

*History Studies*



**University of Limerick  
History Society Journal**

**Volume 14**

**2013**

History Studies is a refereed publication of the University of Limerick History Society and is published annually. It is registered with the Irish International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) Centre at the National Library of Ireland.

ISSN 1393-7782.

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Cover design by Jennifer McCaffrey and Nora McGillicuddy, Limerick School of Art and Design, Limerick Institute of Technology. The cover incorporates the concepts of past, present and future, which is depicted, firstly by the use of the Buddhist symbol Aum. The idea is secondly represented by the illustrative heads looking in different directions. They symbolise the search for history by past, present and future historians.

Printed by Snap Printing, University of Limerick.

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## Preface

## Forward

*History Studies* is a unique achievement in student scholarship. From its humble beginning as an idea conceived by members of the History Society, it has grown into an ideal forum for students to find their first footing in academia. The variety of the articles presented here range from the role of nurses in the First World War to the anti-smoking campaigns of the Third Reich; ensure that the *History Studies* remains vibrant and engaging. It is a true testament to the tenacity of the editors in these tough economic times that a publication such as this has managed to survive these difficult times. The History Society is proud of its role in establishing this fine journal and we are confident that it will continue long into the future.

Darragh Roche  
Auditor  
UL History Society

## Acknowledgements

The editors would like to thank Professor Bernadette Whelan, Head, Department of History, not just for her generous sponsorship and support for this edition of the Journal, but for her continued support of the *History Studies* in her tenure as Head of the History Department. We would also like to thank Professor Anthony McElligott, incoming Head of the History Department for agreeing to be the new Patron of the Journal. We are also grateful for the generous financial support of the President, Professor Don Barry and the History Society. We would like to thank Professor Tom Lodge, Dean of the College of Arts Humanities and Social Sciences for launching this edition of the Journal. We would like to thank Pattie Punch and the Information Technology Division staff of the University Library for their help in putting the journal on the university institutional repository. Thanks also to Brendan Bolger for the technical help he provided. Again as in other years the editors are extremely grateful for the help Dr David Fleming has provided. Finally, we want to thank the contributing authors for their contributions.

## Editorial

Martin and Seán are pleased to present volume fourteen of *History Studies*. This edition contains eight essays based on the work of both undergraduate and postgraduate students in both Irish and British universities. The essays include topical issues about the Home Rule crisis and the Labour Movement, the role of Irish nurses in the First World War and the protests by the poet Siegfried Sassoon against the brutality of the Great War. In addition, there is a variety of other subjects ranging from the *Sheperdes Calanders* in the reign of Elizabeth I to the anti-smoking campaigns of Nazi Germany in the twentieth century. These essays demonstrate that *History Studies* is continuing to provide a platform for cutting edge research by both undergraduate and postgraduate students'. The wide variety of essays presented also demonstrates that there is an appetite among history students' for historical knowledge. It is that search for knowledge that will ensure that the journal will continue to thrive into the future.

Martin Walsh and Seán McKillen

Editors

**Puritan faith and forward protestant politics in Edmund Spenser's *The Shepherdes  
Calendar* (1579)**

Declan Mills

In January 1579, Jean de Simier arrived in London as an ambassador to negotiate a marriage between Queen Elizabeth I and Francis, duc d'Anjou.<sup>1</sup> Both Elizabeth and her first minister William Cecil favoured a match and on 22 November 1581, the queen exchanged rings with Anjou and declared her intention to marry him.<sup>2</sup> However, after encountering strenuous opposition to the betrothal from within her own court, Elizabeth withdrew her promise the following morning.<sup>3</sup> Among the powerful opponents of the match was the queen's favourite, the earl of Leicester, who espoused Puritan or 'forward Protestant' ideology. As well as using his power at court to try to prevent the marriage, Leicester commissioned propaganda against the match from writers and artists he patronised. One of his clients during this period was Edmund Spenser, who published *The shepherds calendar* in 1579. In this collection of eclogues Spenser would both propagandise against the marriage and address the issue of the struggle between radicals and conservatives for control of the Church of England. During the 1560s and 1570s, many radical protestants, particularly in London, had begun to preach against the continued presence of Catholic belief within the Book of Common Prayer, and from within the broader theology of the Anglican hierarchy.<sup>4</sup> These people, who were referred to as puritans, came from both the Presbyterian Church and the anglican Communion. The most radical of them sought a complete overthrow of the anglican hierarchy in favour of a more 'godly' church.<sup>5</sup> However, the majority –including Leicester, Sidney, Walsingham and Spenser – saw the English state and church as being in danger from

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<sup>1</sup> Susan Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony: the courtships of Elizabeth I* (London, 1996), p. 154.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 187.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 187-8.

<sup>4</sup> Susan Brigden, *New worlds, lost worlds: the rule of the tudors, 1485-1603* (London, 2000), pp. 242-3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 243.



catholics at home and abroad and sought to unite English protestants in a church free of catholic superstition that could co-ordinate with protestants on the continent to defeat the catholic powers.<sup>6</sup> This article will examine the ways in which Spenser used *The shepherds calendar* as a platform for these beliefs, focusing in particular on the February, April, May, July, September and November *eclogues*. It will also discuss Spenser's use of classical pastoral forms to convey his message.

Spenser entered Pembroke College, Cambridge on 20 May 1569 as a *sizar*, indicating that he came from a poor background.<sup>7</sup> While there he became acquainted with the poet Gabriel Harvey, the two remained close friends throughout their lives, and Harvey was the basis for the character *Hobbinol* in *The shepherds calendar*. Although they had differing views on poetry – Harvey wished to impose the rules of latin hexameter verse on English rhyme, citing Sidney and Dyer as examples of poets who could do so successfully, while Spenser toyed with different verse forms and often used traditional English styles – Spenser would even send his friend a draft copy of his epic poem *The faerie queene* to Harvey in order to get the latter's opinion of its merits.<sup>8</sup> He could read latin, Greek, French, and Italian. Skills he would soon be putting to use. In 1569, Spenser was recorded as having brought letters from the French city of Tours to Queen Elizabeth on behalf of Sir Henry Norris, ambassador to France. This would suggest that Spenser was already engaged in government work before he left university, possibly due to his linguistic abilities.<sup>9</sup> There is also evidence that he had travelled to France as a young man, seeing at first hand a catholic state that periodically oppressed its protestant population, something which may have coloured his

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<sup>6</sup> Brigden, *New worlds, lost worlds: the rule of the tudors*, p. 244.

<sup>7</sup> Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser, Edmund (1552?-1599)' in Lawrence Goldman (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online* (Jan. 2008) (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26145>) (21 July 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Jason Scott-Warren, 'Harvey, Gabriel (1552/3-1631)' in Lawrence Goldman (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online (Oxford, 2004) (<http://www.oxforddnb.com.proxy.lib.ul.ie/view/article/12517>) (28 August 2013).

<sup>9</sup> Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser, Edmund (1552?-1599)' in Lawrence Goldman (ed.), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online* (Jan. 2008).

view of the roman church. It is possible that after his graduation in 1574 he spent time in Ireland working for Sir Henry Sidney, who spent his career as Lord Lieutenant trying to deal with several powerful but rebellious Irish catholic lords, which could also have influenced Spenser's anti-Catholicism. By 1578 he was secretary to the bishop of Rochester and had become acquainted with Philip Sidney.<sup>10</sup> The next year he entered the earl of Leicester's household, and when the latter needed a talented writer to write propaganda opposing the Anjou match, he turned to Spenser.<sup>11</sup>

Throughout the summer and autumn of 1579, Leicester ensured that a series of pamphlets, letters, sermons and petitions opposing the marriage reached the queen. One of the letters from Philip Sidney to the queen was put into public circulation. Sidney used the arguments which had been deployed by both Stubbs and the opponents of the match at court, stressing the malevolent influence on the Anjou of the Queen's potential mother-in-law, Catherine de Medici, 'the jezebel of our age', who was responsible for the St Bartholomew's Day massacre.<sup>12</sup> He argued that Anjou would, actively or indirectly, become a figurehead for catholic resistance within England, and because he had been taught to 'desire greatness', he would probably become involved in an attempt to overthrow Elizabeth and establish himself as king of a catholic England.<sup>13</sup> Public plays, and more importantly from the perspective of influencing Elizabeth, royal entertainments (including one, *The lady of May*, by Sidney) idealising virginity (often alluding to the roman goddess Diana) were produced.<sup>14</sup> It was from within this context that another member of Leicester's household, the young poet Edmund Spenser, wrote *Prosopopoia, or, Mother Hubbard's tale* and *The shepheardes*

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<sup>10</sup> Andrew Hadfield, 'Spenser, Edmund (1552?-1599)' in Lawrence Goldman (ed.) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography online (Jan. 2008).

<sup>11</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony*, p. 168.

<sup>12</sup> Philip Sidney to Elizabeth I, 1580, Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature (<http://www.luminarium.org/editions/sidneyeliza.htm>) (5 May 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Philip Sidney to Elizabeth I, 1580, Luminarium: Anthology of English Literature (<http://www.luminarium.org/editions/sidneyeliza.htm>) (5 May 2013).

<sup>14</sup> Susan Doran, 'Juno versus Diana: the treatment of Elizabeth I's marriage in plays and entertainments, 1561-81' in *The Historical Journal* 38, 2 (June 1995), p. 269.

*calendar*, expressing opposition to the marriage, which were published anonymously and circulated at court and among opponents of the match throughout England.

Like many other poets during the Renaissance and Reformation, Spenser drew inspiration from a classical form, the verse pastoral. The word pastoral comes from *pastor*, the latin for shepherd. In a literary context, pastoral is a form of writing that examines the complexities of life through an idealised, highly formulaic, view of shepherds and life in the countryside.<sup>15</sup> The earliest extant pastoral, *Theocritus Idylls*, was written about rural Sicilians for the citizens of Alexandria in the third century BC. Two centuries later, Virgil wrote poems in which he and his cultured circle were portrayed as idealised versions of shepherds living simple rural lives, using these pieces to discuss or satirise city politics.<sup>16</sup> During the Renaissance, humanist scholars began to imitate these writers. Virgil heavily influenced many Renaissance poets, including both Spenser and Philip Sidney, and his *Aeneid* would be referred to in propaganda against the Anjou match. Pastoral poetry generally uses particular themes: love, the importance of literature, death, loss and the juxtaposition of the corrupt city or court and the idealized pure country life. Pastoral poems are often written as *eclogues*, dialogues between two shepherds. These may be a conversation between a shepherd and his shepherdess love, a contest to see which shepherd is the better poet or a sophisticated discussion of art, love or current events.

Spenser drew from both the classical and renaissance pastoral traditions to write *The shepherdes calendar*, even using archaic spelling to associate himself with Geoffrey Chaucer.<sup>17</sup> Spenser combined Virgilian tropes such as the grieving lover with the style of pastoral developed by the renaissance Italian Carmelite monk and writer Mantuan in an

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<sup>15</sup> Debora B. Schwartz, 'Pastoral poetry and pastoral comedy' College of Liberal Arts (<http://www.cla.calpoly.edu/~dschwartz/engl339/pastoral.html>) (20 May 2013).

<sup>16</sup> Alistair Fox, *The English Renaissance: identity and representation in Elizabethan England* (Oxford, 1997), p. 94.

<sup>17</sup> Risa Stephanie Bear. 'The Shepherdes Calendar: Edmund Spenser', *Renaissance Editions* (May 1996) (<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/shintro.html>) (21 May 2013).

attempt to build his own form of pastoral which could address English politics and protestant theology in the poem.<sup>18</sup> However, he struggled with the structural limitations of the form he had chosen, particularly when trying to imbue basic Virgilian pastoral tropes such as the funeral elegy with a deep allegorical significance, and when he returned to the pastoral form later in his career with *Colin Clouts come home againe*, he reverted to a more direct narrative form using models from the English literary tradition.<sup>19</sup> *The shepheardes calendar* comprises a series of eclogues, one for each month of the year, which are fables or discussions of art and poetry. However, there is also a strong political subtext. When Spenser wrote *The shepheardes calendar* in 1579, he was a client of the earl of Leicester and was associated with Leicester's nephew Philip Sidney. His involvement with the earl of Leicester contributed to the poem's immediate impact, both on the public and on other writers.<sup>20</sup> A year after working together, Sidney and Spenser founded the 'Areopagus' – a literary group which experimented with using Classical styles and tropes in English art and generally shared Leicester's political views – with Edward Dyer and Fulke Greville.<sup>21</sup> *The shepheardes calendar* was published anonymously during the summer of 1579, as part of a concerted propaganda effort in opposition to a marriage between Elizabeth and the duc d'Anjou. The February *eclogue* was a fable depicting the damage to English society that Spenser feared would be caused by the gradual eclipsing of experienced courtiers like Leicester and Sir Francis Walsingham by younger nobles like the earl of Oxford.<sup>22</sup> It presents the reader with the story of the oak and the briar, in which the sturdy old oak is attacked by a briar until the tree is felled in the mistaken belief that it is diseased, leaving the briar and the rest of the land exposed to the storms. The latin name for the English oak, *quercus robur*, is reminiscent of

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<sup>18</sup> Fox, *English renaissance*, p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 114.

<sup>20</sup> Risa Stephanie Bear. 'The Shepheardes Calendar: Edmund Spenser', *Renaissance Editions* (May 1996) (<http://www.luminarium.org/renascence-editions/shintro.html>) (21 May 2013).

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony*, pp. 170-1.

the name Robert (Leicester's name was Robert Dudley) and the oak was one of Leicester's heraldic symbols.<sup>23</sup> The description of the oak as 'thoroughly rooted, and of wonderous [sic] height; Whilom had been the king of the field' made it clear to Spenser's peers that he was referring to the tall, battle-hardened earl (*robur* translates as strong) and that the tale was a warning against the dangers of allowing Elizabeth's trusted old statesmen Leicester and Walsingham to be eclipsed by younger, ambitious courtiers such as Oxford.<sup>24</sup>

In the same manner as Sidney's *The lady of May* and other works from the period of the Angevin negotiations, the April *eclogue* was part of the emerging pattern of literary and artistic works designed to attribute Elizabeth's successful reign to her virginity. In it, a shepherd discusses admiration and chaste love for 'fair Elisa, queen of shepherds all', who is described as 'the flower of virgins' and 'a maiden queen.'<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, the November *eclogue's* lament for Dido was a thinly-veiled commentary on the death of protestant England that would come with Elizabeth marrying Anjou. The Queen's marriage to a French catholic would quite possibly have brought about the permanent downfall of powerful opponents of the match at court, most of whom were puritans or forward protestants such as Leicester.<sup>26</sup> It takes the form of a lament sung by Spenser's alter ego Colin Clout, mourning the death of 'some maiden of great blood, whom he calleth Dido.'<sup>27</sup> Dido here appears to represent protestant England, and perhaps more specifically the forward protestant and puritan factions who would be most harmed by the feared restoration of catholicism under Anjou.<sup>28</sup> She could also be representative of Elizabeth, or at least Elizabeth's political power, since Colin Clout notes that wolves 'chase the wand'ring sheep, now she is gone that safely hem them

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<sup>23</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony*, p. 171.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171; Edmund Spenser, 'The shepherdes calendar' in Philip Henderson (ed.), *The Shepherd's Calender and other poems* (London, 1965), p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> Spenser, 'Shepherdes calendar', p. 32.

<sup>26</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony*, pp. 170-1.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 170-1.

keep', continuing the allegorical depiction of Catholics as wolves discussed in chapter one.<sup>29</sup> In this *eclogue*, Spenser adopts a traditional pastoral form, the funeral lament, to make a political point.<sup>30</sup> Given Spenser's classical influences, it is worth noting that in Virgil's *Aeneid* Dido is abandoned by her lover Aeneas, who leaves to found Rome.<sup>31</sup> At around the same time, Sir Christopher Hatton commissioned a portrait of Elizabeth that also alluded to Dido and Aeneas, and it seems that this was intended as a reference to Elizabeth's need to abandon Anjou and establish an imperial power of her own through aggressive foreign policy.<sup>32</sup>

Spenser was also heavily inspired by Christian theology and his own interpretation of Protestantism. The September eclogue depicts recusant Catholics as wolves who 'gang in more secret wise/and with sheep's doen hem disguise.'<sup>33</sup> Only one shepherd, the wise and humble *Roffy* (symbolising Spenser's former patron, the bishop of Rochester), realises that his sheep are being preyed on by these hidden wolves and tries to root them out.<sup>34</sup> The July *eclogue* is written as a disputation between a humble shepherd, *Thomalin*, and an arrogant goatherd called *Moralin* who represents 'proud and ambitious pastors.'<sup>35</sup> Spenser criticises the goatherds (and by extension, catholicism) for living on the high hills and looking down on the world, thus gaining a false sense of their own superiority and closeness to Heaven.<sup>36</sup> *Thomalin* argued that 'To kirk the nar, from God more far has been an oft-said saw and he, that strives to touch a star, oft tumbles at a straw.'<sup>37</sup> Throughout the eclogue, protestantism and the shepherds are portrayed as humble, lowly and godly, as opposed to the arrogance of the goatherd's catholic hierarchy. The fourteenth century Italian poet and Carmelite monk

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<sup>29</sup> Edmund Spenser, 'The shepheardes calendar' in Philip Henderson (ed.), *The Shepherd's Calendar and other poems* (London, 1965), p. 90.

<sup>30</sup> Fox, *English renaissance*, p. 112.

<sup>31</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony*, p. 172; Fox, *English renaissance*, pp. 112-4.

<sup>32</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and matrimony*, p. 172.

<sup>33</sup> Spenser, 'Shepheardes calendar', p. 75.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 75-6; Jeffrey Knapp, 'Spenser the priest' in *Representations* 80, 1 (Winter 2003), p. 64.

<sup>35</sup> Spenser, 'Shepheardes calendar', p. 56.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-9.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 'Shepheardes calendar', p. 58.

*Mantuan* had used the pastoral form to exalt catholicism, imbuing the hills of northern Italy with holiness because their height brought them closer to heaven.<sup>38</sup> In the July *eclogue*, which was partially inspired by *Mantuan's* poetry, Spenser uses a traditional pastoral form – the argument or competition between two shepherds – to frame a theological debate about the respective merits of catholicism and protestantism.<sup>39</sup> It is not just catholicism that Spenser attacks in this eclogue. The line ‘to kirk the nar, from God more far’ is indicative of a particularly calvinist or puritan view of how protestantism should be practised, stressing personal Bible readings and godly behaviour over attendance at Church or subservience to an ecclesiastical hierarchy.<sup>40</sup> In contrast to *Mantuan*, who had made the high hills of his Italian pastoral poems symbolic of the virtue and glory of the church, Spenser equates the heights with what puritans perceived to be the arrogance and corruption of Rome. Instead, the lowland shepherds, who are depicted as humble and hardworking, become the model pastors.<sup>41</sup> Much like the real-life debate between protestant divines and catholic bishops in Westminster Abbey in 1558, Spenser’s argument is structurally biased in favour of Protestantism. He explicitly describes the goatherd *Morrel* (symbolising catholicism) as a ‘goatherd proud’ who represents ‘proud and ambitious pastors.’<sup>42</sup> The *eclogue's* gloss explains why he chose a goatherd: ‘By goats, in Scripture, be represented the wicked and reprobate, whose pastor must also needs be such.’<sup>43</sup> The July eclogue also touches on the appointment of Edmund Grindal, a reformist cleric, as archbishop of Canterbury in 1575. puritans’ hopes of him successfully changing the church were soon dashed: Grindal permitted the printing of the Geneva bible with its calvinist glosses in English, but even this moderate reform startled Elizabeth and Cecil, who promptly replaced him with the conservative John

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<sup>38</sup> Fox, *English renaissance*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 107-8.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>42</sup> Spenser, ‘Shepherd calendar’, p. 56.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

Whitgift.<sup>44</sup> Spenser would depict the former archbishop as the wise Algrind in *The shepheardes calendar*, a good and honest ‘shepheard great in gree’ who was hit on the head by a shellfish dropped by an eagle and ‘lies in ling’ ring pain.’<sup>45</sup> After Grindal’s removal, puritans increasingly began to fear that their attempts at reform were being blocked not just by reactionary elements within the church hierarchy but also by a queen who was no longer being correctly advised on how to defend the interests of her protestant subjects.<sup>46</sup>

While the July eclogue is anti-catholic in its sentiment, the May *eclogue* makes Spenser’s religious stance even clearer. Although Spenser introduces it by explaining that ‘under the persons of two shepherds, Piers and Palinode, be represented two forms of pastors or ministers, or the Protestant and the Catholic’, Piers is not just protestant but puritan in outlook.<sup>47</sup> When Palinode explains that he misses the days when shepherds went out in May to celebrate and ‘dancen, each one with his maid’, Piers replies that ‘Those faitours little regarden their charge, While they, letting their sheep run at large, Passen their time, that should be sparely spent, In lustihead and wanton merriment.’<sup>48</sup> While Palinode takes delight in traditional May celebrations in honour of the Virgin Mary, a form of worship the puritans despised – which may also be symbolic of what protestants saw as the unnecessary and corrupting trappings of catholic religion in general – Piers insists that shepherds (here explicitly identified with the clergy) must forsake worldly pleasures in order to do god’s work and not become distracted from their pastoral duties.<sup>49</sup> Here Spenser is critiquing not just the catholic church but also the conservative elements within the hierarchy of the English church

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<sup>44</sup> Fox, *English renaissance*, p. 106.

