist strategy, find it much easier to survive setbacks and make the necessary adjustments.


Kedward in his study of the French Resistance frankly declares that "a militant is someone who is born that way". ¹

In chapters three and four I observed that sociologists who ignore the many psychological and individual personality factors influencing organizational development, especially voluntary ones, are depriving themselves of a very valuable extra dimension for understanding organizational growth and decline and the complex process that is mobilization. I believe that the work of social psychologists like Weiss ² is invaluable for understanding why people join and leave organizations. Yet while psychologists can provide much useful information about the mobilization and defection processes, it is ultimately only the sociologists, often employing historical data, who can fully comprehend the societal processes which create and destroy organizations: for organizations are the product of societal and environmental interaction. Notwithstanding the intensity of their own personal commitment the politicos are incapable of creating a mass membership organization, like the ISDL, unless the appropriate preconditions, favourable societal environment (preferably macro but certainly micro societal, i.e ethnic community) and high sentiment base are present. Nor can their personal commitment, no matter how intense, maintain that

¹ H.R. Kedward, Resistance in Vichy France (1978), 158. Like myself, Kedward does not believe that it is possible to create a socio-economic typology of the Resistance members.

² R. Weiss, op. cit.
organization at the same level of membership when those conditions change adversely.

For this reason I have deliberately refrained from commenting in this concluding chapter on the tactical errors, like the resurrection of the 'secret' constitutional rule, or the adjournment of the April 1922 conference etc, made by the Republican leadership of the ISDL and suggesting alternative strategies and tactics, they could have employed to maintain their organization. For whatever strategy they might have adopted, the ISDL could never have been maintained after 1922 in the manner envisaged by its creators in 1919. Sadler and Barry suggest that,

"an organization cannot evolve or develop in ways which merely reflect the goals, motives or needs of its members or of its leadership since it must always bow to the constraints imposed on it by the nature of its relationship with the environment".  

Marx however expressed this dialectical process in a rather more literary manner,

"Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past".  

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2 Karl Marx, The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte (New York, 1898), 15.
Appendix 1

ISDL Branch Occupational Census Forms, classified as O'Brien Ms 8432.(NLI). Branch membership by sex, age and occupation (lab - labourer, hw - housewife, un - unemployed, serv - servant, text - textile worker).

Teeside No. 1

Males 23, engineer; 29, engineer; 19, lab; 23, lab; 62, lab; 23, lab; 20, lab; 20, lab; 36, lab; 32, moulder; 25, boilermaker; 45, lab; 36, lab; 22, fitter; 25, lab; 19, fitter; 20, fitter; 23, lab; 25, lab; 22, lab; 28, lab; 30, lab; 34, lab; 23, lab; 28, lab; 24, lab; 21, barman; 34, lab; 33, lab; 19, clerk; 18, un; 24, un; 45, un.

Females 18, teacher; teacher; 20, serv; 18, serv; 18, serv; 45, housekeeper, 18, serv.

Swansea No. 2

Males 43, un; 42, lab; 47, lab; 44, lab; 27, driver; 28, lab; 38, lab; 35, un; 39, un; 20, un; 19, lab; 34, un; 21, un; 41, lab; 21, driver; 23, lab; 25, lab; 43, un.

Liverpool No. 14

Males 19, shop assistant; 50, turner; 30, fitter; 25, blacksmith; 18, printer; 19, lab; 28, lab; 25, lab; 33, caretaker; 19, driver; 22, cable layer; 30, blacksmith; 30, lab; 32, lab.

Females 20, maid; 22, cook; 32, hw; 28, dressmaker; 18, bag mender; 30, book folder.

Notts and Derby No. 4

Males 29, clerk; 31, clerk; 46, printer; 28, teacher; 48, lab.

Females 22, nurse.

Liverpool No. 13

Males 51, lab; 20, book repairer; 52, stoker; 14, schoolboy; 18, lab; 50, Sawyer; 20, engineer; 18, warehouseman; 14, schoolboy.
Females  46, hw; 21, printer; 21, shop asst; 43, text; 28, hw; 24, book keeper; 57, hw; 33, hw; 16, cashier; 25, shop asst; 24, book keeper; 24, shop asst.

Cardiff No. 4
Males  52, lab; 29, lab; 50, smelter; 25, lab; 43, rail inspector; 27, foundry worker; 54, lab; 65, signalman.