<sup>45</sup> Spenser, ‘Shepheardes calendar’, p. 61.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 106.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>49</sup> Spenser, ‘Shepherd calendar’, p. 41; Fox, *English renaissance*, p. 107.



who wanted to retain many catholic beliefs and practices that puritans, presbyterians and their continental lutheran, calvinist and Huguenot brethren wished to abolish.<sup>50</sup>

Together, the February, April, May, July, September and November *eclogues* form a clear expression of the forward protestant political and religious stance, expressing opposition not just to the Anjou match but also to reactionary elements within the anglican church. The core tenets of puritan ideology – replacing the existing church hierarchy with a more humble and godly system, the need for religious considerations to outweigh political pragmatism in terms of the French match and other foreign affairs, and the abolition of traditional celebrations and saints’ cults that distracted people from the worship of god – are all present, and in the July *eclogue* Spenser deliberately inverts an Italian poem in praise of the church of Rome in order to demonstrate what he perceived to be catholic arrogance and ungodliness. This was the set of religious and political opinions which the earl of Leicester sought to propagate, and thus *The Shepheardes Calendar* could be seen as encapsulating the opinions of the forward protestant elite at court in the 1570s and 1580s.

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<sup>50</sup> Fox, *English renaissance*, p. 107.

## **The home rule crisis and the arming of the labour movement, 1913-14**

Jeffrey Leddin

A cursory glance at the effects of the Home Rule crisis of 1912 to 1914 reveals that it was one of the most significant events in the history of early twentieth-century Ireland. The Ulster question, by the time of the Suspensionary Act in September 1914, had made parliamentary politics impotent, brought a proverbial gun, which had been missing since before the start of the century, back into Irish politics and played a vital role in creating a military ethos that would characterise the succeeding decade. David George Boyce has written that ‘two images dominate the historical memory of the Ulster Crisis of 1912-14, as seen in the grainy, black and white film of the time: the Ulster Volunteer Force (UVF) marching and drilling, and the Irish Volunteers looking equally resolute.’<sup>1</sup> This paper aims to bring a new image into this ‘historical memory’: that of the effect of the political turmoil on the development of labour’s martial ethos which was seen most particularly through the Irish Citizen Army (ICA).

Indeed, in recent years, such an analysis has occurred merely at a bibliographical level, neither providing a ‘history from below’ nor an analysis of the movement as a whole. With regard to those accounts which dealt with the general Labour movement, the post-1912 political turmoil has either been tangential to the primary focus of the various historical accounts or the breath of these histories have been such that the home rule crisis formed a small part of a much greater whole. Consequently, the crisis has not been given in-depth analysis in the two major accounts of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union (ITGWU). Despite the fact that in his account of the ITGWU, C. Desmond Greaves titled

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<sup>1</sup> David George Boyce, ‘The Ulster Crisis: prelude to 1916’ in G. Doherty (ed.), 1916: the long revolution (Cork, 2007), p. 45.

one of his chapters ‘Home Rule is Cheap Rule’, his analysis focused more of events such as the strike in Sligo in 1912.<sup>2</sup> Francis Devine, in his formative account of the development of the ITGWU, naturally focused more on the gradual build-up of the union at the time; given this and the fact that it surveyed a period of a 100 years of the union’s history, the index included only one reference to home rule.<sup>3</sup> Equally speaking, the breath of Adrian Grant’s analysis of Irish Socialist Republicanism, from 1909 to 1936, allows for only three pages where issues such as ‘the threat of partition’ receive a primary focus.<sup>4</sup> Boyce’s quote reveals where the labour movement has been located in the historiography of the crisis itself. This is not, however, to say that the militant wing of the Labour movement was not affected by the eruption of hostilities in Ulster. Rather, this paper will show how the Ulster question affected the development of this wing in a number of ways.

At an epistemological level it can be understood that the home rule crisis had both direct and indirect effects on the militant labour movement. By direct, what is meant is the manner in which militant labour responded to the actual issues upon which the events in the north revolved around, most particularly the threat of partition. Placing it in the context of the relative numerical strength and morale of the various labour bodies, especially after the cessation of the seismic 1913 strike and lockout, the effect of issues such as partition and ‘Redmondite’ politics on the ideological position of organs such the ICA and the Irish Trades Union Congress (ITUC) will be examined. By indirect, what is meant is the subsequent emergence of paramilitary organisations, i.e. the Irish Volunteers and the UVF. An in-depth analysis of the arming of labour should provide comment on the various British and European socialist and syndicalist contexts; however, in order to draw a correlation between the home rule crisis and labour, the continued growth of paramilitarism in Ireland is far more pertinent.

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<sup>2</sup> See C. Desmond Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers Union: the formative years* (Dublin, 1982).

<sup>3</sup> Francis Devine, *Organising history a centenary of SIPTU* (Dublin, 2009), p. 1170.

<sup>4</sup> Adrian Grant, *Irish socialist republicanism 1909-36* (Dublin, 2012), pp. 61-3.

By the autumn of 1913 the global syndicalist movement and the outbreak of the labour dispute in Dublin was fostering an increasingly militant labour movement in Ireland. Indeed, through the formation, and gradual development of the movement's armed force, the Citizen Army, such militancy would develop a martial element.<sup>5</sup> That such an occurrence coincided with the outbreak of nationalist paramilitarism and the home rule crisis was no coincidence. Rather, the formation of the UVF, in January 1913, was consistently used as an example and a tool for the arming of labour in the winter of 1913. Much like the Irish Volunteers drew inspiration from the UVF, most famously in Eoin Mac Neil's article 'The North Began', so too did the Citizen Army's earliest members. Indeed, in his history of the army, its first secretary, Sean O'Casey, spoke of how James Larkin, on the eve of the force's first drilling session, called upon Carson's example as a tool for the defence of Dublin's workers. According to O'Casey, Larkin told a crowd assembled in Liberty Hall that:

Labour in its own defence must begin to train itself to act with disciplined courage and with organised and concentrated force. How could they accomplish this? By taking a leaf out of the book of Carson. If Carson had permission to train his braves of the North to fight against the aspirations of the Irish people, then it was legitimate and fair for Labour to organise in the same militant way to preserve their rights.<sup>6</sup>

O'Casey's version of the event has been criticised by some historians. In his biography of Connolly, Lorcan Collins pointed out that Larkin was in England at the time this speech was supposed to have occurred.<sup>7</sup> While, in his Bureau of Military History Witness Statement, John Hanratty, one of the organisation's first members and its future O/C, gave an account that concurred with O'Casey, it must be noted that Hanratty recorded this statement twenty-nine years after the publication of O'Casey's *The Story of the Irish Citizen Army*.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> At this point the Citizen Army was sporadically referred to as both the Citizen Army and the Transport Union Citizen Army. It was not until April 1914 that the term Irish Citizen Army was first referenced, the significance of which is detailed latter in the text. See *Irish Worker*, 4 Apr. 1914.

<sup>6</sup> Sean O'Casey, *The story of the Irish citizen army* (London, 1980), pp. 4-5.

<sup>7</sup> Lorcan Collins, *16 lives: James Connolly* (Dublin, 2012), p. 220.

<sup>8</sup> John Hanratty witness statement to the Bureau of Military History (Military Archives, BMH, WS0096, pp. 1-2) (<http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0096.pdf#page=1>) (9 Sept. 2013).

However, despite the uncertainty over this incident there were other events where Larkin drew upon the precedent of the UVF in order to spur the workers of Dublin to join an armed labour force. On 26 August 1913, speaking to a crowd gathered in Liberty Hall, he said:

Police brutality has been shown tonight. I would advise the friends and supporters of this cause to take the Sir Edward Carson's advice to the men of Ulster. If he says it is right and legal for the men of Ulster to arms, why should it not be right and legal for the men of Dublin to arm themselves so as to protect themselves...So arm and I will arm.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, on 14 November 1913, the *Evening Telegraph* reported that Larkin called for drilling within the Labour movement 'a la Carson.'<sup>10</sup> Thus, while the date of such rhetoric is muddled, what is clear is that the military *oeuvre* of the home rule crises was being used as an inspirational tool of the development of an armed wing of the labour movement.

Larkin was not the only labour figure who used this *modus operandi*. James Connolly, at this time, also repeatedly referred to the 'Carson example.' On the 13 November, Connolly spoke to a crowd in Beresford Place, Dublin and asked: 'Why should we not train and drill our men in Dublin as they are doing in in Ulster?'<sup>11</sup> Such rhetoric ran along similar lines as those by MacNeill in his famed *An Claidhmeamh Soluis* article when he argued that 'it appears that the British Army cannot be now used to prevent the enrolment, drilling and reviewing of volunteers in Ireland. There is nothing to prevent the other... counties from calling into existence citizen forces to hold Ireland.'<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, Frank Robbins, a future Irish Citizen Army captain, referred to Carson as militant labour's unintentional ally and explicitly stated that the Irish labour leaders followed the example served by the UVF when they established the labour force. Finally, it is also noteworthy that the meeting of the Civic League in which Captain Jack White, the first chairman of the ICA, officially proposed the formation of a citizen army was referred to, by the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP), as

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<sup>9</sup> *Irish Times*, 30 Aug. 1913.

<sup>10</sup> *Evening Telegraph*, 14 Nov. 1913.

<sup>11</sup> Notes on the Irish citizen army by William O' Brien (N.L.I, William O' Brien papers, MS 15673 1).

<sup>12</sup> Pdraig Yeates, *Lockout: Dublin 1913* (New York, 2000), p. 438.

‘Captain White’s Home Rule Meeting’, this further highlighted the role of the home rule crises, and the development of ulster volunteers, in the formation of the citizen army.<sup>13</sup>

It can, therefore, be argued that the conflagration in ulster and the formation of the UVF affected the militant labour movement in much the same way as it did the militant nationalist movement; it acted as an example and a justification for the creation of an armed paramilitary organisation for both ideological spheres. However, it would be inaccurate to draw too much of a correlation between the effect of the crises on the nationalist movement and on the labour movement. That the Irish volunteers was formed in direct opposition to the UVF, with the defence of home rule as their main priority, is well known, and, given the theme of this paper, needs not be expanded upon here; however, in order to assess the gradual effect of the ulster question on the formation of the citizen army and the resulting arming of labour, it important to understand the degree to which the crises and ulster volunteer force were significant to the citizen army’s leadership; whether the issue was just a mere justification for an armed labour force needed for a city in a midst of it biggest and most severe labour dispute or whether it constituted some part of the ideological essence of that force.

It is well known that the citizen army formed out of the labour crisis in Dublin at the time. Indeed, much of the historiography has argued this. John Boyle, for instance, has argued that the ICA developed with a two-fold purpose: firstly, to protect themselves against blackleg labour and secondly, to boost worker’s fitness and morale.<sup>14</sup> Donal Nevin and D.R. O’Connor Lysaght have also argued that the formation of the ICA was a response to the tactics of intimidation deployed by the DMP and strike breakers during that industrial

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<sup>13</sup> C. Desmond Greaves, *The life and times of James Connolly* (Berlin, 1971), p. 328.

<sup>14</sup> John W. Boyle, ‘Connolly, the citizen army and the rising’ in K. Nowlan (ed.), *The making of 1916: studies in the history of the rising* (Dublin, 1969), pp. 53-4.

dispute.<sup>15</sup> However, it would be wrong to suggest that the army's focus on the protection of workers precluded its volunteers, leadership, and supporters from expressing concern and responding to the crisis in the North. Indeed, the evidence suggests that the home rule crisis, while of secondary importance at this point, was still in issue connected to the arming of labour.

The role of the DMP's intimidation of striking workers in the formation of the paramilitary army can be gleaned from the fact that in *Forward* on 6 December 1913, Connolly wrote of how the brutality of police necessitated the formation of a workers defence force.<sup>16</sup> However, it is also true that in the same piece he wrote that 'as a measure possibly needed for future eventualities arising out of the ferment occasioned by Carsonism in the north, we are organising a citizen army, and are drilling every day.'<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Connolly, though not yet a member of the force, appears to have viewed the army, even in its embryonic stages, as having a role in national as well as labour issues. On 19 November 1913, he was reported as having drawn a direct parallel between the citizen army and the Ancient Order of Hibernians (AOH), an organisation which he viewed as sectarian.<sup>18</sup> The *Irish Times*, it appears, were suggesting, Connolly held the opinion that the Dublin force could eventually supplant the role of the AOH in its opposition to the UVF, reporting him as saying 'we will not leave the whole of that work to the Ancient Order of Hibernians' and that 'they [the citizen army] will be able to handle a rifle, and when King Carson comes along here we will be able to line our own ditches.'<sup>19</sup> Outside from its support base, the army's leadership appears have held some ideological agreement with Connolly. In December 1913, White also spoke of this duality of labour and nationalist goals. He drew a direct correlation between the

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<sup>15</sup> Donal Nevin, 'The Irish Army, 1913-1916' in D. Nevin (ed.), *James Larkin: lion to the fold* (Dublin, 2006), p. 257. D.R. O'Connor Lysaght; 'The Irish citizen army: White, Connolly and Larkin' in *History Ireland*, 14 (2006), p. 17.

<sup>16</sup> Notes on the Irish Citizen Army by William O' Brien (N.L.I, William O' Brien papers, MS 15673 1).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> *Irish Times*, 19 Nov. 1913.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 Nov. 1913.

two arguing that neither Ireland nor its workers could be free without the other, and then asked them to prepare for the so called ‘double task’ of achieving both.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, even in the United States it was being reported that the citizen army had ‘been organised as an offset against the Carson army, though not necessarily to fight them.’<sup>21</sup> What is clear from this it that by the final months of 1913 the strike and lockout, the militant labour movement was primarily concerned and preoccupied with the day to day issues of the subsistence and protection of those on strike or locked out. However, the national question and the ensuing home rule crisis, though far less important, was a prevalent issue.

Naturally, the gradual cessation of the strike and lockout and the slow trickle back of workers from January 1914 onwards was a defining moment for the Labour movement at time. John Newsinger, in his account of the Dublin labour movement during the revolutionary period, proposed that as the citizen army was formed to provide protection for union members during the lockout, the cessation of that dispute meant the army had lost its *raison d’etre*.<sup>22</sup> It is true that the primary function of the force had now become defunct and, certainly, by the early months of 1914 it had reached its nadir. Indeed, the one of the army’s volunteers, James O’Shea, described this as the time ‘where everything was at its lowest ebb.’<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, on 29 March 1914, when the process of the revitalisation of the paramilitary labour organ began in earnest, Captain White told the labour leaders William O’Brien and Con Lehane that there was only circa fifty men left in the army.<sup>24</sup> Such a malaise, arising out of the culmination of the strike and lockout, created a vacuum which needed to be filled by a reorganisation and a reprioritisation of the army’s principles, developing an impetus for a movement into a more outwardly nationalist outlook. More

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<sup>20</sup> *Irish Worker*, 27 Dec. 1913.

<sup>21</sup> *The Christian Science Monitor*, 2 Dec.1913.

<sup>22</sup> John Newsinger, *Rebel city: Larkin, Connolly and the Dublin labour movement* (Dublin, 2004) p. 114.

<sup>23</sup> James O’Shea, witness statement to the Bureau of Military History (Military Archives BMH, WS 733, p.5) (<http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0096.pdf#page=5>) (9 Sep. 2013).

<sup>24</sup> Notes on the Irish Citizen Army by William O’ Brien (N.L.I, William O’ Brien papers, MS 15673 1).



relevant to the theme of the home rule crisis, this process coincided with the passing of the Amendment Bill which allowed for the fixation on the part of militant labour on the issue of the spectre of the partition. This also furthered the perception within labour circles that parliamentary politics was failing to stand-up to ‘Carson’s bluff.’ Thus, it can be said that both internal and external factors resulted in the increased nationalisation of the force.

Indeed, from 1914 on, there was a noticeable increase in the volume of Connolly’s writings on the issue of home rule and partition, with the appearance of articles such as: ‘labour and the proposed partition of Ireland’, ‘the first hint of partition’, and ‘the exclusion of ulster.’<sup>25</sup> The titles of these articles suggest that for the labour movement and militants, in particular, the major issue within the home rule crises, at this point, was the ‘amputation’ of part of Ireland. With this in mind, it is not surprising the greatest advancement in the reorganisation of the citizen army occurred in the immediate aftermath of the amendment on 9 March which, in Prime Minister Asquith’s words, was ‘to allow the ulster counties themselves to determine, in the first instance, whether or not they desire[d] to be excluded... [for] a term of six years.’<sup>26</sup> This threat of partition was met with a clear and unified response from the labour movement who were opposed to any incarnation of a divided Ireland.<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, on 14 March, Coabh Dearg wrote that such a proposal was equally unsatisfactory to all parties in Belfast and that partition would hinder trade.<sup>28</sup> On the same day, Connolly wrote ‘labour and the purposed partition of Ireland’ and issued a far more ominous warning. In this article he put forward the view that the division of Ireland would destroy the upcoming unity of the labour movement and he proposed to such a proposal

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<sup>25</sup> *Irish Worker*, 14 Mar. 1914; *Forward*, 21 Mar. 1914; *Ibid*, 11 Apr. 1914.

<sup>26</sup> *Hansard 5 (Commons)* LIX, 907-948 (9 March 1914).

<sup>27</sup> Grant, *Irish socialist republicanism*, p. 61.

<sup>28</sup> *Irish Worker*, 14 Mar. 1914.

should be fought by labour ‘even to the death’.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, in the Scottish newspaper *Forward*, he reiterated this, writing that partition would destroy the labour movement and make ‘division more intense and confusion of ideas and parties more confounded.’ Again, he stated that such a scheme needed to be resisted by armed force.<sup>30</sup> Two important features of the above must be commented upon. Firstly, these comments highlight how the home rule crisis was not viewed solely through the prism of national and patriotic reasoning but rather it was intrinsically tied to issues of class and trade. Indeed, at this juncture, the progress of the labour movement was dependent on the absence of any partition of the island. The country’s dispersion of industry, or lack thereof, meant that in an Ireland without the industrial Ulster, labour would make little progress in a home rule parliament.<sup>31</sup> Secondly, it is important to note that the home rule crisis was no longer merely some small part of an abstract ideology; rather, by this point there were calls for direct involvement, on the part of armed labour, with the ulster question; a subtle but important difference in contrast to the description of the force, by the *Christian Science Monitor* in December of the previous year, as an army which operated as a ‘offset against the Carson army.’

The amendment bill was not the only significant event in relation to the home rule crises that occurred in March 1914. The Curragh Mutiny on 20 March was another noteworthy event in the crisis.<sup>32</sup> The mutiny, the statement by fifty-seven out of the seventy officers in the Curragh military camp that they would have chosen dismissal over initiating action against the UVF, further aggravated the nationalisation occurring in the outlook of organs such as the ITUC and the ICA. This incident, it seemed, provided further evidence that what was required to prevent partition was not parliamentary politics but, rather, an

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<sup>29</sup> *Irish Worker*, 14 Mar. 1914.

<sup>30</sup> *Forward*, 21 Mar. 1914.

<sup>31</sup> Emmet Larkin, ‘Socialism and catholicism in Ireland’ in *Church History*, 4 (1964), p. 480.

<sup>32</sup> While this event is variously termed as the Curragh Mutiny and the Curragh Incident, the term mutiny will be used here as it better reflects how the Labour movement, viewed the event.

armed force, within labour, which sought to provide a counterbalance to the UVF. Indeed, for the ITUC, the mutiny brought out the realisation of the distinct possibility of partition.<sup>33</sup> Thus, for the various labour leaders, the spectre of partition took on a sort of metaphorical corporeality after the event, and gave further credence to the anti-partitionist arguments outlined by Connolly. Indeed, by this time, unionism and the Irish labour movement had become completely alienated and separated from each other, and within this context Connolly's critique of partition received little dissent from the Irish labour movement.<sup>34</sup>

The events in the Curragh and the continued threat of partition resulted in the publication of a 'manifesto to the workers in Ireland from the Irish Trades Union Congress parliamentary committee' on 27 March 1914. In this manifesto the parliamentary committee referred to the officers in the Curragh as a 'military junta evidently determined to thwart the will of the people.'<sup>35</sup> The nationalist outlook of the committee can be gleaned from the fact that it explicitly stated that it stood for the unity of Ireland and claimed 'Ulster in its entirety' before stating its opposition to any attempt at division.<sup>36</sup> Interestingly, the Curragh mutiny was viewed through the prism of a class conflict, further highlighting the perceived intrinsic connection between class and national issues. The position argued was that officers of the British army would not fight against their own political convictions because it would have meant fighting against their privileged class. Likewise then, the committee proposed the private in the army should not fight against his own class.<sup>37</sup> The manifesto contained a clear call to arms which was reminiscent of the rhetoric seen when the citizen army was being established, particularly that of Larkin's speech in liberty hall on 26 August 1913. Indeed, the manifesto argued 'if it is lawful for Carson to arm, it is lawful for us— the workers— to arm;

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<sup>33</sup> Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers Union*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>34</sup> Emmet O'Connor, *A labour history of Ireland, 1824-1960* (Dublin, 1992), p. 89.

<sup>35</sup> *Irish Worker*, 28 Mar. 1914.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 Mar. 1914.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 28 Mar. 1914.

if it is lawful for Carson to drill, it is lawful for us to drill; if it is right and legal for Carson to fight, then it is right and legal for us to fight for economic freedom.’<sup>38</sup> On 11 April 1914 the manifesto received the support of the labour movement in Belfast as it was adopted by the Belfast Trade and Labour Council.<sup>39</sup>

In his seminal account of the Irish citizen army, R. M. Fox wrote that the manifesto had all the hallmarks of something written by Larkin, who was then both the chairman for the parliamentary committee of the ITUC and one of the vice-chairmen for the citizen army.<sup>40</sup> Furthermore, Fox argued that the manifesto, signed by leaders of the national labour movement, not only emphasised the right of workers to arm against the UVF but also gave ‘powerful support’ for the newly reinvigorated labour paramilitary.<sup>41</sup> It is contended within the historiography of the period that the reconstitution of the citizen army, like the ITUC manifesto, was partially inspired by the Curragh incident that had occurred two days previous, further highlighting how both the organs of the Labour movement were equally affected by the home rule crisis.<sup>42</sup> Given the fact that the ITUC wrote its manifesto just five days after the Citizen Army held a general meeting for the ‘acceptance and amendment of a provisional constitution’, that Larkin signed both documents, and that the army’s constitution and the congress manifesto were published side by side in the *Irish Worker*, it seems likely there was an intrinsic connection between the two.<sup>43</sup>

It must be noted that while the ITUC’s manifesto was explicit in its commentary on the mutiny, the relation between the question of partition and the army’s constitution was more implicit. Indeed, with regard to the Home Rule crisis, the most relevant clause was the statement ‘that the citizen army shall stand for the absolute unity of Irish Nationhood, and

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<sup>38</sup> *Irish Worker*, 28 Mar. 1914.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid*, 11 Apr. 1914.

<sup>40</sup> R.M. Fox, *A history of the Irish Citizen Army* (Dublin, 1943), p. 66.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>42</sup> Yeates, *Lockout*, pp. 564-5.

<sup>43</sup> *Irish Worker*, 21 Mar. 1914.

shall support the rights and liberties of the democracies of all nations.’<sup>44</sup> The reference to the absolute unity of Irish nationhood was clearly a product of the prevalent northern problem, the threat of partition, and created a direct correlation with the manifesto issued by the ITUC. Indeed, the March constitution formalised the nationalist aspects of the army’s ideology. By doing this, the constitution ‘complemented’ the anti-partitionist stance being taken by Connolly at the time.<sup>45</sup> An analysis of both the constitution and the manifesto suggests that the ITUC were giving implicit support for the development of the citizen army into an outwardly anti-carsonist, anti-partitionist military force. Furthermore, it should also be noted that the anti-partitionist position was, at this point, no longer solely connected to issues of labour but, rather, it appears that the argument of unity for unity’s sake had become prevalent.

During the following month, militant labour continued to voice their opposition to the concept of partition. On 4 April 1914, Connolly wrote an appeal to Ireland working class regarding the ulster problem. In this he argued that it would only take the instalment of a Tory government and a small act of parliament to turn the six year delay of inclusion, offered under the 9 March amendment, into permanent exclusion. With this in mind, he asked the working class to turn to the principles outlined the army’s constitution and concluded the article ominously when he asked that if Irish labour stood for the unity of Ireland, who would stop them.<sup>46</sup> Thus, at this point, there was a clear support based for the use of force to provide an avenue for the more and more nationalistically driven goals of the Irish labour movement, i.e. the defence of the unity of Ireland. Indeed, with regard to the citizen army, further evidence of their reprioritisation of nationalist goals can be gleaned from the fact that on the same day as Connolly’s appeal, the army adopted the word ‘Irish’ into their name.<sup>47</sup> This adoption had a significant symbolic importance as it expressed both the desire to

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<sup>44</sup> *Irish Worker*, 28 Mar. 1914.

<sup>45</sup> O’Connor, *A labour history of Ireland*, p. 89.

<sup>46</sup> *Irish Worker*, 4 Apr. 1914.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 4 Apr. 1914.

broaden the confines of the force from its narrow Dublin-centric scope to an all-Ireland organisation and further highlighted the growing importance of nationalist, 'Irish', and anti-partitionist goals.

The following day a national labour demonstration was organised to protest against 'the suggested amputation of Ireland's right hand.'<sup>48</sup> In Sackville Street, Dublin, the first battalion of the citizen army paraded at this demonstration and unveiled its new flag, the starry plough. At this demonstration White argued that it would be for the good of ulster if they were to receive a defeat from their enemies.<sup>49</sup> While, less than a week later, on 11 April, Sean O'Casey, writing as the secretary of the ICA, further revealed the effect of the home rule crisis upon labour's armed wing. He wrote that the army could 'never allow political corrosion to suck from Ireland even a shred of one of ulster's counties.'<sup>50</sup> This was a clear indictment of the manner in which Redmond handled the crisis and explains the increased drive for the strengthening of paramilitarism.

Indeed, following on from this, a concentrated effort was made in April, on behalf of the ICA, to extend its base from outside Dublin and into the rest of Ireland. In order to do this, a manifesto was sent to the 'Irish trade bodies' across the country. Signed by both White and O'Casey, this manifesto argued that 'in view of the present situation it has been decided to reorganise and develop the scope of the Irish citizen army' and that as the UVF were 'preparing for eventualities in the north' and the Irish volunteers were developing across the country, the 'labour hercules' needed to 'shake itself to action.'<sup>51</sup> It must be recognised that this manifesto did not promote any nationalist or anti-partitionist goals. Rather, the manifesto's focus was centred on the argument of the necessity of a Labour force that was set

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<sup>48</sup> *Irish Worker*, 28 Mar. 1914.

<sup>49</sup> *Irish Worker*, 11 Apr. 1914.

<sup>50</sup> *Irish Worker*, 11 Apr. 1914.

<sup>51</sup> O'Casey, *Citizen Army*, p. 68.

apart from other paramilitary organs in Ireland.<sup>52</sup> Thus, while it was a product of the increased drive for the expanding the army, which was at least in part resultant from the Ulster question, the manifesto cannot be read as an anti-partitionist document. However, the referral to both the UVF and the Irish volunteers along with the attachment of a handbill, which argued why Irish workers should not join the volunteers, and join the ICA instead, reveals how the home rule crisis had a continued effect on the ICA at an indirect level.<sup>53</sup>

Indeed, White and O'Casey's manifesto was a product of the continued and rapid development of paramilitarism. The swelling size of both the UVF and the Irish Volunteers affected the sense of the need to further develop the armed labour movement. Much like the formation of the 'Carson's army' was being used by Labour leaders, in late 1913, as a justification for the arming of labour, the need of the revitalisation of this movement and the further development of the ICA was placed directly in the context of the 'present situation' and the growth of Ireland's two strongest paramilitary forces. It should be noted that at this point the UVF had a supposed enrolled strength of 110,000 men while there was between 20,000-50,000 men within the ranks of the Irish volunteers.<sup>54</sup> Despite the establishment of new ICA branches within the confines and hinterland of the capital, given the short timeframe, it is unlikely that the ICA membership had significantly risen beyond the fifty men detailed by White on 29 March. With this numerical disparity and the rapid growth of the Irish Volunteers in mind, that the handbill's critique of the Irish volunteers as 'hostile to the workers', 'opposed to labour' and undeclared towards the 'principles of Wolfe Tone and John Mitchel' arose out of the threat of the Irish Volunteers to the Irish Citizen Army's potential membership base seems likely.<sup>55</sup> It is, therefore, clear that the home rule crisis'

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<sup>52</sup> Fox, *Irish Citizen Army*, p. 69; Grant, *Irish socialist republicanism*, p. 60.

<sup>53</sup> 'Manifesto sent to Irish Trades Bodies', pp. 68-9.

<sup>54</sup> Timothy Bowman, *Carson's army: The Ulster Volunteer Force* (Manchester, 2007), p. 45; Collins, *Connolly*, p. 234.

<sup>55</sup> 'Manifesto sent to Irish trades bodies', p. 9.

effect on the ICA's manifesto manifested itself in two ways: firstly, it was believed that the political crisis of time should have been allowed to act as a catalyst for the revitalisation of armed labour; secondly, it was believed that the presence of the Irish Volunteers threatened the possibility of this revitalisation from occurring on a national level.

Despite this the armed wing of the Labour movement was not prioritised over the parliamentary process. Rather, during the summer months of 1914, the Labour movement simultaneously focused on their own parliamentary necessities and the development of a militaristic *oeuvre*. At this point, significant issues for the Labour movement were the establishment of the constitution for the Labour Party and the process of contesting the home rule elections. On 18 July 1914 and 8 August 1914 respectively the Irish Trades Union Congress and Labour Party (ITUCLP) issued manifestos which argued for the necessity for the presence of the Labour movement in a Home Rule Parliament.<sup>56</sup> For the ITUCLP the primary necessity for the contesting the home rule elections were economic issues: 'the evils of poverty, of unemployment, of bad and insufficient housing, of low wages', rather than nationalist, anti-partitionist aspirations.<sup>57</sup> However, during these summer months the spectre of partition continued to be an issue for organs such as the ICA and the ITUC. Indeed, while Greaves contended that that the most important item on the agenda when the ITUC met on 1 June was the adoption of a constitution, an anti-partition motion was also put forward by Connolly, seconded by Richard Corsih, and passed eighty-two votes to two.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore, the ITUCLP continued to reaffirm its 'objection to the exclusion of Ulster in any shape' and called upon the labour party in parliament to vote against any exclusion clause.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> ITUCLP manifesto (NLI MS 17108).

<sup>57</sup> ITUCLP manifesto (NLI MS 17108).

<sup>58</sup> Greaves, *The Irish Transport and General Workers Union*, p. 130.

<sup>59</sup> ITUCLP manifesto (NLI MS 17108).



Strategies at stopping the implementation of partition were not restricted to the parliamentary process. Even while they were focused on these elections, the ITUCLP continued to offer a degree of support for the arming of the Labour movement. Indeed, in August, it resolved that as all the main political parties in Ireland had armed themselves to suit their own political purposes in their respective 'sphere of influences', the congress advised all workers to 'either carry or to retain whatever arms' they had access to.<sup>60</sup> While this was advised in order to prevent the reoccurrence of the 'scenes' which took place in Belfast, 1907, and Dublin, 1913, Connolly would, on 5 September 1914, again relate this support for arms to the national crisis, writing that, given the outbreak of the war in Europe, the various armed and militarily drilled men in Ireland should have been used as threat in order to secure the withdrawal of the amending bill.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, on the same month, a draft circular was written calling for a conference through which the formation of the Irish Neutrality League would occur; an organisation that would contain the membership of labour leaders such as Connolly, the ICA's secretary Countess Markievicz, and the President of the Dublin Trades Council William O'Brien. The circular expressed the doubt that parliamentary forces in Ireland could provide a sufficient counter-weight to Carson and doubted whether the partition of the country could be stopped through such means.<sup>62</sup> Not only did it express a lack of faith in the parliamentary process, it argued that 'Ireland's position' with regard to ensuring the island remained untied needed to be strengthened during the war.<sup>63</sup> Later that month Connolly would again publically voice such arguments. On 19 September 1914, the day after the home rule bill and act suspending it for the duration of the war were made law, Connolly wrote that home rule would not be passed by parliament until after cessation of hostilities in Europe and that by that time the issue would entirely be in the hands of

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<sup>60</sup> TIUCLP manifesto (NLI MS 17108).

<sup>61</sup> ITUCLP manifesto (NLI MS 17108); *Forward*, 5 Sept. 1914.

<sup>62</sup> Circular and letter of the Irish Neutrality League 1914 and Anti-Conscription Committee 1915 (NLI, William O'Brien papers, MS 13, 954).

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

Carson.<sup>64</sup> This was a clear admission of a loss of faith in the ability of the parliamentary process to grant Ireland a home rule bill that was not dictated by Carson. Indeed, in the same article, he argued that the ‘courage’ of the Irish soldiers in that enlisted within the British would have been better used ‘in the liberation’ of the Irish nation.<sup>65</sup>

Despite the fact that during the general strike and lockout of 1913 the labour movement was in the midst of its own particular watershed, it was still affected by the ensuing home rule crisis. Indeed, while the lockout, itself, provides a paragon of labour militancy and Larkinism, the history of the arming of the labour movement in the first years of the Irish revolutionary period is intrinsically connected to the Ulster question. Even the ICA, formed primarily out of the necessity of providing protection and comradeship to striking workers, responded to the formation of the UVF and the crisis in the north in practical and ideological terms, using the formation of the unionist paramilitary force as a justification and an inspiration for their own army, an army which was seen as a vague, though still pertinent, counter-weight to militant Ulster unionism. Indeed, while the Citizen Army, consumed by events in Dublin and militarily weak, could not offer any realistic opposition to the UVF, it would be inaccurate to view Connolly and White’s nationalist speeches and writings as disingenuous.

After the culmination of the lockout in the early months of 1914, such opposition became more concrete and corporeal. The increased threat of partition and the perceived failures of Redmonite politics resulting from this offered an avenue for the revitalisation of the army which had already reached a nadir. Other organs, such as the ITUC, were equally resolute in their opposition to partition and offered a tactile support for the army’s movement into militant nationalist politics. Certainly, events such as the passing of the amendment bill

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<sup>64</sup> *Irish Worker*, 19 Sept. 1914.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 Sept. 1914.

on 9 March 1914 and the Curragh mutiny on 20 March 1914 played a vital role in this nationalisation, furthering the perceived threat of partition and providing further evidence of the dwindling role of parliament as the driving force of Irish politics. Indeed, an analysis of the ITUC's March manifesto, the citizen army's March constitution and its April manifesto reveals the perception of the increased need of armed forces within the Labour movement. With particular regard to the ICA, the continued and rapid development of the Irish Volunteers, an indirect consequence of the Home Rule crisis, provided further evidence for the necessity of a revitalised armed labour force. Naturally, for the ITUCLP, this was tempered with the argument that Labour needed a presence in any home rule parliament. However, such an argument did not constitute a disavowal of either armed Labour or anti-partitionist armed labour. Indeed, until the suspension of home rule on 18 September 1914, Connolly and other leading figures continued to resolve and voice support for both. This illustrates the effect the crisis on the various political spheres in Ireland and explains the growth of both the martial and nationalist ethos within sections of the labour movement.

## **Poetry, protest and propaganda: The First World War told through the experiences of Siegfried Sassoon**

Clíodhna Conboye

As one of the largest wars in history, and the first major conflict of the twentieth-century, it was inevitable that the First World War would produce ground-breaking ramifications, many of which can still clearly be seen in the today's modern world. The geography of modern Europe would be drastically different if it had not been for the war. The relationship between the government and public, specifically in Britain, also experienced some important transformations during that time. As the war dragged on, the British government realised that keeping up public morale was a necessity and increasingly relied on propaganda as a means of maintaining control over public opinion.<sup>1</sup> The propaganda techniques employed were incredibly successful in garnering public support for the war. However, in doing so it created a rift between those fighting the war in the muddy trenches on the continent, and those at home that supported the continuation of a war which they did not, and could not, know the

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<sup>1</sup> M.L. Sanders and Philip M. Taylor, *British propaganda during the First World War, 1914-18* (London, 1982), p. 2.

true realities of. Siegfried Sassoon was a soldier and a poet who, throughout his war service, became increasingly disillusioned about the causes he was supposedly fighting for. Unhappy with the complacency which the government's propaganda had implanted among the general public towards the men who were suffering from the war's continuance, Sassoon was prompted to make a public protest in an attempt to change the situation.

When the war began in early August 1914, Britain could boast only a small volunteer army and it would be over a year and a half before the Military Service Act of 1916 would introduce conscription into the country.<sup>2</sup> Those first eighteen months of the war that was initially expected to be a short one and was advertised as such, depended much on patriotic volunteers, and indeed at first received them in droves. One of those volunteers was twenty-seven year old Siegfried Loraine Sassoon. Born in Kent to an upper-class, but broken family, Sassoon was raised by his mother and named for her love of Wagner's operas.<sup>3</sup> In his youth, Sassoon attended Cambridge University but left without a degree. His mind was more on poetry than on any of the subjects he found himself studying such as, law and history.<sup>4</sup> The discipline necessary for success did not agree with Sassoon and he quickly became bored with the world of academia. At the age of twenty-one, he left university to settle into the life of a poet, sportsman and country gentleman.<sup>5</sup> In the period before the outbreak of war Sassoon self-published some of his poetry. It was also during his time at Cambridge that Sassoon fully came to terms with his sexuality; something which he was often uncomfortable *with and which he felt set him apart from others*<sup>6</sup> He had always felt an 'antipathy', as he put it, towards women, and an 'intense' but 'subconscious' attraction towards his own sex, but it was not until he discovered that his younger brother, Hamo, was homosexual that he could

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<sup>2</sup> Max Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon: a biography* (London, 2005) p. 64.

<sup>3</sup> John Stuart Roberts, *Siegfried Sassoon* (Dublin, 2005), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Roberts, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 29.

fully admit to himself what he was and what he ‘wished to be.’<sup>7</sup> He pursued a number of same-sex relationships in those years, despite the fact that homosexuality was at this time a criminal offence in Britain. Sassoon’s man-about-town lifestyle soon began to impact on him financially, and with the threat of war growing in late summer 1914, he began to seriously consider a career in the army, joining up just as war was declared.