South Wales No. 6
Males  45, steel wrkr; 29, quarryman; 33, plate layer; 17, shop asst; 48, cooper; 21, quarryman; 17, shop asst; 24, plate layer; 20, un; 38, miner; 39, wine shop foreman; 29, lab; 35, tin wrkr; 23, quarryman; 26, lab; 36, rail engineer; 45, porter; 37, boiler cleaner; 48, county court officer; 14, schoolboy; 22, lab; 25, furnace man; 19, fireman; 23, plate layer; 46, rail porter; 57, foreman platelayer; 26, carriage wrkr; 44, carpenter; 44, teacher; 26, lab; 23, lab; 30, lab; 22, rail porter; 27, lab; 49, plate layer; 25, insurance agent.
Females  17, un; 34, hw; 23, barmaid; 21, un; 21, un; 25, self-employed dress maker; 22, confectioner; 32, cook; 18, maid; 19, tailoress; 36, hw; 45, hw; 31, hw; 61, hw; 30, hw; 25, dress maker; 27, milliner; 45, hw; 17, hw; 51, hw; 42, hw; 27, hw; 37, hw; 29, h2; 40, hw; 24, GPO asst.

Pontypridd No. 2
Males  28, miner; 55, miner; 29, engineer; 30, lab; 36, miner; 34, miner; 36, miner; 36, miner; 47, miner; 47, miner; 47, lab; 45, miner; 36, miner; 36, miner; 36, carpenter; 27, miner; 21, lab; 45, miner; 65, foreman; 45, miner; 36, miner, miner, miner, 22, fitter; 46, miner; 26, miner; 26, miner; 47, miner; 29, miner; 36, miner; 47, miner; 24, factory hand;
Females  59, hw; 42, hw; 35, hw; 20, hw; 31, hw.

Morley
Males  26, railway wrkr; 29, blacksmith; 21, miner; 19, miner; 52, miner; 22, miner; 45, builder; 37, text; 24, porter; 20, engineer; 28, lab; 19, miner; 29, driver.
Females  25, text; 58, hw; 50, hw; 22, text.
**Burnley**

Males 45, lab; 43, miner; 30, lab; 22, foundry wrkr; 45, chargehand; 33, lab; 40, chargehand; 59, lab.

Females 51, text.

**Heston**

Males 29, hairdresser; 30, miner, transport wrkr; 37, miner; 34, lab; 43, miner; 43, driver; 27 waiter; 40, rail worker; 43, docker; 20, painter; 49, lab; 28, rail porter; 43, lab; 35, electrical engineer; 38, lab.

Females 18, text; 21, typist; 23, teacher; 48, housekeeper.

**Ashton in Makerfield**

Males 26, fitter; 39, miner; 39, miner; 33, miner; 44, barman.

Females 20, shop asst; 30, text; 30, teacher; 21, text; 20, text; 37, teacher; 35, teacher; 37, cook.

**Bingley**

Males 23, Sawyer; 43, text; 24, lab; 22, brick layer; 19, machinist; 30, text; 17, text; 27, fitter; 23, warehouseman.

Females 55, text; 18, text; 41, text; 20, text; 29, text; 35, text; 27, text; 25, text; 56, hw; 20, text; 20, tailoress; 26, text; 18, tailoress; 52, hw; 59, text; 22, text; 30, hw.

**North Staffs No. 1**

Males Headteacher.

**Coventry**

Males 35, civil servant.

**London No. 40**

Males 36, naval waiter; 40, civil servant; 34, electrician; 40, hairdresser, 21, lab; 19, fitter; 20, fitter, 19, fitter; 19, lab; 19, plumber; 24, lab; 21, fitter; 19, boiler maker; 20, lab; 24, teacher; 34, electrical engineer; 47, plumber.

Females 26, teacher; 22, nurse; 18, teacher, 24, teacher; 30, teacher.
Stockport No. 11
Males 38, fitter; 55, text; 22, engineer; 54, lab; 56, lab; 60, shop manager; 39, GPO foreman; 21, text; 19, turner; 18, blacksmith; 19, turner; 18, brick layer; 47, porter; 20, text; 58, lab.
Females 27, text; 37, hw.

Hulme
Males 32, teacher; 28, lab; 50, private and trades status enquiry agent; 35, secretary.
Females 18, confectioner; 26, shop asst; 18, designer; 28, clerk.