Sassoon’s initial war experiences were uninspiring, and in fact for the first few months he found himself feeling distinctly bored. In service with the Sussex Yeomanry, he felt it was unlikely that they would be sent to the front anytime soon and the uncertainty and excitement he had felt in his first few weeks soon began to dwindle. In this first year of the war, however, Sassoon managed to retain his patriotism and even pride at being in the army. In his first autobiographical novel, *Memoirs of a Fox-Hunting Man*, he writes that in those early months while enlistment had not yet become an inevitability, ‘everyone thought it was splendid of me to set such an example...I shared their opinion.’<sup>8</sup> About his early instances of sentry work with the yeomanry he says that he ‘did not doubt it was essential’ that someone should stand guard wherever it was that he and his company should be situated. ‘My King and Country expected it of me.’<sup>9</sup> The poems of this period make only oblique reference to the war and it would be a while before Sassoon would experience the tragedies that would provide the materials for his more hard-hitting war poems for which he has become famous.<sup>10</sup> The first half of 1915 saw Sassoon enter the ranks of the Royal Welsh Fusiliers, where he met David Cuthbert Thomas, a man with whom he formed a strong attachment, and whose death in March of the following year, would be one of the main tragedies of the war for Sassoon and a powerful incentive for his eventual protest against the war and the deaths it incurred.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>8</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of a fox-hunting man* (Folkestone, Kent, 1971), p. 232.

<sup>9</sup> Sassoon, *Memoirs of a fox-hunting man*, p. 233.

<sup>10</sup> Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 65.

However, the inclusion in late 1915 of his younger brother, Hamo, in the mounting casualty lists was to be the first personal tragedy to occur to Sassoon, and it hit him hard.

In the months following Hamo's death, Sassoon spent more and more time at the front, getting the full experience of life in the trenches as the war entered a period of stagnation with the opposing armies facing each other in trenches spanning Belgium and France.<sup>11</sup> Sassoon did not see much fighting action in these months, but he did solidify his friendships with fellow soldiers, David Thomas, and Robert Graves. Graves, also a poet, had joined Sassoon's battalion in November 1915 and was immediately intrigued by finding a copy of *The Essays of Lionel Johnson*, the first book he had seen in France 'that was neither a military textbook nor a rubbishy novel.'<sup>12</sup> The book of course belonged to Sassoon, and the two poets quickly formed a friendship that was to remain significant to both of them, particularly throughout the remainder of the war. Their initial bond centred around poetry, as they discussed and critiqued each other's work, but later would revolve around the loss they both felt when Thomas was shot dead on 18 March 1916. In his autobiography, *Goodbye to All That*, Graves states that he 'felt David's death worse than any other' but its effect on Sassoon was stronger still. When first entering the war, Sassoon had felt some reserve about taking the lives of others, which is expressed in *Memoirs of an Infantry Officer*, the second of his three autobiographical novels, 'I didn't want to kill any Germans myself, but one had to kill people in self-defence.'<sup>13</sup> In those early days, Sassoon had indeed seen the war as one of self-defence. By the time of David Thomas's death, however, he had already begun losing the illusions he had held about the war, and the grief and anger the loss had awoken in him smothered any reticence he had felt about killing the men responsible. The desire for vengeance instilled Sassoon with a recklessness and a lack of caring for his own personal

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Graves, *Goodbye to all that* (London, 2000), p. 146.

<sup>13</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *Memoirs of an infantry officer* (New York, 1930), p. 19.

safety. He began distinguishing himself through dangerous deeds on the battlefield as he saw more and more combat during the spring and summer of 1916. Often misconstrued as bravery, these were in reality acts of heedless bravado from a distraught and at times suicidal man. An incident described in Graves's autobiography, in which Sassoon single-handedly cleared out and occupied a German trench, highlights the impulsive but careless state of mind he was in at the time. Instead of reporting back to his superior, Sassoon merely sat down in the trench and read a poetry book he had been carrying with him.<sup>14</sup> Actions such as this won him the nickname 'Mad Jack' and a Military Cross for gallantry after he rescued a lance-corporal who had been wounded near German lines, in summer 1916.<sup>15</sup>

Returning to England after being taken ill in late July, Sassoon had mixed feelings about leaving the fighting. While feeling guilty about leaving his men behind, the war continued to hold increasingly less purpose for the poet, and he was overwhelmed by a sense of its futility and a belief that it would never end.<sup>16</sup> He turned to writing more and more in the effort to cope with his conflicted feelings about the war. The poems he produced in this period are filled with his anger at those he saw as supporting and encouraging a war which they did not know the true horror of. The General in only seven lines helps to highlight the disparity between the 'cheery' military leaders and the men they thoughtlessly send to their deaths with their 'plan[s] of attack'. Christ and the Soldier is one of number of poems in which Sassoon attacks the idea, oft-touted by British priests and bishops in their attempts to promote recruitment that god was on the British side. In the poem a weary soldier falls to his knees before Christ and questions him about the war:

*But be you for both sides? I'm paid to kill*

*And if I shoot a man his mother grieves.*

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<sup>14</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 174

<sup>15</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 174.

<sup>16</sup> Roberts, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 83.



*Does that come into what your teaching tells?*

Sassoon's main grievance was with British civilians who were fully supportive of a war they did not know the truth of, as they were being deluded and hidden from the realities of war by the propaganda and censorship regime of the British government. Now that he was back in England, Sassoon's new stance on the war led him to new acquaintances among a strongly pacifist crowd which would have a strong and long-lasting influence on him. The publication of his poem *To Victory* in *The Times* at the beginning of the year had already brought him to the attention of Lady Ottoline Morrell.<sup>17</sup> An English aristocrat, married to liberal MP, Philip Morrell, Lady Ottoline was a well-known and influential socialite among artistic and intellectual circles. Both she and her husband had been against the war from its commencement, and upon reading Sassoon's poetry, she immediately brought it upon herself to discover more about the poet, and the two had struck up a correspondence while Sassoon had been in France. She introduced him to many who styled themselves as 'conscientious objectors' including the famous philosopher Bertrand Russell. In August 1916, Sassoon re-established his acquaintance with the publisher Robbie Ross, best known for his relationship and friendship with Oscar Wilde. Ross inspired a rebellious attitude in Sassoon, and in the late summer of 1916, the seeds were sown that would lead to his public protest against the war the following year.

When Britain first declared war on Germany, the British public was overwhelmingly supportive of the war effort. Germany was seen as an evil power, which had aggressively violated Belgium's neutrality, and the British had an imperative role to play in protecting itself and countries such as Belgium. They were entering the war in a legitimate act of defence and had just cause to do so.<sup>18</sup> In the four years of the war, the British government

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<sup>17</sup> Roberts, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 73

<sup>18</sup> Ian Stewart and Susan L. Carruthers (ed.), *War, culture and the media: representations of the military in 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain* (New Jersey, 1996), p. 41.

engaged in acts of propaganda in order to continually reinforce the perception at home that they held the moral high ground over Germany, as well as to influence opinion in neutral countries and later to pressure America into joining the war on the allied side.<sup>19</sup> The level of public involvement in the war, first with providing troops and workers for munitions factories and later as the British population began to experience the effects of German bombings at home, made it clear to the British government that public opinion could not be ignored as a determining factor in the formulation of governmental policies regarding the war. When the initial surge in recruitment after the outbreak of war began to wear off, the main task of propaganda, at least until conscription was introduced, was to encourage a patriotic zeal that would get men to enlist, and women to encourage their brothers, sons and husbands to sign up. The largest medium for propaganda was of course the press, which at the time of the First World War was reaching a larger audience than ever before as new technologies were being utilised and standards of literacy were improving.<sup>20</sup> Posters were printed in newspapers and placed in various buildings bearing legends designed to prey on vulnerabilities and inspire guilt among those who had not yet signed up for the army, such as ‘Surely you will fight for your King and Country’, ‘Who’s absent? Is it you?’ and ‘Women of Britain say Go!’ Inspiring patriotic feelings was only one side of the coin; just as important was preventing the publication and spread of information which might negatively affect the image the government and therefore decrease enthusiasm and support for the war effort. The 1914 Defence of the Realm Act made it a punishable act to publish information of a nature which might be, directly or indirectly, useful to the enemy or which might cause disaffection among the British and her allies.<sup>21</sup> Sassoon himself became a victim of this censorship when his first outspoken war poem, *In the Trenches*, about a man reminiscing about life at home while he contemplates his death in the freezing sludge and wretchedness of the trenches, was refused

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<sup>19</sup> Sanders, *British propaganda*, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Sanders, *British propaganda*, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

publication by the *Westminster Gazette* on the grounds that it might damage the recruitment campaign.<sup>22</sup>

When conscription was introduced the need for recruitment propaganda diminished. However, it became even more vital than ever to not lose public support for the war which was now entering its third year, when originally it had not even been intended to last longer than one. To retain the public's trust and enthusiasm, British propaganda makers focussed on creating a strongly negative image of Germany and its army. Horrible tales of barbaric atrocities perpetrated by Germans soldiers were widely reported by the British press; the stories were greatly exaggerated if not completely fabricated. Massacres, mutilated children, raped nuns, crucified soldiers; the list of the different crimes supposedly occurring was long and incredibly detailed.<sup>23</sup> British propaganda was extremely successful in generating a xenophobic disgust and hatred for the barbaric and monstrous Germans with tales of them celebrating such tragedies as the sinking of the *Lusitania*.<sup>24</sup> One of the most famous of the war atrocities stories, which was eventually proven to be completely untrue almost a full decade after the war, was the report of Germans converting dead bodies into such things as oil, fertiliser and soap.<sup>25</sup> There were numerous reports of the story made and the legend made its way into the national consciousness. Graves, in his autobiography, described the reported atrocities as 'ridiculous' and stated that if 'accidental-on-purpose' bombing and gunning down of civilians from the air were to be considered as atrocities, then 'the Allies were now committing as many atrocities as the Germans.'<sup>26</sup> This information was of course never to be revealed to the civilian population. Much information about the progress of the war was in fact kept from the public, casualty figures were misrepresented, defeats were passed off as

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<sup>22</sup> Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 82.

<sup>23</sup> Trudi Tate, *Modernism, history and the First World War* (Manchester, 1998), p. 24.

<sup>24</sup> Tate, *Modernism, history and the First World War*, p. 18.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59-60.

<sup>26</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 152-153.

victories, true stories from the front were suppressed in favour for manufactured atrocity stories and opposition to the war was contained. All in the attempt to deceive the public, who of course had no way of verifying the information they were receiving.<sup>27</sup>

British civilians therefore, could never realistically hope to be able to fully comprehend what it was like to serve at the front. Instilled as they were with a harsh Germanophobia, and kept sheltered from true reports of the war, despite becoming weary of the conflict as the war dragged on and the death toll rose, the British people remained behind the war because they still thought it was one worth fighting.<sup>28</sup> The fact remained, however, that from the start the British government had failed to establish any definite war aims and it was this point which prompted many to protest the war and to ask the question that it left unanswered: what were they fighting for?<sup>29</sup> It was this question which led Siegfried Sassoon to make his declaration against the war in July 1917.

Sassoon was not the only soldier to feel disillusioned with the war. Robert Graves's memoir, which first appeared over a full decade after the cessation of hostilities, reveals how similar his feelings were to Sassoon's, as he describes how strange England looked to the two soldiers when they returned to it in the summer of 1916 after they were both injured in the trenches. 'We could not understand the war madness that ran wild everywhere' he remarks, noting how the civilians almost seemed to talk in a foreign language, 'newspaper language.'<sup>30</sup> He even states that he found it impossible to talk to his parents, the rift between the civilian's world and the soldier's world having transcended even familial bonds. Writing of the discussions he had with Sassoon about the war, he says they began to see the war merely as 'a sacrifice of the idealistic younger generation to the stupidity and self-protective alarm of

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<sup>27</sup> Tate, *Modernism, history and the First World War*, p. 43.

<sup>28</sup> Stewart, *War, culture and the media*, p. 48.

<sup>29</sup> Sanders, *British propaganda*, 1982, p. 46.

<sup>30</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 188.

the elder.’<sup>31</sup> However, after re-joining their battalion in late 1916, the two soldier-poets agreed it was better not to make a public protest against the war, as it would achieve nothing and would only bring about accusations of cowardice, while also taking them away from the men under their command.<sup>32</sup> Protecting their men was something both officers placed extreme importance on. In the end it would be for them that Sassoon would break his agreement with Graves, stating in his declaration six months later that he was ‘acting on behalf of soldiers.’

While he could forget about the disparity between the home front ideas of war and the realities of war while he was fighting in France, returning to England in April 1917 after once again been wounded, Sassoon became increasingly agitated and impatient with the attitudes towards the war that he saw all around him. He found the war ‘inescapable’; longing for home when he was abroad but finding no relief while there during his convalescences.<sup>33</sup> He also felt another term in France, would take a severe toll on his mental health and feared the repercussions that this might have for the reputation that his Military Cross had given him.<sup>34</sup> At the same time his sense of futility was increasing daily, making him question whether there was any point to his military actions. Taking advantage of his uneasiness, his pacifist acquaintances urged Sassoon to take action, as they believed a statement from a serving officer, especially one who had been decorated for bravery, would be immensely beneficial to the pacifist cause.<sup>35</sup> With their help Sassoon drafted his Soldier’s Declaration, his attempt to explain as simply as possible all the issues he had with a war he felt was ‘being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.’<sup>36</sup> Sassoon states that the war

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 202.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., p. 192.

<sup>33</sup> Sassoon, *Memoirs of an infantry officer*, p. 174.

<sup>34</sup> Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 134.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>36</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, ‘A soldier’s declaration, in the First World War poetry digital archive, University of Oxford (<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ww1lit/education/tutorials/intro/sassoon/declaration.html>) (12 Aug. 2013).

he had entered had been one of 'defence and liberation' but had since become about 'aggression and conquest.' The dissatisfaction at the lack of definition about clear war aims from the government is also mentioned. The declaration is imbued with Sassoon's strong feeling for his fellow soldiers. It is for them that he is making the protest, with the hope of ending their suffering and sacrifices for a cause he sees as 'evil and unjust.' The short declaration, less than 250 words in total, ends with an expression of hope that the 'callous complacency' with which those at home regard 'the continuance of agonies which they do not share' can be destroyed. The declaration achieved some initial measure of success when it was published by the labour-associated paper the *Bradford Pioneer* on 27 July, and read out in the House of Commons three days later by liberal MP, Hastings Lees-Smith. Lees-Smith identified with the anti-war movement, reading out Sassoon's declaration, and also asserting that there were many other soldiers who likewise opposed the war, but whose right to protest against it was being suppressed by the government.<sup>37</sup> Lees-Smith's words were to be a foreshadowing of what was to happen to Sassoon, as his protest was to a large extent smothered during the weeks following its launch; its significance would not be fully appreciated until later decades when more and more facts about the mistakes made during World War One came to light.

Robert Graves received a letter containing a newspaper cutting of the declaration from Sassoon himself just days after it was published. While agreeing with all the points Sassoon made, his first reading of the declaration filled him with anxiety and unhappiness.<sup>38</sup> He thought the act of protest to be a courageous one, but this feeling was superseded by concern for the repercussions it would have for his friend. Graves was convinced that the only responses Sassoon could expect, from nearly all quarters, would be negative. The men for whom he stated he was acting would accuse him of cold feet and the army would see

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<sup>37</sup> Roberts, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 114.

<sup>38</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 214.

cowardice in his actions, while civilians would 'take an even unkind view.'<sup>39</sup> When making the protest, Sassoon had been well aware that he would most likely be faced with a court-martial, followed by imprisonment. While he was fully prepared to play the martyr if that was what it would take, Graves had serious doubts that his friend was in any proper physical or mental condition to suffer such penalties, and took it upon himself to rescue his fellow soldier and poet if he could. Rather than have him face a court-martial, Graves took great pains to arrange to have Sassoon seen by a medical board. Ultimately, this arrangement was one the army would also find preferable, as it would deny Sassoon the chance of becoming a martyr to the pacifist cause. Instead, the cause of this public embarrassment could be declared mentally unstable and hidden away in a war hospital. The most difficult part of this plan, however, was to convince Sassoon to agree to appear before the medical board.

Sassoon's disillusionment with the war had reached such heights that he had thrown the ribbon from his military cross into a river, no longer feeling pride in its significance.<sup>40</sup> Now that he had stated publically his opposition to the war he felt obliged to see his protest through to its end. Meeting him shortly after the whole affair had begun, Graves attempted to convince Sassoon that his protest could achieve nothing; 'the War was bound to go on till one side or the other collapsed.'<sup>41</sup> Extremely reluctant to do anything that would make it appear as if he was going back on his statement, Sassoon only agreed to go before the medical board when he was convinced that the army would never allow his Declaration to achieve the publicity he intended and would smother his voice somehow.<sup>42</sup> Faced with the possibility of being forcibly shut in a lunatic asylum for the duration of the war.<sup>43</sup> Sassoon chose to

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>40</sup> Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 155.

<sup>41</sup> Sassoon, *Memoirs of an infantry officer*, p. 233.

<sup>42</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 216.

<sup>43</sup> Sassoon, *Memoirs of an infantry officer*, p. 234.

voluntarily appear at a medical hearing that would diagnose him with neurasthenia (a term for what was commonly referred to at the time as shell shock and is now known as post-traumatic stress disorder) and send him to Craiglockhart war hospital.<sup>44</sup> When the war had begun, unused buildings and large houses all over Britain had been converted into hospitals for the wounded; the Craiglockhart hydropathical in Edinburgh was one of these, becoming a home for soldiers suffering extreme mental stress due to their war experiences. Men who had lived through horrific ordeals at the front and whose memories of such events were affecting their ability to eat, sleep and, most importantly for their superiors, fight, were sent to Craiglockhart to receive treatment. One of the practitioners stationed there was the well-known, Dr W. H. R. Rivers. To Sassoon, poetry had always been a form of therapy, and this did not change in Craiglockhart where he continued to write. However, his frequent therapy sessions with Rivers became very important to Sassoon, and a friendship was formed between the two that would last until the doctor's untimely death in 1922, which would deeply affect Sassoon.

Rivers was an accomplished practitioner in numerous fields, including anthropology, neurology, ethnology and psychiatry. He employed theories and methods similar, but not identical, to those made popular by Freud, regarding the repression of painful memories, and most importantly the idea of a 'talking cure' approach to helping patients.<sup>45</sup> While Sassoon was adamant that he was more mentally stable than the other inhabitants of 'dottyville', as he referred to the hospital, his talks with Rivers did prove immensely beneficial to him.<sup>46</sup> With Rivers, Sassoon was able to begin working through issues that had plagued him all his life and which the war had only heightened. These included his fear of failing the test of manliness, an anxiety born in a youth spent coming to terms with a then forbidden sexuality,

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<sup>44</sup> Roberts, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 112.

<sup>45</sup> Richard Slobodin, *WHR Rivers: pioneer, anthropologist, psychiatrist of the ghost road* (New York, 1978), p. 54.

<sup>46</sup> Egremont, *Siegfried Sassoon*, p. 160.



and emphasized by his time in the trenches and the responsibility he felt for his men.<sup>47</sup> Rivers debated the issues of the war seriously with Sassoon, and gradually, through Rivers, Sassoon began to understand that his only course of action was to return to the war. Writing in the final volume of his three-book long memoir, *Sherston's Progress*, Sassoon states that 'much as [Rivers] disliked speeding me back to the trenches, he realised that it was my only way out.'<sup>48</sup> Sassoon had soon begun to find the isolation of the hospital 'unbearable' and had felt a growing 'sense of humiliation' at being away from the war despite his youth and health.<sup>49</sup> While never renouncing the views that had led to his being sent to Craiglockhart in the first place, by winter 1917, Sassoon had returned to the active duty again. His reasons for returning are best seen illustrated in his poem *Banishment*. In the poem Sassoon acknowledges that his struggle was in vain, and states 'love drove me to rebel. Love drives me back to grope with them through hell.'<sup>50</sup> Sassoon returned to a war he did not believe in, in order to serve with the men whose suffering had led him to rebel in the first place, realising they were more important to him than the conscientious objectors, such as Lady Ottoline Morrell, who had encouraged his protest. But had not shared the causes or the consequences of it with him.

World War was seen as a British victory, but the nation had not come through the conflict unscathed. Economic and structural damage was severe, but it was the psychological wounds that had been inflicted which would prove the most long-lasting. As more and more information came to light regarding the decisions made and actions taken by the British government and military, a perception emerged that the First World War was a huge debacle during which terrible mistakes had been made, causing hundreds of thousands to be brutally

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p. 162.

<sup>48</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *Sherston's progress* (London 1936), p. 80.

<sup>49</sup> Graves, *Goodbye to all that*, p. 225; Sassoon, *Sherston's progress* p. 24.

<sup>50</sup> Siegfried Sassoon, *The war Poems of Siegfried Sassoon*, (Gloucester, 2007), p. 56.

killed and many times that number wounded.<sup>51</sup> However, the fact remains that at the time the majority of the British people were in favour of the war. Throughout the war, the British people were subjected to a process of cultural conditioning, designed to instil in them a patriotic fervour, a sense of racial superiority and an understanding that laying down one's life for king and country was the right thing to do.<sup>52</sup> It was not until almost a full decade after the war had ended that the nation began questioning the war, through fiction and studies of propaganda. Ford Madox Ford's novel based during the war years, *Parade's End*, was published in four volumes between 1924 and 1928. In the book Ford's main character worked in the civil service, and is required to fake statistics about the progress of the war. In this way Ford questioned the integrity of the war and the information that the British government had supplied to its citizens during the war. Arthur Ponsonby's study of propaganda, published in 1928, the same year as Ford's final volume, discusses the disastrous effects of the manufactured falsehoods fed to the public. Ponsonby even goes so far as to posit that these falsehoods were a "greater evil" than the actual loss of life experienced during the war.<sup>53</sup> Less than a decade after Sassoon's 1917 protest many other voices were being raised in condemnation for the senselessness of much that went on during the war. Sassoon's protest was one of the first to be made, but it was not to be the last. While it had little initial success, Sassoon's declaration gathered new significance as hindsight changed the nation's accepted views of the First World War.

Sassoon returned to the war in late 1917 consigned to play his role as soldier either until he died or until the war ended. At first located in Palestine, Sassoon eventually returned to the Western Front in May 1918. He never renounced his views against the war, and the poems written during these months, such as *Aftermath* and *Reconciliation*, are filled with

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<sup>51</sup> Stewart, *War, culture and media*, p. 38.

<sup>52</sup> Stewart, *War, culture and media*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>53</sup> Arthur Ponsonby, *Falsehood in war-time* (London, 1928), p. 13.

anger and images of hideous things, while also containing a measure of compassion for his fellow soldiers, on each side of the conflict. Sassoon was once again injured in July 1918 and spent the remainder of the war recovering at home in England. While his anti-war declaration may not have made the changes he yearned for, it was because of the war that Sassoon found his voice as a poet, and his poetry and his soldier's declaration have survived the century since they were written and can perhaps teach the lesson today which Sassoon tried so earnestly to impact so long ago.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> <sup>54</sup> Arthur E. Lane, *An adequate response: the poetry of Wilfred Owen & Siegfried Sassoon*, (London, 1972), p. 90.



## The effect of public opinion on the case of Dr Langley in Nenagh, County Tipperary 1849 – 1850

Mary Williams

Dr Langley was a professional man with connections to the upper ranks of local society. As such, he might have been expected to receive the benefit of any doubt from a Victorian judiciary, then typically influenced by considerations of respectability.<sup>1</sup> This micro-historical approach to his case will highlight many preoccupations and concerns of Victorian life, especially among those living through famine in provincial Ireland, and will demonstrate the extent to which public opinion within Nenagh Co Tipperary was able to influence both the judicial process, and the subsequent treatment of an accused man.

Nenagh was listed by Samuel Lewis, in 1838, as a small market and post town in County Tipperary, seventeen miles from Limerick. Of its 9,159 inhabitants, 8,446 resided in the town, which Lewis describes as a populous and well cultivated district with many resident gentry. The town had both a resident stipendiary magistrate and a constabulary police station; it held general sessions twice a year and petty sessions weekly.<sup>2</sup> As well as the landed gentry, whose lands were tended by tenant farmers, the town had a good mix of middle class professionals including doctors, solicitors and merchants. On the margins of the town were the poor, who scraped together a meagre living. It is between these groups that contrasting shades of public opinion will be detected. A decade after Lewis prepared his guide, Ireland was in the grip of unprecedented famine, and the small market town of Nenagh was deeply affected. Between 1841 and 1851, recorded deaths in the area comprised nearly one quarter of the total population.<sup>3</sup> The 1851 census showed a total population decrease of

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1Carolyn Conley, *The unwritten law, criminal justice in Victorian Kent* (Oxford, 1991), p. 178.

2Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (London, 1837), p. 423.

3William Smyth, “‘Born astride the grave’: The geography of the dead’ in J. Crowley, W.J. Smyth and M. Murphy (eds.), *Atlas of the great Irish famine, 1845-52* (Cork, 2012), p. 110.

over twenty-nine per cent. In Nenagh itself, there were twenty per cent less habitable houses, although the population of the town increased by 1,000 probably by the influx of the starving from the countryside, who came to beg or seek relief in the workhouse.<sup>4</sup> The boundary between the respectable and the destitute was fluid: take for example the case of James Kelly, reported in the *Nenagh Guardian* on 14 February 1849 with the familiar strapline 'Another death by starvation':

'On Monday last, James Carroll Esq., coroner, held an inquest on the body of James Kelly, who died of actual famine. Kelly, who was a blacksmith, was, a few years ago, a comfortable farmer, ... and now he is numbered among the many victims who have fallen by starvation in this poverty stricken country. ... It would appear by the evidence given at the inquest that Mr Young, the relieving officer had refused relief to the deceased ...'<sup>5</sup>

Despite the devastating death-rate from hunger-related disease, for which the paper reported regular statistics, individual deaths from actual hunger were still noteworthy, and in January 1849 almost every issue of the bi-weekly *Nenagh Guardian* reported such deaths. Mr Young appeared to escape censure in the case of James Kelly, but inquest juries reflected public concern and were not always slow to apportion blame. At an inquest in Nenagh on 22 January 1849, when Dr Kittson deposed that Tom Ryan died 'from want, not being able to secure the common necessities of life', the inquest jury found 'that the deceased came by his death in consequence of the negligence of the relieving officer McKeogh.'<sup>6</sup> Analysis by Nicholas Woodward suggests that Tipperary was one of the few counties in Ireland where sentencing policies were not mitigated to take account of exceptional circumstances during the famine.<sup>7</sup> Those North Tipperary residents dispensing the law in Nenagh would include representatives of the town's many resident gentry, their dual role as both landlords and

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<sup>4</sup> *The Census of Ireland for the year 1851. Part I. Showing the area, population and ... County of Tipperary (North Riding)* BPP 1852 -53 XC1 649 - [1549], p. 681.

<sup>5</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 14 Feb. 1849.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 24 Jan. 1849.

<sup>7</sup> Nicholas Woodward, 'Transportation convictions during the great Irish famine' in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xxxvii, 1 (2006), pp. 59-87.

magistrates no doubt a source of tension, as Silverman highlights.<sup>8</sup> However, as famine devastated the country, the gentry of Nenagh maintained a respectable lifestyle. Butler observes:

A perusal of contemporary provincial newspapers shows a 'business as usual' attitude was adopted by the mercantile and landowning classes ... as in North Tipperary in January 1846, when the correspondents felt compelled to observe that 'seldom .. have we witnessed a more splendid Ball in Nenagh. Those attending included the aristocracy and many families of the *respectable portion* [italics added] of the residents of Nenagh.'<sup>9</sup>

This was the background against which the case of Charles Langley erupted into the public domain in 1849. It would embroil some of those pillars of Nenagh society who served as guardians of the poor, made up the juries of the quarter sessions, sat on the bench at the petty sessions, and attended splendid balls in Nenagh. In particular, it would tear apart the Poe family from the Solsborough estate, who had provided two jury members at the busy quarter sessions of January 1849. It was sparked by events in the marriage of their cousin Eleanor, and her ultimate death. Eleanor was a frequent visitor to Solsborough, and the wife of Dr Charles Langley. The detailed study of the events around the death of Eleanor Langley which follows uses micro historical methodology. Magnússon identifies micro history as an innovative response to the cultural turn in social history, turning the attention away from large scale studies grounded in the methods of the social sciences to studies which probe the significance of the small-scale and the individual.<sup>10</sup> In this case micro history will reveal a record of behaviours and interactions, coming (as Muir and Ruggiero describe) 'from many

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8 Marilyn Silverman, 'Custom, courts, and class formation: constructing the hegemonic process through the petty sessions of a South Eastern Irish parish, 1828-1884' in *American Ethnologist*, xxvii, 2 (may, 2000), pp. 400-430.

9 David Butler, 'The landed classes during the great famine' in J. Crowley, W.J. Smith and M. Murphy (eds.), *Atlas of the great Irish famine, 1845-52*, (Cork, 2012), p. 272.

10 S.G. Magnússon, "'The singularities of history': social history and micro history within the postmodern state of knowledge' in *Journal of Social History*, xxxvi, 3 (2003), pp. 701 - 735.

levels of society and viewed from multiple perspectives'.<sup>11</sup> Gattrell described his own work of microhistory as 'rooted in neighbourhood and community, playing to a sense of place, and of incident'.<sup>12</sup> The sense of place and of incident is palpable in the contemporaneous news reports of these events in Nenagh, as they throw light on the role of public opinion in mediating the interrelationship Muir & Ruggiero identify, between law and social values.<sup>13</sup>

This study will rely heavily on newspaper documentation of events, as no official records survived the destruction of the Irish Public Record Office in 1922. Knelman, paraphrasing Hariman, points to the function of trials as a form of public discourse, and highlights the role of the Victorian newspaper in facilitating this.<sup>14</sup> The extensive coverage provided by the *Nenagh Guardian* reflected deep public interest in the case. No doubt few in Nenagh lacked their own opinion of events, and the paper assumed a level of familiarity with background details in its readership that only slowly became evident to this historian. Although it is unfortunate that the official documents presented in evidence during the inquest and subsequent court case are now destroyed, the newspaper quotes extensively from these. Significantly Dr Langley, who is known to have complained about the content of reports, did not contest their accuracy. There would be many representations of truth in the documentation of a trial; perhaps that of the newspaper is most relevant to the present study, as it both reflects and shapes public opinion.

Charles Langley, born in 1806, was not a native of Nenagh, but came from the nearby city of Limerick. He was a licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons in Dublin, and had arrived in Nenagh in April 1831 to take up the position of medical superintendent to the

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11 Edward Muir and Guido Ruggiero, 'Afterword: crime and the writing of history' in Muir and Ruggiero (eds) *History from crime* (London, 1994), p. 226.

12 V.A.C. Gattrell, 'The rape of Elizabeth Cureton: a microhistory' in V.A.C. Gattrell, *The hanging tree: execution and the English people 1770-1868* (Oxford, 1994), p. 447.

13 Muir and Ruggiero, 'Afterword', p. 227.

14 Judith Knelman, 'The popular press' from J. Knelman, *Twisting in the wind: the murderess and the English press* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 38-9.



dispensary. On 12 December 1831, he married Ellen (Eleanor) Poe.<sup>15</sup> She was, it would later transpire, about fourteen years his senior. The wedding took place in Dublin, Charles Langley residing at a prestigious address on Fitzwilliam Square. Two of the Poe family served as witnesses.<sup>16</sup> His wife's connections were probably advantageous to him, as Ellen's older sister Frances was already married to Rev. James Hill Poe, one of the Solsborough Poes and incumbent of the parish of Nenagh. Langley's subsequent career and ultimate downfall can be traced through the minutes of the church vestry and the pages of the *Nenagh Guardian*. He does not appear to have taken a significant place in the charitable life of the community, although he is mentioned once in the vestry minutes, when, in May 1835, he was appointed to a committee providing coffins for the poor. It is perhaps significant that he is not mentioned more often. By 1840, he had become a controversial figure, and probably an embarrassment to his wife's connections. In December 1840, the dispensary post was advertised, and his re-election as medical attendant contested, because of many complaints concerning management of his loan fund, which interfered with his duties. He was re-elected by the directors of the dispensary by twenty-seven votes to seventeen: evidently a significant number of enemies had been made among the directors, who consisted of significant subscribers to the dispensary, including familiar names from the Poe family.<sup>17</sup>

Eleanor Langley died on 1 May 1849, and news of the death spread quickly: evidence at the inquest would reveal that crowds outside were attempting to break down the front door before the coffin was removed to the garden on the night of her death. Both Langley and Eleanor's nephew, James Poe, had written to the coroner requesting an inquest. Langley wrote of his hope that a 'fair, open, impartial and public investigation into her death' would rebut insinuations circulating against him. His letter was written, but not posted, three days

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<sup>15</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Dec. 1831.

<sup>16</sup> Marriage of Charles Langley and Ellen Poe., Representative Church Body Library, Dublin, St Peters Church Dublin 12 Dec. 1831.

<sup>17</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 30 Dec. 1840.

before his wife's death. It is obvious from the newspaper coverage that the inquest was considered sensational, and expected to be controversial.<sup>18</sup> By the final day, after two adjournments, police were present to control the crowds. The different strands of evidence in this inquiry and later court case would cover adultery, passionate love, and marital cruelty. It would also submit Charles Langley to public ridicule. It had, in fact, all the ingredients of the fictional stories published by Anthony Trollope at that time.<sup>19</sup> One contention at the inquest, that the victim had been deprived of food necessary for her life, was a familiar one, but it was familiar because of deaths from famine; the townspeople of Nenagh would find it shocking that it could be attached to the wife of a well-connected doctor. Townspeople were strongly antagonistic to Langley: angry feeling exhibited by the public was referred to on the final day of the inquest, and an earlier news report described how on the day of Mrs Langley's internment a crowd of women threw stones at the house, broke most of the windows, and accompanied this with 'violent denunciations against Dr. Langley'.<sup>20</sup> An abusive stone-throwing crowd made up entirely or mainly of women, suggests a ground-swell of solidarity with Eleanor Langley from a group which transcended class distinctions, and whose gender made them officially powerless to adjudicate on events.

After the jury had viewed the body, Mr O'Brien Dillon, who appeared on behalf of the next of kin of the deceased, requested an adjournment in order to gather witnesses. The inquest was rescheduled for the following morning, the day after Eleanor's death, and on resumption extensively covered as a front-page story. The chief witness was Dr Quin, who described visiting Mrs Langley at her lodgings two weeks before she died. He found she was concerned that she had a certain condition, which he declined to name, but of which she showed no symptom. She did however have other symptoms from that time until her death

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<sup>18</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 5 May 1849.

<sup>19</sup> For examples, see *The Kelly's and the O'Kelly's* published in 1848.

<sup>20</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 7 May 1849.

which, he said, 'assumed quite the character of English cholera'. The signed statement by Dr Quin and four other doctors following a post-mortem found evidence of her long-term lung disease and inflammation sufficient to account for the diarrhoea 'which ultimately caused her death', but did not mention cholera. Questioned about the earlier complaint for which he was called, Quin responded 'it is not necessary to mention it. She died of English cholera.' Dillon then advised that the relatives were satisfied with this, and did not after all wish to pursue the matter further. The coroner immediately encouraged the jury to bring in a verdict of death from cholera. Scenes of uproar followed, with the court cleared three times and the jury forced twice to answer individually whether they were prepared to give a verdict. They were not. They insisted that they were not satisfied, and had come to hear evidence which was now denied to them. The coroner threatened to dismiss the jury, but finally the inquest was again adjourned. The jury was not prepared to accede to the wishes of the prestigious Poe family to avoid any scandal. Significantly, the qualification for jurors to sit upon inquest hearings was considerably less restrictive than the property qualification needed for jurors at the quarter sessions: they were expected to be rated at four pounds for the relief of the poor, and even that requirement could be relaxed if necessary.<sup>21</sup>

When the day of the adjourned inquest arrived, Charles Langley had two solicitors acting for him, but was thought to have left Nenagh. Six doctors and four servants were called as witnesses and closely questioned. The doctors were asked many times to comment on the possibility that Langley could have administered prussic acid to his wife, ostensibly as a cure for lung disease. The five doctors who were present at the post mortem all gave their opinion that, although it might have been possible, Mrs Langley did not die from poison but from diarrhoea. They were also questioned about the amount Mrs Langley was given to eat,

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<sup>21</sup>*An act for consolidating and amending the Laws relative to Jurors and Juries in Ireland. 28 Aug. 1833 (3 & 4 Will. IV, c. 91); An act to amend the Laws relating to the office of Coroner and the Expenses of Inquests in Ireland. 27 July 1846 (9 & 10 Vict., c. 37).*

and all testified that her food may have been adequate in quantity, but was not suited to her constitution. The evidence of the servants was that she was frequently hungry, and that they often smuggled her more food than Langley allowed. Indeed, the doctors concern about the suitability of bread given to Mrs Langley would resonate with a recent campaign to improve the quality of the bread provided at the workhouse.<sup>22</sup>

More sensationally, Dr Quin admitted that when he attended the fifty-eight year old Mrs Langley two weeks before she died, the condition she feared was one sexually transmitted, for which a servant-man could possibly be responsible: this information was presented by the newspaper as a series of asterisks, with meaning easily understood when taken in context. The doctors all agreed, when questioned, that Dr Langley would know of a drug that might be administered to 'excite her passions', but made no further comment. The sixth doctor, Calahan, gave evidence of being recently summoned by Langley to provide a certificate of 'a certain disease' for his wife. She was subjected to examination by Calahan in the presence of her husband, but, despite pressure, he refused to provide the certificate because he was satisfied she had no such disease. What became clear during the inquest was that Langley, having formed an attachment with his wife's niece, wanted a divorce, and it was inferred that as part of the strategy for this had attempted to obtain sworn evidence of her unfaithfulness. He had moved Eleanor to a garret previously occupied by a servant, opposite the room occupied by Pound, the servant-man. It was in this garret that the incident with Pound took place, and he would later give evidence that Langley was not displeased with him, gave him a new suit of clothes, and also took him to swear a declaration, which he drafted for him, of what had occurred. Charles Langley now had Pound's declaration as proof of his wife's unfaithfulness, but this could only achieve a divorce *a mensa et thoro*. If he

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<sup>22</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 18 Nov. 1848.

wanted to remarry, the next step would be a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*, involving a costly minor act of parliament.<sup>23</sup>

There was evidence from all the servants that Langley continually subjected his wife to mental cruelty: many *examples were given, including verbal encouragement to kill herself, the burning of her false 'fronts or curls', and, allegedly, the poisoning with prussic acid of a lap-dog.* After the incident with Pound, Langley had turned Eleanor out of the house, finding a cheap lodging room for her in the town, and affording her a meagre allowance. After seventeen days she re-entered her home while Langley was away, and when he returned that night bringing his sister, Mrs Lydia Jackson, he ordered her to the garret room. Lydia stayed with him until Eleanor's death ten days later, and was to testify for his defence that he gave her everything the doctors advised during that time. Lydia's fourteen year-old daughter Fanny had been living for some time in the Langley household. The jury, having heard all the evidence, spent half an hour deliberating before bringing in their verdict:

We find that Mrs Eleanor Langley came by her death, in consequence of a bowel complaint brought on by unnatural and diabolical treatment, received at the hands of her husband, Charles Langley, and of which she died at Nenagh, the 1st day of May inst; we therefore find the said Charles Langley guilty of manslaughter. [sic].<sup>24</sup>

As an accused man, Langley forfeited any claim to public respect, and a new lack of status was evident from the description in *The Hue and Cry*: '[with] whiskers shaved off, voice vulgar, very bad countenance, prominent teeth, ...'.<sup>25</sup> A week later he had been arrested and bailed in Dublin, spending at least one night in Newgate Gaol.<sup>26</sup> Public perception was important to him; it would later transpire that he was still receiving the *Nenagh Guardian*, and two months later he placed an advertisement to the effect that he would shortly hand

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23 William G. Brooke, 'Report on the differences in the law of England and Ireland as regards the protection of women', *Journal of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland*, vi, Part 43 (Dublin, 1872/1873), p 210.