Mid Durham No. 23
Males 27, lab; 48, lab; 33, painter; 16, miner; 23, miner; 38, miner; 31, lab; 24, miner; 26, miner; 21, miner; 21, miner; 28, miner; 26, miner, 48, lab.
Females 36, hw; 24, teacher.

Battersea
Males 47, bankclerk, clerk.
Females 22, typist; 22, typist; 19, typist; 27, cigarette maker.

Preston
Males 30, moulder; 32, moulder; 26, coach builder; 31, engineer; 20, machinist; 20, boot maker; 20, spinner; 42, clerk; 20, lab; 30, docker; 69, joiner; 42, miner; 26, moulder; 22, joiner; 23, miner; 22, fitter; 19, text; 27, builder; 32, lab; 16, text; 21, transport wrkr; 33, plasterer; 20, baker; 37, weaver; 47, lab; 37, lab.
Females 36, text; 19, text; 23, text; 15, text; 26, text; 18 text; 44, laundress; 36, laundress; 40, laundress; 42, laundress; 46, laundress; 28, clerk; 30, clerk.

Richmond
Males 26, salesman; 46, electrical engineer; 42, mechanic.
Females 24, photographer; 21, supervisor; 22, clerk.
Central London
Males  39, plate layer; 36, captain.

Sheffield No. 3
Males  45, inspector of weights; 44, foreman; 29, rail foreman; 48, lab; 32, lab; 50, joiner; 49, smelter; 44, rail foreman.
Females  19, warehouseman; teacher.

Barry
Males  57, painter; 48, shipwright; 38, docker; 48, docker; 44, teacher.

Halifax
Males  41, postman; 43, moulder; 26, moulder; 19, lab; 31, electrician's mate; 38, plater; 24, dyer; 43, baker; 24, fitter; 23, joiner; 25, pattern maker; 43, corporation wrkr; 57, stoker; 26, moulder; 23, miner; 27, baker; 21, wireman; 20, fitter; 20, baker; 37, weaver; 45, lab; 22, joiner; 22, fitter; 32, saddler; 33, plater; 37, lab; 16, schoolboy; 19, text.
Females  18, weaver; 15, text; 19, spinner; 37, text; 26, spinner; 23, spinner; 26, hw; 20, confectioner; 22, confectioner; 24, confectioner; 24, text; 16, spinner; 32, text.

There were two branch forms with the names at the top either indecipherable or torn off.

Anon 1
Males  22, fireman; 23, plate layer; 46, porter; 57, foreman plate layer; 26, lab; 44, carpenter; 44, tailor; 26, lab; 23, lab; 30, lab; 22, porter; 27, lab; 49, plate layer; 45, fitter; 29, lab; 33, plate layer; 17, shop asst; 48, cooper; 21, lab; 17, shop asst; 24, lab; 20, un; 39, foreman; 21, lab; 35, tinwrkr; 23, lab; 26, lab; 25, insurance agent.
Females  17, un; 34, un; 23, barmaid; 21, barmaid; 24, clerk; 22, confectioner; 32, cook; 18, maid; 36, hw; 45, hw; 31, hw; 61, hw; 30, hw; 25, dress maker; 27, dress maker; 45, hw; 17, hw; 51, hw; 42, hw; 29, hw; 32, hw; 29, hw; 40, hw; 25, dress maker.
Anon 2

Males 28, miner; 55, miner; 29, engineer; 30, lab; 36, miner; 34, miner; 36, miner; 36, miner; 36, miner; 47, miner; 47, miner; 47, lab; 45, lab; 36, miner; 36, miner; 36, carpenter; 27, lab; 21, lab; 45, lab; 65, foreman; 45, miner; 22, fitter; 36, miner, miner, miner, miner; 46, miner; 26, miner; 26, miner; 47, miner; 24, miner; 36, miner; 47, miner; 24, lab.

Females 59, hw; 42, hw; 35, hw; 20, hw; 31, hw.
Appendix 2

The March 1923 Deportees Compensation Claims and Awards

Listed in TS 27/182 (L - lost job).