24 *Nenagh Guardian*, 9 May 1849.

25 *Ibid.*, 12 May 1849.

26 *Ibid.*, 19 May 1849.

himself in to await the Assizes, and would be obliged if it was not reported, incorrectly, that he had been arrested.<sup>27</sup> When the case was brought before the assizes the following August, there was much surprise that the Grand Jury chose to 'upgrade' the charge, and brought in a true bill for murder against Charles Langley.<sup>28</sup> In view of the even more serious implications of the new charge, the defence succeeded in having the case deferred. It was finally heard at the end of March, 1850, and Langley spent the intervening months in Nenagh Gaol. The witnesses called by the crown at the trial, covered in the paper on 27 March 1850, included all those appearing at the inquest, who were now even more forthright in their evidence. Servants and neighbours were unanimous in condemnation of Dr Langley. The doctors were all clear that, given both her lung and bowel complaints, the diet Eleanor was given and the garret room confined to while at home were unsuitable, and that the lodging room procured for her, being small, unheated and with a broken window, was not a fit place for her. All but one were explicit that this treatment had accelerated her death. Dr Kittson testified that she often came to his house in need of food, although this stopped after his wife received a letter from Dr Langley. A solicitor, Mr Kilkelly, also testified that on occasion she called to his house in a very weak state and 'my mother got some meat and bread for her before tea.' A further comment from Kilkelly is revealing of Langley's wider reputation:

I had a quarrel with Dr Langley about 2s. 6d, I then thought it better to discontinue my acquaintance with him, as he was a person that was not well liked, or whose society was not appreciated.

The quarrel about a small amount of money identified a continual pre-occupation of Langley. Since his disagreement with the dispensary directors in 1840, he now employed a clerk, Gabriel Prior, to manage funds which he lent out on interest, and Prior testified about the financial arrangements made for Eleanor's care. The lodging room was the cheapest Prior could find, at one shilling and sixpence, although if he had known who it was intended for he

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<sup>27</sup>*Nenagh Guardian*, 19 July 1849.

<sup>28</sup>*Ibid.*, 1 Aug. 1849.

would not have taken it, despite being five-pence over the budget Langley had set him. The allowance given to Eleanor was seven shillings a week, out of which she had to pay for the lodging. Prior would also testify that he was told to buy the cheapest coffin available. Further evidence came from a letter written by Langley to Edward Nixon in Dublin, barely a week before his wife's death. He reports that, following Nixon's advice, he told Ellen, while in the lodgings, to call to his office, where, if she signed a consent to her divorce, he would add thirty pounds a year to her allowance. She refused to do so, and instead, on the advice, as she told him, of her Solsborough friends, came back to the house the next day, insisting that if he wanted her to go he must forcibly throw her out, as she could then take a case and be granted a better allowance. He continued in this letter:

I did not fall into the trap that was laid for me by those wily hypocrites, for instead of turning her out I at once ordered her up to her garret, where she shall live and die, sooner than I shall be imposed on to give a bitch of her kind £60 a year, when I draw but £21 17s 6d on her account, ... [if she agrees to divorce] She shall have the interest, but not the principal ... I have earned it right well after being with such a prostitute for over seventeen years.<sup>29</sup>

This letter to Nixon, and another, written in September 1848 and addressed to 'My own still dear and fondly attached Nanny', were key pieces of evidence at the trial. His love-letter to 'Nanny' displays the passions of a love-sick boy, recounting dreams and even mentioning his happiness as he recalls when they 'slept together at Solsboro'. The letters reveal a man who considered himself deeply wronged because he believed his wife had spoken in public about his attachment to her niece, making him 'the talk of the town', and moreover she spoke about his treatment of her to 'his own dear Nanny' (the niece in question) who, as a result, condemned him. In a breath-taking egotistical display, he claimed that for these reasons he had every reason to treat his wife harshly: she was bound to love and cherish him, and should have thrown 'the cloak of secrecy' over his faults. He showed no concern for the destruction

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<sup>29</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 27 Mar. 1850.

of 'Nanny's' character, or any sense that he was at all to blame himself; in fact he placed some blame at 'Nanny's' door for not nipping his passion in the bud.

The inquest and trial make clear the patriarchal model of male domination in the Langley marriage. Evidence was given at the trial that Langley mandated who Eleanor could see, where she slept, what clothes she wore, what and where she ate. He also claimed his right to complete control of the money she had brought to the marriage. Even the model of separate spheres had broken down, his wife being denied a place in any sphere: Langley controlled the household, and when he was away this power was given to Fanny Jackson, the fourteen year-old daughter of his sister. Yet in his letter, he decried the fact that 'Nanny' was under the control of her father, who refused to allow her to dine with him, even in the presence of her brother. He appeared to dream of a companionate relationship with his 'Nanny', but not one that compromised male headship, and already refused to brook her criticism.<sup>30</sup> The public opprobrium he suffered suggest that this domination was not acceptable, even after his wife's unfaithfulness, although blatant unfaithfulness was accepted by the public in England as condoning a wife's murder in 1864 in the case of George Hall.<sup>31</sup> The unfaithfulness of a husband was usually considered less culpable, for example it was not by itself a ground for divorce, but in the present case Langley's own unfaithfulness was used as evidence of his motive.<sup>32</sup>

The closing speech for the defence was long. The paper reported that Mr Martley Q.C. spoke for three hours, and must have been persuasive since the jury after one hour's deliberation brought in a verdict of 'not guilty'. Langley returned to gaol to await the end of the assizes, but remained longer as, it was reported, he was ill in the prison hospital. Still concerned

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30 For a brief overview of debates on the nature of nineteenth-century marriage, see A. James Hammerton, 'Victorian marriage and the law of matrimonial cruelty' in *Victorian Studies*, xxxiii, 2 (1990), pp. 269-70.

31 Martin Wiener, 'The sad story of George Hall: adultery, murder and the politics of mercy in mid-Victorian England' in *Social History*, xxiv, 2 (1999), pp. 174-195.

32 Hammerton, 'Victorian marriage', p. 271.



about his public image, Langley wrote to the paper to complain that Martley's speech had not been reported in full. The reporter's response was that the verdict of the court might have been different if the prosecution, for whatever reason, had not withheld material evidence, and theirs was the more significant omission.

Langley remained a public laughing stock. The *Nenagh Guardian* reported much merriment at the next quarter sessions in nearby Thurles when his name came up.<sup>33</sup> The trial appears to have been widely reported throughout Ireland. One opinion piece included the following:

... We allude to Dr Langley,... The length of his hair, and the length of his 'love letter' ...were about the same length, and equally silly in the fashion and the effusion. ... to all this were joined a coxcombrity of passion and a burlesque of sentiment that make us laugh in spite of our abhorrence. ... There are in the world hundreds of such 'Langleys' as this. They escape being brought to the bar of public justice; but there is a bar of opinion and society which should keep them in check.<sup>34</sup>

The trial also stirred public opinion in a wider debate in England at that time about changes to the degrees of affinity allowable in marriage. The *Nenagh Guardian* quotes from the *Evening Mail* which used the case as an example of the ills that could arise if marriage to a dead wife's niece were allowed, adding 'This case of Dr Langley's should not be lost sight of by defenders of Christian morality in Parliament, when Mr Wortley's bill come again to be considered.'<sup>35</sup>

On 4 June 1850, Dr Charles Langley and Miss Anna Mathilda Poe, the daughter of Rev. James Hill Poe, were married in Chester, after banns.<sup>36</sup> Mr Wortley's bill had not been passed, so the marriage, under the 1835 Marriage Act, was legally void.<sup>37</sup> Perhaps this, as well as the destruction of her reputation, was the reason for Anna's change of name; although close to Charles's pet name of Nanny, her age and the Poe family tree suggest that she was

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33 *Nenagh Guardian*, 27 Apr. 1850.

34 *Ibid.*, 12 Apr. 1850.

35 *Ibid.*, 30 Mar. 1850.

36 Marriage of Charles Langley and Anna Mathilda Poe, 4 June 1850, *Register of marriages in the registration district of Great Boughton*, General Register Office England.

37 An act to render certain Marriages valid, and to alter the Law with respect to certain voidable Marriages, 31 Aug. 1835 (5 & 6 Will. IV c 54.)

baptised Mary Ann. If this is not the case, then she has been air-brushed from her family tree.<sup>38</sup> English census records and the UK Medical Register reveal the couple living in Liverpool for the next thirty years. They had at least three children. It is clear that a significant number of the townspeople of Nenagh had pre-judged Charles Langley even before his wife's death, and that the decision of the inquest jury was influenced by a groundswell of public opinion, which neither gentry nor professional colleagues could play down. Public opinion thus ensured that Charles Langley faced a trial, and that this trial was carried out in a glare of publicity which extended throughout Ireland and beyond. Victorian ideals of respectability and propriety, as well as Charles Langley's particular concern about his public image, left him with little alternative but to start a new life elsewhere. The decision of the inquest jury, the verdict of the crown court, and the subsequent life of Charles Langley and his new family, were all shaped as much by public opinion as by law.

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38 Edmund Thomas Bewley, *The origin and early history of the family Poë or Poe, with full pedigrees of the Irish branch of the family*. (Dublin, 1906), p. 97.

## Up in smoke: the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign

Conor Heffernan

‘So many excellent men have been lost to tobacco poisoning.’<sup>1</sup>

Adolf Hitler, 1942

Much historical study has been conducted into addressing the atrocities committed by the Nazi Regime from 1933 to 1945. However, considerably less attention has been dedicated to the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign, a relatively benign government policy, which importantly, was one of the first campaigns by a Western government designed to deal with health issues arising from tobacco use.<sup>2</sup> This subject is particularly topical in the current climate, as many Western governments are attempting to reduce tobacco consumption among their citizens. This paper will examine the first mass Western government campaign against tobacco and its ultimate failings. Why were the Nazis so concerned about controlling the use of tobacco among its citizens? Is it possible that the Nazis were concerned with the wellbeing of some of its citizens? Or were more selfish motives involved? This article intends to address such questions and, in doing so, shed light on a subject that encompassed larger Nazi concerns with health and the Aryan ideology. The background of the Nazi campaign against tobacco will firstly be examined. Following on from this, the process by which Nazi concerns over health and ideology became intertwined with the campaign against tobacco will be examined, thus displaying the historical significance of this topic. In examining the effect of this campaign, it will be show how the Nazis attempted to curtail smoking and the relative lack of success of such attempts. Finally, the failure of the overall campaign will be discussed.

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<sup>1</sup> Robert Proctor, ‘The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences’, in *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 71 (1997), p. 435.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Szöllösi-Janze, *Science in the Third Reich: German historical perspectives* (London, 2001), p. 15.

It is unsurprising that an anti-tobacco campaign emerged in Germany in the 1930s. As Robert Proctor, has argued, objections to smoking had existed in Germany both in academic and political circles for decades - even centuries.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, one of the first anti-smoking organisations in Germany emerged in 1904, and by the 1920s calls existed in Germany from academics and also doctors to ban smoking for health reasons.<sup>4</sup> Some German medical professionals were making great strides at this time in linking tobacco to health issues. For example, German doctor Fritz Lickint, in his 1929 study, published one of the most thorough case studies of the time linking tobacco use and cancer.<sup>5</sup> Lickint's study showed that lung cancer patients were likely to be smokers. He also argued that tobacco use was the best way to explain the fact that lung cancer struck men four or five times more often than women (since women smoked much less). Such a study was motivated by a dramatic rise in lung cancer among Germans.<sup>6</sup> For example, prior to 1900, there were 140 known cases of death by lung cancer worldwide. By the 1930s, lung cancer caused by smoking was the second highest killer of German men.<sup>7</sup> Lickint was not the only German physician interested in tobacco at this time; two papers, a 1939 article by Franz H. Müller and a 1943 paper by Eberhard Schairer and Erich Schöniger also presented convincing evidence that cigarettes were a major cause of lung cancer.<sup>8</sup>

Armed with such studies, the Nazis had scientific backing for their campaign against tobacco. Importantly, it has been estimated that half of all German doctors from 1933 to 1945 joined the Nazi party, which undoubtedly gave an air of medical authority to Nazi health policies.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, from 1933 to 1938, more medical journals were published in

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<sup>3</sup> Proctor, 'The Nazi war on tobacco', p. 439.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. p. 439.

<sup>5</sup> F. Lickint, 'Tabak und tabakrauch als ätiologischer factor des carcinoms. zeitschr'. in *Krebsforsch.* 30 (1929), pp. 349-65.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 443.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Proctor, 'Commentary: Schairer and Schöniger's forgotten tobacco epidemiology and the Nazi quest for racial purity', *International Journal of Epidemiology* 30 (February, 2001), p. 32.

<sup>8</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1450.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

Nazi Germany than any other Western European country, which illustrates the relative boom in medical studies in Germany at this time.<sup>10</sup> Such journals included the *Monatsschrift für Krebsbekämpfung* or ‘Monthly Anti-Cancer Journal’, established in 1933, which was dedicated to coordinating the anti-cancer research of German doctors. Such a journal was greatly needed, as more than a thousand medical doctoral theses exploring cancer in one form or another were published in Germany during the twelve years of Nazi rule.<sup>11</sup> Thus, there had been an exponential growth in studies exploring the damage that tobacco caused in Germany, and cancer had become a topical issue when the Nazis first came to power in 1933. It must also be stated that Germany had suffered tremendous military losses during the First World War, which in part encouraged fear regarding population health and size.<sup>12</sup> Such concerns were coupled with anxiety over Germany’s declining birth rate.<sup>13</sup>

Nazi interest over tobacco use appears to have been in part driven by concerns over the current and future strength of German citizens, rather than a compassionate interest in health. Indeed, Pierre Lemieux has argued this point, postulating that fascist states need and are concerned with ‘strong human material’ for the survival of the regime.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, Hitler himself certainly expressed such a view in his magnum opus, *Mein Kampf*, in which he argued that the future of the German state and public health were intrinsically linked. Such a view was re-affirmed by Hitler’s assertion in the same work that the struggle for existence allowed for only the healthy and strong to survive, thus displaying much of the Social Darwinism underpinning the Nazi desire for a healthy Aryan race.<sup>15</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising then that under Hitler, Nazi Germany was actively concerned with public health

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Proctor, *Racial hygiene: medicine under the Nazis* (Harvard, 1988), p. 5.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Proctor, *The Nazi war on cancer* (Princeton, 1999), p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> Matthias Blum, ‘Government decisions before and during the first World War and the living standards in Germany during a drastic natural experiment’, in *Explorations in Economic History*, 48 (2011), p. 567.

<sup>13</sup> Susan Bachrach, ‘In the name of public health – Nazi racial hygiene’, *New England Journal of Medicine*, 351 (July, 2004), p. 416.

<sup>14</sup> Pierre Lemieux, ‘Heil health’, in *The Independent Review*, 4 (Fall, 1999), p. 304.

<sup>15</sup> Adolf Hitler and Ralph Manheim, *Mein Kampf* (Boston, 1971), p. 117.

and specifically the health of the Aryan race, or *Volksgesundheit*.<sup>16</sup> Such concerns were to influence the Nazi campaign against tobacco. For example, tobacco was thought by the Nazis to limit the military prowess of soldiers, something that was of course important for a country with a strong military background such as Germany.<sup>17</sup> Nazi officials went so far as to declare that a good aryan and a good soldier did ‘not have the right to damage his body with drugs’, such as tobacco.<sup>18</sup> Thus, tobacco was seen to damage Germany’s might in many ways. It is important to note also that the figurehead of the movement, Adolf Hitler, was presented to the greater German populace as an ascetic of great political and business prowess, perhaps in the hope that others would follow the example set by the Führer. It was once written of Hitler that ‘our Führer Adolf Hitler drinks no alcohol and does not smoke...his performance at work is incredible’.<sup>19</sup> Incidentally Hitler had been an avid smoker in his youth before he ‘tossed his cigarettes into the Danube and never reached for them again’.<sup>20</sup> Thus, in their figurehead, the Nazi Government had a leader who, according to Nazi propaganda, had stopped smoking and become a man of great work. The Nazi Government’s anti-tobacco policy does therefore appear to have been driven by in part concerns over the health of the German army and state.

The health of German women also influenced the Nazi campaign against tobacco. Female participation in smoking was sharply criticised, as the requirement to secure a healthy race was seen to depend on a healthy female citizenry.<sup>21</sup> Indeed, some scholars such as Proctor, have argued that greater pressure was brought to bear on German women not to

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<sup>16</sup> Bachrach, ‘In the name of public health’, p. 417.

<sup>17</sup> Proctor, ‘The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences’, p. 446.

<sup>18</sup> George Davey Smith, ‘Lifestyle, health, and health promotion in Nazi Germany’, *British Medical Journal* 329 (December, 2004), pp. 1413-96.

<sup>19</sup> Proctor, ‘The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis: a little known aspect of public health in Germany, 1933-1945’, in *British Medical Journal*, 313: 7070 (December, 1996), pp. 1413-96.

<sup>20</sup> Proctor, ‘The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis’, p. 1451.

<sup>21</sup> Hartmut Berghoff, ‘Enticement and deprivation: the regulation of consumption in pre-war Nazi Germany’, in Martin Daunton and Matthew Hilton (eds.), *The politics of consumption: material culture and citizenship in Europe and America* (Oxford, 2001), p. 169.

smoke even more so than men.<sup>22</sup> At one point the President of the German Medical Association declared triumphantly that ‘German women don’t smoke.’<sup>23</sup> Such concerns regarding the neo-natal dangers of smoking reflected a wider Nazi concern over the future of the aryan race. *Mein Kampf* illustrated this where Hitler expressed himself greatly concerned with the survival of races, particularly the Aryan race.<sup>24</sup> Concerns over the future of the aryan race fostered an atmosphere in which the Nazis were highly interested in encouraging aryan procreation. Under the Nazi regime, German women were encouraged to have as many healthy aryan children as possible. Such was the reward for childbearing that German women were awarded the ‘Cross of Honour of the German Mother’ for giving birth to four or more children, with the highest honour, a first class medal, given to mothers of eight or more children.<sup>25</sup> Government actively encouraged childbearing. A female citizenry whose health might be damaged by tobacco had wider implications for childbearing. Women needed to be healthy for the benefit of the aryan race. In the eyes of many Nazi officials, an unhealthy female citizenry had a direct and negative correlation with the future of the aryan race. Men were targeted too by the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign but to a lesser degree, with prominent Nazi members declaring that smoking caused men to be infertile.<sup>26</sup> As shown above, infertility was considered counterproductive to the future of the Aryan race. The campaign against tobacco therefore complemented the wider Nazi concern of *Gesundheitspflicht*, or the duty to be healthy for the aryan race.<sup>27</sup> The aryan race, and the importance of its continuity, was an important factor in the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign. While health concerns in part

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<sup>22</sup> Proctor, ‘The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences’, p. 470.

<sup>23</sup> Berghoff, ‘Enticement and deprivation’, p. 169.

<sup>24</sup> Hitler and Manheim, *Mein Kampf*, p. 208.

<sup>25</sup> Ethel Tobach, and Betty Rosoff, *Challenging racism and sexism: alternatives to genetic explanations* (New York, 1994), p. 201.

<sup>26</sup> Tobach and Rosoff, *Challenging racism and sexism*, p. 436.

<sup>27</sup> John Welshman, ‘Smoking, science and medicine’, in Sander L. Gilman and Xun Zhou (eds.), *Smoke: a global history of smoking* (London, 2004), p. 328.

contributed to the Nazi campaign against tobacco, the greater concern was certainly ideological.

It is perhaps unsurprising that a State as ideologically charged, as Nazi Germany would link the campaign against tobacco with wider Nazi ideologies. Health was of great importance to the Nazi regime, but scholars such as Coombs and Holladay have argued that the Nazis were more concerned with ideology than health in their campaign against tobacco.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, when one looks at the health concerns that the Nazis held regarding tobacco, the concerns very much fit into an idea of fostering a racial community on the basis of an ideological commitment to an Aryan race.<sup>29</sup> Tobacco was almost the antithesis to the concept of an Aryan race. , Smoking itself was an individualistic act, whereas, the Nazis certainly believed in the health of the Aryan race rather than individual wellbeing.<sup>30</sup> For example, the Nazis at times required an almost unrelenting commitment to the idea of an Aryan race as a whole. Such a commitment was shown in contemporary concerns that the addictiveness of tobacco distracted Aryans from their dedication to the Führer and the Aryan race, elucidating this idea of the needs of the many outweighing the needs of the few.<sup>31</sup> Coupled with this, the asceticism of the Führer was perhaps contrasted with the behaviour of those who smoked. Hitler was in many ways setting an example for the Aryan race in that he presented an image of a hardworking, non-smoking and non-drinking German. Hitler himself referred to smoking as ‘masturbation of the lungs’, suggesting hedonist behaviour among those who smoked.<sup>32</sup>

The idea that tobacco not only represented something negative but something sinister is perhaps one of the most fascinating aspects of the Nazi campaign against tobacco. The

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<sup>28</sup> Timothy W. Coombs and Sherry J. Holladay, *It's not just PR: public relations in society* (Chichester, 2006), p. 97.

<sup>29</sup> Jonathon S. Wiesen, ‘National socialism and consumption’, in Frank Trentmann (ed.), *The Oxford handbook of the history of consumption* (Oxford, 2012), p. 435.

<sup>30</sup> Bachrach, ‘In the Name of Public Health’, p. 417.

<sup>31</sup> Proctor, ‘The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences’, p. 473.

<sup>32</sup> Lemieux, ‘Heil health’, p. 304.



anti-tobacco campaign became intertwined at times with wider Nazi Government policies of persecution. Smoking began to be associated under the Nazis with many of the people or ideas against whom the Nazis despised. For example, some in the Nazi party attempted to blame the Jews for the popularity of smoking in Germany.<sup>33</sup> As noted, the popularity of smoking had greatly increased from the 1900s onwards and it was perhaps convenient for the Nazis to blame the Jewish Race for this. Smoking was depicted as the habit of Jews, homosexuals and many other groups that were persecuted under the Nazis, showing how the campaign against smoking was at times juxtaposed with the Nazi Regime's persecution of minorities.<sup>34</sup> The importance of race was shown in Hitler's assertion that tobacco was 'the wrath of the Red Man (Native American Indians) against the White man for having been given hard liquor', thus creating a dichotomy between races and tobacco.<sup>35</sup> Such ideological concerns interestingly crept into the speeches made by the Nazis. For example, Hitler regularly referred to Jews by using pseudo-medical terms such as tumours, poisons or cancerous, juxtaposing in some small way, the campaign against tobacco and the persecution of Jews.<sup>36</sup> Such juxtaposition worried some German government ministers, with Economics Minister Walther Funk writing to the Führer in the early 1940s expressing his fear that tobacco workers would become likened to Jews as a result of the campaign against tobacco.<sup>37</sup> This was a dangerous precedent for Funk, but it did show the stigma that was at times placed on the tobacco industry by the Nazis. Perhaps just as inflammatory for the Nazis, smoking also became associated with the 'lifestyle of the liberals' and the Weimar Republic, a time in Germany's history from which the Nazis attempted to distance Germany.<sup>38</sup> Having discussed

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<sup>33</sup> Proctor, 'The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences', p. 463.

<sup>34</sup> Proctor, *The Nazi war on cancer*, p. 14.

<sup>35</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1450.

<sup>36</sup> Proctor, *The Nazi war on cancer*, p. 8.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>38</sup> Lemieux, 'Heil health', p. 304.

the ideological underpinnings of the Nazi tobacco regime, the implementation of anti-tobacco policies will now be examined.

The Nazi campaign against tobacco adopted a three pronged offensive spanning public propaganda, law and taxes. Propaganda took many guises. High profile medical officials, such as the President of the German Medical Association, publically opposed smoking and tobacco.<sup>39</sup> However, as in other realms of political and social life in Germany, the Nazis greatest emphasis appeared to be placed on public criticisms and youth movements. Goodfellow and Waugh have detailed how the Nazis made great use of public broadcasting on radio in attempts to discourage tobacco consumption.<sup>40</sup> Publications were also used. Leading health magazines, such as *Gesundes Volk* (Healthy People) carried the message that tobacco was damaging to one's health, yet oddly, important popular German magazines also continued to carry tobacco advertisements.<sup>41</sup> Nazi anti-tobacco posters were also a common sight in many German towns during this period.<sup>42</sup> A caption from *Reine Luft* (Clean Air), a prominent journal for the anti-smoking campaign in Nazi Germany, in 1941 provides an example of the kind of visual propaganda used. It depicted a man being eaten by a cigarette with the caption 'You don't smoke it, it smokes you!' (fig. 1).

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<sup>39</sup> Berghoff, 'Enticement and deprivation', p. 169.

<sup>40</sup> Lynda T. Goodfellow, and Jonathan B. Waugh, 'Tobacco treatment and prevention: what works and why', in *Respiratory Care*, 54:8 (August, 2009), p. 1083.

<sup>41</sup> Coombs and Holladay, *It's not just PR*, p. 98.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*



Fig 1. ‘The chain smoker: you don’t smoke it, it smokes you!’, *Reine Luft*, 23, 90 (1941).<sup>43</sup>

The youth of Germany were also harnessed in the campaign against tobacco. Smith has argued that the Nazis made a concentrated effort to spread their anti-tobacco message to Germany’s youth.<sup>44</sup> According to Smith, the Nazi Government were able to spread anti-tobacco propaganda using youth movements such as the Hitler Youth and the League of German Girls.<sup>45</sup> Even those children not involved in such movements were affected, in some primary schools, the dangers of tobacco were taught directly to children as part of the school curriculum.<sup>46</sup> The public pressure for Nazi members to be seen as non-smokers seems to have even reached the higher echelons of the Nazi party, with Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister for the Nazis, said to have made great efforts to hide his smoking in public in the later years of the Nazi Regime.<sup>47</sup> Thus, the Nazis attempted to use public propaganda to discourage the use of tobacco in Germany.

<sup>43</sup> Proctor, ‘The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis’, p. 1452.

<sup>44</sup> Davey Smith, ‘Lifestyle, health, and health promotion in Nazi Germany’, p. 1424.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Proctor, ‘The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences’, p. 455.

<sup>47</sup> Proctor, *The Nazi war on cancer*, p. 66.

Goodfellow and Waugh have argued that the Nazi campaign against tobacco began with propaganda campaigns, as highlighted above, and slowly progressed toward the Nazis introducing more stringent legal measures against tobacco in Germany.<sup>48</sup> While the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign does not appear to have followed a linear, predetermined path, Proctor has found evidence that the campaign against tobacco was accelerated in the late 1930s, perhaps when the Nazis felt more secure in their power, before decelerating greatly as World War II dragged on.<sup>49</sup> During the late 1930s, the Nazis certainly seemed to have made great strides in relation to laws governing tobacco use. While not banning tobacco outright, most likely due to its widespread popularity at the time, the Nazis attempted to make tobacco consumption increasingly more difficult. A few examples will elucidate this. The Nazi Government, once more displaying the importance of youth to the regime, legislated that smoking by anyone under the age of eighteen was a criminal offence.<sup>50</sup> Attempts were made by the Nazis to ban smoking in many public areas, and stringent driving laws were introduced whereby, if a driver of a car involved in an accident was smoking at the time of the collision, he or she was charged with a criminal offence.<sup>51</sup>

The laws governing rations were also used in an attempt to deter tobacco consumption. For example, during World War II, tobacco-rationing coupons were denied to pregnant women and restaurants were banned from selling tobacco to women.<sup>52</sup> Rations for soldiers were likewise affected. Rations were distributed to troops in such a way as to deter tobacco use. Soldiers could exchange their tobacco coupons for extra chocolate or extra food.<sup>53</sup> Letters from the Russian front by German soldiers exemplify some soldiers' disaffected views on such a rationing system; 'we receive 6 cigarettes a day, which is not

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<sup>48</sup> Goodfellow, and Waugh, 'Tobacco treatment and prevention: what works and why', p. 1083.

<sup>49</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1450.

<sup>50</sup> J. Lewy, 'A sober Reich? alcohol and tobacco use in Nazi Germany', *Substance Use & Misuse*, 41 (2006), p. 1179.

<sup>51</sup> Davey Smith, 'Lifestyle, health, and health promotion in Nazi Germany', p. 1424.

<sup>52</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1451.

<sup>53</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1453.

very much'.<sup>54</sup> Those still working in Germany also faced tobacco restrictions. For example, Himmler introduced a smoking ban for all uniformed police and SS members in the late 1930s.<sup>55</sup> Therefore, it appeared, on a surface level at least, that the Nazis were attempting to ensure that every level of society was free from tobacco. The last measure they took in the fight against tobacco was to increase taxes on the product.

Using taxes as a deterrent was, in theory, one of the most effective ways of ensuring that tobacco consumption would decrease. The higher the tax, the theory went, the less demand the public would exhibit for tobacco due to cost increases. Taxes however, were a double-edged sword for the Nazi regime. It was hoped that higher taxes would aid the Nazi anti-tobacco cause, but scholars such as Aly have argued that the Nazis were chary of breeding discontent among the public due to higher taxes and prices.<sup>56</sup> Aly's argument is given further credence by Berghoff's anecdote that Hitler personally intervened in order to keep the price of bread low as a means of ensuring that the public did not become disgruntled due to rising costs.<sup>57</sup> While it was feared by the Nazi Government that the German public would be very price sensitive to change in tobacco prices, increases in tax on tobacco did occur. Aly estimated that in 1939, the cost of tobacco rose twenty percent due to taxes and in 1941, the Nazis introduced a fifty percent increase in the tax on tobacco.<sup>58</sup> Proctor estimated that in 1941 the taxes on tobacco made up between eighty to ninety five percent of the retail price of tobacco.<sup>59</sup> Proctor also estimated that the taxes on tobacco made up nearly one twelfth of the total tax revenue for the Nazis.<sup>60</sup> Thus, the Nazis certainly attempted to curtail

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<sup>54</sup> Götz Aly, Peter Chroust and Christian Pross, *Cleansing the fatherland: Nazi medicine and racial hygiene* (New York, 1994), p. 276.

<sup>55</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1451.

<sup>56</sup> Götz Aly, *Hitler's beneficiaries: plunder, racial war, and the Nazi welfare state* (New York, 2007), p. 53.

<sup>57</sup> Berghoff, 'Consumption politics', p. 138.

<sup>58</sup> Aly, *Hitler's beneficiaries*, p. 53.

<sup>59</sup> Proctor, 'The Anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1453.

<sup>60</sup> Proctor, 'The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences', p. 477.

tobacco consumption through an increase in taxes on the product and seemed to have benefitted financially in doing so.

It is difficult to measure accurately the relative success of the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign, but such research as exists, suggests that the result was far from what was desired. During the first six years of Nazi rule, German smoking rates rose dramatically.<sup>61</sup> In comparison with some of its neighbours, German smoking rates under the Nazis were equal to, if not greater than, other European countries. For example, between 1932 and 1939, the average number of cigarettes consumed per adult per year rose from 570 in 1932 to 900 in 1939 in Germany compared with 570 to 630 in France, during the same period.<sup>62</sup> Proctor argued that that while the proportion of men smoking in Germany during this time increased significantly, the overall consumption of tobacco decreased in Germany, perhaps due to a decrease in smoking among women.<sup>63</sup> This, however, surely represented a hollow victory for the Nazis, and in itself is a disputable figure as it did not and could not take into account tobacco obtained on the black market, something that would have been necessary for pregnant women and those under the age of eighteen. Dostorvsky was kinder to the Nazis, arguing that while the rate of tobacco consumption in Germany during this time appears to have increased, the Nazis did curtail tobacco consumption.<sup>64</sup> Berghoff calculated that from 1932 to 1940, the consumption of cigarettes in Germany almost doubled.<sup>65</sup> Proctor found that of 1,000 servicemen surveyed in 1944, the proportion of soldiers smoking had increased, only 12.7 per cent were non-smokers, while the total consumption of tobacco had decreased by just over 14 per cent, suggesting that supplies, rather than propaganda, had led to a

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 477.

<sup>62</sup> P. N. Lee, *Tobacco consumption in various countries* (London, 1975), p. 86.

<sup>63</sup> Proctor, 'The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences', p. 486.

<sup>64</sup> Nathaniel Dostrovsky, 'Anti-smoking initiatives in Nazi Germany: research and public policy', in *The Proceedings of the 14th Annual History of Medicine Days* (2005), p. 192.

<sup>65</sup> Berghoff, 'Enticement and deprivation', p. 169.

decrease in the overall consumption of tobacco.<sup>66</sup> For all the bluster exhibited by the Nazi regime regarding tobacco consumption, the results appear to have been relatively unsuccessful. For a regime attempting to propagate a healthy Aryan race that did not smoke, the growth of tobacco consumption, no matter how curtailed, surely represented a failure. This paper will now examine the reasons for this failure.

The failure of the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign was largely due to the fact that the Nazi campaign was rife with contradictions. For example, while the Nazis did use propaganda as an attempt to curtail tobacco consumption, Nazi magazines, such as *Die SA*, continued to published tobacco advertisements as late as 1940 and 1941.<sup>67</sup> Even *Völkischer Beobachter* (Nationalist Observer), the Nazi magazine controlled by Goebbels and Hitler, advertised Reemtsma cigarettes, which at the time was Germany's largest cigarette manufacturer.<sup>68</sup> Proctor has attributed such a contradiction in the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign to the power of the cigarette industry in Nazi Germany at this time, but that does not adequately explain other inconsistencies within the Nazi campaign.<sup>69</sup> Cigarettes were often given to peoples deemed by the Nazi regime to be 'deserving groups', such as 'good Aryans' or soldiers. In fact, members of the Hitler Youth and League of German Girls were at times paid in cigarettes.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps even more confusing was the fact that soldiers were permitted to confiscate cigarettes from occupied countries.<sup>71</sup> Such inconsistencies appear to have very little to do with the tobacco industry, as confiscated cigarettes were surely detrimental to the indigenous German tobacco companies. These contradictions were highly inconsistent with the Nazi goal of an aryan race that was free from addiction such as smoking. Interestingly, also, is the

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<sup>66</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1450.

<sup>67</sup> Proctor, 'The Nazi war on tobacco: ideology, evidence, and possible cancer consequences', p. 460.

<sup>68</sup> Chris Whetton, *Hitler's fortunes* (Barnsley, 2004), p. 55.

<sup>69</sup> Proctor, 'The anti-tobacco campaign of the Nazis', p. 1450.

<sup>70</sup> Eleonore Bachinger, Martin McKee and Anna Gilmore, 'Tobacco policies in Nazi Germany: not as simple as it seems', in *Public Health*, 122 (May, 2008), p. 497.

<sup>71</sup> Aly, *Hitlers beneficiaries*, p. 62.

fact that after the *Anschluss* (Connection) in 1938 with Austria, the Nazis did not ban tobacco in Austria.<sup>72</sup>

There appears then to have been no consistency within the Nazi campaign against tobacco and it can be argued that this accounted for the failure of the anti-tobacco campaign. For example, there was no Government Ministry solely dedicated to the anti-tobacco campaign. The Ministry of Science and Education, the Reich Health Office and even a Bureau Against the Hazards of Alcohol and Tobacco all attempted to tackle tobacco use at some point.<sup>73</sup> It should be noted that some scholars, such as Coombs and Holladay, have argued that smoking represented a small act of resistance against the Nazis, yet the evidence must surely look towards the failure of the Nazis to implement a consistent campaign.<sup>74</sup> Indeed, the Nazi regime was famed at times for its inherent contradictions. Lest one forgot a popular joke of the Third Reich: ‘What does a true aryan look like? A true aryan is tall like Goebbels, thin like Goering and blond like Hitler!’<sup>75</sup> Thus, despite the campaign of the Nazis to eradicate tobacco use, the later actions appear in fact to have been misguided and mishandled. A substance as addictive as tobacco requires great efforts to tackle and overcome its deleterious effects. It appears that other issues, such as the growing militarisation in Germany at this time directed attention and resources away from the anti-tobacco campaign. In the view of this paper, this is what led to the failure of the Nazi anti-tobacco campaign.

The Nazi anti-tobacco campaign is perhaps one of the most underutilized fields of study regarding Nazi Germany. What appeared at first glance to have been simply a health issue is at a second glance a microcosm for the ideologies and inconsistencies within the Nazi regime itself. Having examined the background of the campaign, the ideological drivers

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<sup>72</sup> Basil Aboul-Enein, ‘The Anti-tobacco movement of Nazi Germany: a historiographical re-examination’, in *International Electronic Journal of Health Education*, 15 (2012), pp. 167.

<sup>73</sup> Proctor, *The Nazi war on cancer*, p. 445.

<sup>74</sup> Coombs and Holladay, *It's not Just PR*, p. 98.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas U. Berger, *War, guilt, and world politics after World War II* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 129.



behind it and finally the failure of the campaign it is perhaps prudent to note Mark Twain's quip that giving up smoking is the easiest thing in the world. 'I know because I've done it thousands of times.'<sup>76</sup> In doing so, it has been shown that the Nazi concerns over health and ideology became intertwined with the campaign against tobacco, thus displaying the historical significance of this topic. Finally, in examining the effect of this campaign, the paper detailed how the Nazis attempted to curtail smoking and the relative lack of success of such attempts. Thus, it was argued that Nazi attempts to discourage smoking largely failed in its mission to eradicate smoking from the aryan make-up.

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<sup>76</sup> Des MacHale, *Witt* (Kansas, 2003), p. 247.

## **Heroes, villains and scapegoats: understanding Cathal Goulding**

Kenneth Sheehy

Cathal Goulding was a soldier, prisoner, Irish Republican Army (IRA) leader and left wing revolutionary figure at a time of great ideological uncertainty in Ireland. His role in Irish history, particularly republican history, has become complicated and divisive, given the marriage of truth, lies, propaganda and spin that continue to surround his life. As someone who has spent five years researching his life, and interviewed family members, comrades and opponents, it is clear the realities of his life contradict a great deal of the existing information, particularly when agendas and political positioning are removed from the dynamics. His former comrades have been eager to highlight his achievements, journey toward peace and reconciliatory relationships with Loyalist gunmen. His enemies, particularly those who supported the Provisional IRA, have been quick to marginalise and dismiss his successes, eagerly portraying his republican career negatively. Many respected academic historians, such as Brian Hanley, have broken ground on Goulding's movement, or the 'Officials' as it was widely known, and challenged the validity of many agenda driven arguments. Given the central role, which Goulding played, and the affect his agenda had on people, these contradictory interpretations present many opportunities, when viewed from an academic historian's perspective. In order to understand the origins of this divide, and reveal some of the truths that have been forgotten, marginalised or ignored by people seeking to rewrite history and elevate political positions to unsustainable heights, it is crucial to look at Goulding's life, particularly his time as Chief of Staff, when the movement struggled to resolve ideological positions and slowly journeyed toward schism.