<table>
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<th>Awarded</th>
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## Appendix 3

People convicted for Irish military type activities in England and Wales 1918-1923

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<td>Donkeyman</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. Lynch</td>
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<td>Clerk (ex police)</td>
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<td>Solicitor</td>
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1 Compiled from Times trial reports and Reports on Revolutionary Organizations.
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## Appendix 4

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<td>19</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Painter</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average age - 19.8 yrs

Officer Commanding (no age given) - Teacher

---

1 Listed as Exhibit 8, sedition trial, in A. O'Brien Papers (Ms 8419).
Appendix 5

Arms sent from London to Ireland in 1920 (photocopy, reduced, of Michael Collins file DE2/530, State Paper Office, Dublin).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PARTICULARS OF GOODS</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 10th</td>
<td>1-38 colt. with hammer.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 ditto. hammerless.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 9 m/m. German. Automatic.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Gallery Pistol.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45 ordinary.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Single action. 476.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 ditto 44.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 9/ m/m. German Automatic.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Bulldog. 32.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>1 Small Auto.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45 S &amp; W.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-38 Auto.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Rifle.</td>
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<tr>
<td>21st</td>
<td>2-38 German Autos.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-32 Auto.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Ditto.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>350 rounds 32 Auto.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>27th</td>
<td>1 Machine Gun.</td>
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<td>March 4th</td>
<td>1-45 Ordinary.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Rifle</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>1-45 Auto. &amp; Am.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Expenses</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>17th</td>
<td>1 Rifle (1917)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Trunk, straps, taxi etc.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Automatic &amp; 70 rounds.</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expenses to Liverpool.</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 6th</td>
<td>1-45 Auto.</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>German Auto. &amp; 200 rounds.</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>1-38 Hammerless ordinary.</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-45 Colts.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1-9 m/m Automatic.</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>1-45 ordinary.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>20 rifles.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd</td>
<td>30 &quot;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>PARTICULARS OF GOODS</td>
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<td>d</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
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<td>1920; Bt. Fwd.</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
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<td>March 24th</td>
<td>1 Rifle</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1 &quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1-45 ordinary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1-45 &amp; 17 rounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>23rd packing cases etc.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6th</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>8th Expenses to Dublin</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1-45</td>
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<td>10</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1-38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>17th 1-45</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>1-38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>Expenses removing rifles</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>21st to Dublin</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>23rd 1-45 short and 43 leaves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>25th 1-45 &amp; 50 rounds</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>26th 4-45 ordinary</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
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<td>29th 1 Long German rifle &amp; bayonet</td>
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<td>30th 1 Mauser pistol &amp; 67 rounds</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>8-45 Ordinary</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>June 2nd</td>
<td>1-45 f</td>
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<td>2nd 2 Automatics, 1-45 and some rounds</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>6th 4-45 ordinary</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>2-45</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>&quot;</td>
<td>22nd 3 revolvers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>23rd Daggers</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
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<td>1 Revolver ?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Tools for taking Rifles apart</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9th</td>
<td>1 Shield</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>11th 1-45 and 40 rounds and one doz. rounds 205</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>11th 5-45 ordinary</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;</td>
<td>15th 4 Automatics &amp; 1000 rounds</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>0</td>
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Total: 444 12 3
<table>
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<th>£</th>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 1st</td>
<td>2 German Autos, 1-45 colt, 1-45 Webley, 200 mixed rounds</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3rd</td>
<td>1 German automatic, 1-38 ordinary &amp; 2 miles of grenades</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45 ordinary &amp; 1-38 ordinary</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>7th</td>
<td>11 sticks of gelignite</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>30th</td>
<td>3 automatics</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>5,500 rounds mixed ammunition</td>
<td>42.</td>
<td>14</td>
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<td>Taxi</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 5th</td>
<td>1-45 Webley</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15th</td>
<td>2-45 automatic, 1-45 ordinary</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2-32 automatics, 1-38 automatic</td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov. 3rd</td>
<td>1-45 ordinary</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-38 ordinary</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 German automaton</td>
<td>8.</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th</td>
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<td>39.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12 automatics</td>
<td>9.</td>
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<td>6</td>
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**A ACCOUNT LONDON CONTINUED (3)**
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<th>£</th>
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<td>Nov, 5th.</td>
<td>2-32 ordinary.</td>
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<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4 rifles, &amp; 500 rounds, .303</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
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<td>100 assorted rounds small.</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 automatic.</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-45 ordinary.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th.</td>
<td>1-45</td>
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<td>Dec, 1st</td>
<td>1 colt, .45, &amp; 60 rounds.</td>
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<td>1 colt, .45 auto, &amp; 10 rounds.</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1-9 m/m</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-45 Webley.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6th.</td>
<td>4-32 revolvers ordinary, .38, rifle</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 automatics &amp; 50 rounds for same.</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<td>20-38 revolvers ordinary.</td>
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<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45 ordinary.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-45 ordinary.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1000 rounds of .45 amm.</td>
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<td>1-45</td>
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<td>10</td>
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Total: £39 3s. 3d.
Bibliography

Primary Sources

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Ireland

State Paper Office, Dublin
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Chief Secretary's (Ireland) Office.
Dail Eireann.
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Free State Government.

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Robert Barton.
Captain Berkeley.
Isaac Butt.
Roger Casement Repatriation Committee.
General Michael Collins.
Patrick Cusack.
Michael Davitt.
C.B. Dutton.
Sean Golden.
Alice Stopford Green.
Captain Harrison.
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Irish Republican Army, G.H.Q.
Edward McCarthy.
Fionan MacColuim.
J.J. McGarrity.
Kathleen Napoli MacKenna.
Eoin MacWeill
Sean Nunnan.
Art O'Brien.
J.F.X. O'Brien.
William O'Brien.
General J.J. O'Connell.
General Geroid O'Sullivan.
John Redmond.
Francis Sheehy Skeffington.
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Hugh Kennedy.
Patrick McGilligan.
General Richard Mulcahy (includes Michael Collins Papers).
Lily O'Brennan.
General Ernie O'Malley.
Richard O'Murthile.

Trinity College Library, Dublin

Personal Papers of:
Erskine Childers.
Pamphlets in Misc. Box IX.

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Irish Loyalist Relief Fund.
Irish Unionist Alliance.
Southern Irish Loyalists Defence Fund.
Anti-Partition League.
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Richard Dawson
Sean Murray.
Bound volumes of press cuttings.

Britain

Public Records Office, London

Records of:
Cabinet Office.
Foreign Office.
Home Office.
Treasury Solicitor.
War Office.
Ministry of Munitions.
Metropolitan Police.
Central Criminal Court.
Personal Papers of:
Mark Sturgis.
Granville Papers.

Personal Collection

Harry O'Brien Memoir (copy)

Newspapers and Periodicals

Unless otherwise stated the place of publication is London.

An Ghor
An Poblacht (Dublin)
An t-Oglach (Dublin)
Cardiff Western Daily Mail (Cardiff)
Catholic Herald
Catholic Times
Church Times
Daily Express
Daily Herald
Daily Mirror
Daily News
Daily Sheet (Dublin)
Dark Roseleen (Dublin and Glasgow)
Economist
Eire (Glasgow and Manchester)
Evening Standard
Freemans Journal
Glasgow Herald (Glasgow)
Glasgow Observer (Glasgow)
Hibernia (Dublin)
Irish Catholic (Dublin)
Irish Democrat
Irish Exile
Irish Freedom
Irish Independent (Dublin)
Irish Post
Irish Press (Dublin)
Irish Times (Dublin)
Irish Worker
Jewish Chronicle
Jewish Outlook
Jewish Struggle
Justice
Labour Leader
Listener
Liverpool Post (Liverpool)
Manchester Evening News (Manchester)
Manchester Guardian (Manchester)
Merthyr Tydfil Pioneer (Merthyr Tydfil)
Morning Post
News of the World
Old Ireland (Dublin)
Pall Mall Gazette
Poblacht na h Eireann (Dublin)
Red Mole
Reynolds News
Sinn Fein (Dublin)
Socialist Review
Sunday Observer
Sunday Press (Dublin)
Sunday Telegraph
Sunday Times
Sunday Tribune (Dublin)
Tablet
The Month
The Nation (Dublin)
the Patriot
The Socialist
The Southern Cross (Buenos Aires)
The Star
Times
United Ireland
United Irishman (Dublin)
Books, Articles and Theses

I have cited over 1,200 books, articles and theses. Following the precedent established by my supervisor Prof. A. Tropp in his own Phd. thesis *The Elementary School Teacher* (London University, 1954) I have decided that it is unnecessary and indeed impractical—adding another hundred pages to what is already a very long thesis—to list all these works which have already been fully documented in the course of their citation.