Cathal Goulding spent six years in various British prisons for his part in a failed IRA raid on the Felsted Army Barracks, in 1953. Few republicans questioned his devotion to the militant agenda, or his willingness to lay his life on the line for the republican cause. He was offered the position of Chief of Staff, in 1962, but was reluctant to accept such responsibility, given the amount of work, internal wrangling and personal sacrifice that it demanded. The toll, which his repeated incarceration and on-going republican activity took on his family life, is hard to qualify. He was interned during the Second World War, released in 1945, but rearrested in 1946, having been found in possession of IRA documents. This was a cycle that continued, creating uncertainty and mistrust in the family home. His son, Cathal Óg, spoke at great length about the way his mother struggled to keep going, often relying on republican charities to keep food on the table. This was a difficult home environment, but Goulding was singularly focused, when it came to republican activities, and he refused to get bogged down by guilt, or personal feelings, particularly when it came to matters relating to his republicanism. He accepted the position and immediately set about rebuilding the broken infrastructure and working relationships, which had been badly damaged by the failed border campaigns acrimonious end. This was a pivotal movement in Goulding's life and he chose to put the republican movement first, as he had done throughout his career. His fidelity to the IRA remained absolute and was renewed by a deep determination to change the movement's focus, and go forward on a different platform, which had political advancement at its core. Cathal 'possessed a family tree that most Irish republicans could only dream about. His grandfather had been a member of the Fenians, his father participated in the 1916 Rising and his uncle had an IRA Career,' so his pedigree ensured he was both respected and admired in equal measure.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Richard English, *Armed struggle: the history of the IRA* (London, 2004), p. 83.

Goulding often wondered, as his former comrade, Eoin O'Murchú, remarked 'what the purpose of the movement really was, and why it had never succeeded?'<sup>2</sup> In his early tenure as leader, the IRA underwent a period of introspection, uncertainty and self-questioning. The lessons of the Republican Congress loomed large in Goulding's thinking, and the frustrations of Peadar O'Donnell and his comrades, who watched the IRA repeatedly make the same mistakes, powerless to do anything from outside the movement, stood as a stark reminder that tangible change could only happen within the confines of the IRA. Goulding believed 'the actual fight for freedom had become an end to itself' and that the IRA 'had not planned to achieve the freedom of Ireland,' but wanted to fight on indefinitely. He said the movement could not 'succeed because they never planned to succeed.'<sup>3</sup> This was a fresh approach that surprised many in the movement, but the determination needed to enact such enormous change was immediately felt at home, where his wife and son were struggling, often wondering if they were being ignored. Cathal Óg said, he 'was never around when he came out of prison. He was just out of jail and he was gone off around the country doing things with the IRA.'<sup>4</sup>

It should be noted, so as to contextualise the period that for hard-line traditional republicans, the prospect of leaving the republicanism, or abandoning the militant struggle, never entered their mind. They were, as Bowyer-Bell noted, 'unable to face the prospect of a private life after their republican investment, years in prison, careers aborted and families denied.'<sup>5</sup> This was the group, which Goulding initially looked to for assistance, in 1962, and 1963, as he attempted to rebuild the movements decimated support base. They helped him carry out the 'post-mortem...to examine the whole position of the republican movement from

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<sup>2</sup> Interview with Eoin O'Murchú, County Dublin (16 Feb. 2012).

<sup>3</sup> *This Week*, 31 Jul. 1970.

<sup>4</sup> Interview with Cathal Goulding Jr., County Carlow (18 Feb. 2011).

<sup>5</sup> J. Bowyer Bell, *The secret army: the IRA* (New Jersey, 1997), p. 337.

the beginning of the century, to try and supply answers to a number of different questions.’<sup>6</sup> Men such as Paddy Mulcahy of Limerick, who was considered a committed militant, played crucial roles in the rebuilding process.<sup>7</sup> This highlights Goulding’s understanding and recognition that their ideological platform remained at the core of the struggle, but by bringing this group back into the inner sanctum of the leadership, rather than immediately reaffirming the power and centrality of a left-wing agenda, which he would later do, he allowed the traditional platform reassert the legitimacy and primacy of its ideological position. While he was comfortable with this dynamic, given the fact the movement was near collapse, having been decimated by the failure of another campaign, he was laying the seeds for future trouble.

Goulding knew that, in order to build the new, politically viable movement, which he felt was needed; he had to go outside the traditional republican gene pool, where adherence to militant doctrine limited the potential for progressive thought. He recognized the ‘shortage of new thinking’ that repeatedly dogged the movement and looked to its left-wing past, particularly the actions of his childhood hero, and former teacher, Frank Ryan, for inspiration.<sup>8</sup> He believed Loyalists could be swayed toward his agenda if it was inclusive, representative and politically driven. Republicans felt ‘if these people understood, they would support them.’<sup>9</sup> This drive to educate Northern Irish Protestants, and engage the Loyalist working class radicals in a more meaningful way, was a feature of his political agenda that became more pronounced in later years.<sup>10</sup> He increasingly looked to Universities, radical political parties and academics, as he sought to put meat on the bones of his ideas and develop a workable left-wing programme. When Goulding assumed power,

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<sup>6</sup> *This Week*, 31 Jul. 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Robert White, *Ruairí Ó Brádaigh: the life and politics of an Irish revolutionary* (Indiana, 2006), p. 114.

<sup>8</sup> Interview with Cathal Goulding Jr., County Carlow (18 Feb. 2011).

<sup>9</sup> *Belfast Telegraph*, 16 Feb. 1966.

<sup>10</sup> English, *Armed struggle*, p. 93.

left-wing thinking was gaining ground, particularly with the youth, who grew vocal in their calls for change. In mainstream politics the Irish Labour party, which largely adopted moderate centrist positions on issues, moved toward developing a more radical left wing agenda in tandem with a global growth of the left. As a result, labours electoral support grew by almost 50%, rising from '11.6%, in 1961, to 17%, in 1969,' so Goulding felt this was a viable avenue for exploration and he was determined that, rather than taking up positions on the periphery, where republicans felt safe, the movement needed to create a viable political movement that could capitalise on this changed dynamic and grow its support base.<sup>11</sup>

The IRA went into 'conference for eighteen months, almost two years,' holding meetings with 'representatives of local leadership,' so as to prepare republicans for a new agenda that could push the movement out of the malaise, which threatened to engulf it.<sup>12</sup> Goulding planned to 'establish his objectives, explain them to the movement, persuade the movement to accept them, bring them to the people, explain them and then show the people, by political and agitationary activities that they were sincere.'<sup>13</sup> This inclusive political position broke new ground in an organisation, which thrived on secrecy and closed group thinking. Goulding recognized the potential that a clearly defined, politically driven movement could bring to the ailing republican agenda. He believed, given the failure of past campaigns that the key to future successes lay in the power of revolutionary Marxist left-wing movements, such as those that were emerging in France, Germany and Spain. The radical international undercurrents gave rise to the emergence of left-wing activism across the state, particularly the expanding third level sector. They were an untapped resource, which presented the republican agenda with seemingly endless expansion opportunities. For the first time since the formation of the Republican Congress, the IRA began enticing left-wing

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<sup>11</sup> Michael Gallagher, *The Irish Labour party in transition, 1957-82* (Manchester, 1982), p. 320.

<sup>12</sup> *This Week*, 31 Jul. 1970.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

thinkers to the fold, so as to build and encourage a new structure, capable of evolution and ideological change.

Goulding's determination to broaden the movement's base, and allow a wide diverse group of people to shape its development, so as to expand its ideological position, brought the movement further from its ideological high-ground than had ever been the case. It marked a major turning point in the history of the republican movement, and the state as a whole, given the fact the IRA was now being led by someone who viewed active republican participation in a favourable light. Goulding's long term aim was to have people that represented his ideological outlook in the 'establishment in Dublin and Stormont...who would have an assignment to help our outside political, economic and military activity in destroying the establishment, north and south.'<sup>14</sup> He proposed, at the IRA army convention, in 1964 that 'republicans should immerse themselves in social and economic struggles, build an alliance with other radical groups to create a national liberation front, contest elections and take their seats in Dublin.' It was ground breaking stuff for an IRA leader, but it increasingly worried the traditional republican elements, many of whom increasingly felt isolated. Although he privately assured supporters that he remained loyal to the IRA's militaristic agenda, his public overtures to left wing academics, particularly members of the Communist Party, such as Roy Johnston, filled many with fear. This was the beginning of a multifaceted duplicitous strategy, which Goulding and his comrades used to advance their progressive agenda, while assuring doubters that militarism remained the basis for all his actions. While this contradictory approach seems quite complex and difficult to maintain, Goulding adapted to it quickly. It is important to remember that Goulding still felt 'a military component would be required' in any future struggle, which is the reason revolutionary left-wing elements were attracted to his movement, as it seemed to offer a viable way to push for tangible

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

revolutionary change.<sup>15</sup> It is also the reason apolitical militarists remained committed to the leadership, as they assured by his rhetoric and appeased by the occasional muscle flexing, which the leadership sanctioned. Goulding was not pushing for demilitarisation, so internal cohesion was not being threatened in an overt way. The extent, or amount, of militarism, which Cathal was willing to allow, or even champion, particularly as the decade developed, remained unclear, and it was this uncertainty that increasingly alarmed proponents of the traditional aggressive agenda. They were not comfortable second guessing the leadership, and wanted to know, without doubt that the movement would not hesitate to act aggressively. There need for a definitive and unequivocal stance started to cause difficulties by the mid-sixties, as Goulding's political agenda started to take shape and the envisioned IRA of the future started to contradict traditional republican understanding of the army's role.

In 1965, Goulding openly supported calls for a change in direction, and publically asked members to reconsider the intransigence that he felt was holding the movement back. He released a statement to all IRA volunteers, which documented the journey the movement had made in recent years, and spoke about his developing agenda. He spoke to the volunteers of 'long service' and asked them to 'think well of these recommendations.'<sup>16</sup> He asked them to forget the past and focus on the 'present and future needs' of the movement and admitted that 'recommendation number 9,' which called for political participation, was a deeply divisive issue, but asked members 'not to regard those who favour it as traitors...or those who oppose it as stupid or traditionalist.'<sup>17</sup> It was clear that Goulding's politicising agenda was about to enter the public domain, and that he was expecting to meet a wall of hostility. While he called for unity and understanding, he was driving this initiative, so few believed events were going to remain cordial and workable, as long as the Chief of Staff was trying to

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<sup>15</sup>Interview with Roy Johnston, County Dublin (23 Mar. 2011).

<sup>16</sup> *An tÓglach*, May 1965.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



promote an ideological platform that remained repugnant to rural Ireland, where the vast majority of the weapons and explosives were stored.

The Extraordinary IRA convention, which occurred, in 1965, rejected Goulding's call for political participation by an overwhelming majority, but agreed to his demands for closer involvement with Sinn Féin. The minutes of the meetings highlight the changing nature of the movement, as the need for 'agitational' action was a prevalent feature of the discussions.

<sup>18</sup> The 'Midleton agitation and Griffith Barracks housing agitation' were viewed as campaigns that benefited the IRA, while the 'Dundalk Engineering Workers strike,' given the fact they 'called on the IRA for assistance,' and the movement had 'worked behind the scenes and could take complete credit for their total victory,' was seen as the 'most successful.'<sup>19</sup> While this appeared quite limited, the fact that the Dundalk IRA was 'still in touch' with the strikers and claimed to have 'them at his disposal for activity in the Trade Union field' highlights the type of mobilised and inclusive movement that Goulding was trying to create. His aggressive agitational tactics, such as the threat of using military assets against those challenging the strikers, won the support and loyalty of the local strikers. The blueprint for future expansionist policies was clear to leadership, given these successes, regardless of whether they agreed with Goulding's long term politicising aims, or not. The subsequent Sinn Féin convention was a deeply divisive affair and the 'nine points,' which called for 'actions within existing parliaments on a guerrilla basis,' reaffirmed the IRA's call for 'closer integration' and rehashed the defeated arguments, but with a renewed sense of bitterness and purpose.<sup>20</sup> Goulding's position, as Chief of Staff, was rapidly dividing the movement, and though he later promised 'a fight where the military's role would hold prominence,' his

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<sup>18</sup> *Minutes of Extraordinary IRA convention*, 5 June 1965 (Copies in author's possession).

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Matt Treacy, *The IRA 1956-1969: rethinking the republic* (Manchester, 2011), pp. 49-50.

approach was polarising his opponents in an increasingly dangerous way.<sup>21</sup> Few in the movement believed he would sanction a war, and most believed he was consciously allowing the militaristic side to degrade. Although he said the ‘next military campaign would be the final one,’ many feared that this was empty rhetoric.<sup>22</sup>

Roy Johnston’s continued involvement with Sinn Fein, and Goulding’s decision to welcome him into the IRA, irritated traditional republicans, causing confrontation and anger at the highest levels of the movement. Johnston, who believed the ‘IRA’s left-wing potential made it worthy of some respect,’ acted as a catalyst for confrontation, as his Communism and Protestantism challenged the traditional republican understanding of the struggle.<sup>23</sup> In his autobiography, *Century of Endeavour*, he spoke about these issues and noted that the ‘impression he picked up was that the IRA did not exist as a serious military organisation’ when he joined, in 1965.<sup>24</sup> He believed ‘it consisted of a few groups of local activist visionaries, held together by local O/Cs, nominated by Goulding’ and that ‘there were no more than 200 in the whole country.’ Johnston’s work portrays the movement as amateurish, largely rural, intransigent and collapsing under the reality of its political malaise. Given his education, he felt he could help fulfil, or at least diligently work toward developing Goulding’s rejuvenating agenda. In April, 1965, Johnston wrote about the ‘republican new departure,’ which he said ‘carried new flexible and diverse republican tactics into other areas.’<sup>25</sup> This worried many traditionalists, who believed he was infiltrating the IRA, so as to destroy its traditional ethos and make it subservient to a communist leadership. When Sean MacStiofáin, formerly John Stephenson of London, was elected to the Army Council, in 1965, he ‘claimed to know where the policies are coming from’ and blamed Roy Johnston

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<sup>21</sup> Treacy, *The IRA 1956-1969*, p. 52.

<sup>22</sup> *An tÓglach*, May 1965.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Roy Johnston, County Dublin (23 Mar. 2011).

<sup>24</sup> ‘Century of Endeavour: the Desmond Greaves journals’, Roy Johnston/Techne Associates (<http://www.rjtechne.org/century130703/1940s/greave40.htm>) (16 Oct. 2012).

<sup>25</sup> *Irish Democrat*, April 1965.

publically for the first time.<sup>26</sup> He said that Johnston was ‘a Marxist, whom he knew to be Moscow-oriented, and who had been in the Communist Party of Great Britain and the Connolly Association. He proposed that this person be expelled, under the anti-communist rule.’<sup>27</sup> This was a brave move by MacStiofáin, who was aware of Goulding’s faith in Johnston, but presumably he felt safe confronting the Chief of Staff, given the fact they were involved in the failed Felsted operation together and were known to be close friends at that time. Goulding, however, refused to be swayed by MacStiofáin’s direct challenge to his decision making, or allow relationships cloud his desire to assert his authority and said ‘that if this person went, he would go too.’<sup>28</sup>

Goulding’s defence of Roy Johnston pushed him into open confrontation with advocates of the traditional republican agenda, removed his impartiality and allowed his enemies to portray his leadership style in a way that was detrimental to his ambitions, and inevitably destructive to the movement as a whole. While MacStiofáin was new to the Army Council, he was a man of fierce republican conviction, who was greatly respected by the membership. For Goulding to publically stand against MacStiofáin was a significant event, which left a sense of resentment in a large portion of the membership that would fester over time. Traditional republicans increasingly felt isolated alone and bitter, and while they disagreed about many things, particularly the possibility of creating viable political and social programmes, they were increasingly united by a shared distain for Goulding’s leadership and his politicising agenda. Over the next few years the ‘new social image of Sinn Féin’ clashed with traditional IRA militarism on a regular basis.<sup>29</sup> Goulding’s supporters felt they were ‘changing that which needed to be changed,’ but his opponent’s intransigence seemed to be

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> *United Irishman*, Feb. 1968.

intensifying, rather than dissipating, in the face of this shift in policy.<sup>30</sup> Ed Moloney has noted that their ‘opposition was not just practical, but almost spiritual as well,’ and though this is a rather bellicose way to phrase their ideological position, it was not without merit.<sup>31</sup> It was clear the situation was becoming untenable. Goulding’s push to politicise the republican movement quickly gained traction in urban Ireland, particularly in Dublin, Cork, Limerick and Derry, where a mixture of socially aware, unemployed, mobilised student’s and mainstream academics were favourably disposed to his agenda. This marked the continued rise of a new generation of republicans, who viewed Goulding’s progressive agenda as the next step in the evolution of the republican struggle. Goulding worked tirelessly, often to the detriment of his business and family lives, to rehabilitate the movement’s image and by the late sixties this drive started to pay dividends. His agenda became hugely popular with younger members, many of whom related to his modernising ambitions and were attracted to his bohemian style and warm personality. It was an era of revolution and global uncertainty, and Goulding’s movement was active on the ground trying to capitalise on this feeling and push for change. This was a point that Elizabeth Steiner-Scott, a feminist and former lecturer at University College Cork, who met Goulding through Máire Woods, in the seventies, spoke about with candour and clarity. She remembered that, while ‘Cathal was much older than her and Máire...he was very much the bohemian, revolutionary figure...he would drink and hang out with communists, feminists and many of the city’s radicals.’<sup>32</sup>

On 29 and 30 August, 1967, Goulding called an IRA Army Council meeting, where the realities of the political shift, particularly the dangers of marginalising a faction of the movement that were eager to wage war on Northern Ireland, were discussed openly. The minutes of that meeting reveal a complex internal dynamic. While speaking about the

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<sup>30</sup> *United Irishman*, Jan. 1967.

<sup>31</sup> Ed Moloney, *A secret history of the IRA* (London, 2002), p. 55.

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Liz Steiner, County Cork (10 Feb. 2011).

decision to allow the resolution on Leinster House to reach convention, Goulding said that ‘it was probably a mistake on their part to allow it reach the convention.’ He said that ‘there was a large body of opinion in the army, which held that the traditional stand on Leinster House was out of date and this body had to be respected.’<sup>33</sup> Seamus Costello, who was a popular figure in the movement, and a close friend of Goulding’s at the time, said the army should have ‘disciplined those elements,’ rather than allow this anger fester, while Tomás MacGiolla spoke about the ‘difficulty in reconciling the disparate opinions on the recommendation’ and noted that the ‘whole affair was handled badly by the Council.’<sup>34</sup> When looking at the way these men spoke about the wider situation, their personal political outlooks were evident. When the discussion was over, Goulding said he ‘believed in a policy of cooperation with others’ and that there was a ‘need for education in the long term aims of the movement.’<sup>35</sup> He told the council that the ‘first step toward revitalising the movement was accepting that resolutions were going to be the basis for official policy’ and called on people to ‘reject the Griffithite brand of republicanism.’ He said that ‘twin organisations,’ which were the ‘political party and military cadre were essential,’ and that republicans ‘inherited a failed movement, but it was too late to change that now and the question of representation in the Dáil does not mean a thing because of ineffectiveness.’<sup>36</sup> It was clear that Goulding was laying the groundwork for a move toward further political development, but he remained cautious of marginalising the traditional republican agenda and its ideological limitations.

In December, 1968, Goulding called an IRA convention and proposed two major changes to the movement. He wanted to abolish the Army Executive, which appointed the Army Council and had the power to sack it, and expand the Army Council from seven

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<sup>33</sup> *Minutes of the 1967 IRA Army Council meeting* (copies in the author’s possession).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

members to twenty. The convention rejected Goulding's call to abolish the Executive, but accepted his proposal to expand the army council, so his desire to fill the leadership with people that were more amenable to his ideology was taking shape. The Civil Rights movement in Northern Ireland pushed Goulding's politicising agenda back into the spotlight, as many local units felt he was disengaged from the situation and putting the lives of republicans in danger. The Belfast IRA was one of the first units to break from the leadership and refuse to follow orders. They held regular meetings, discussed tactics and organised patrols, as though Goulding's movement was disbanded, so it could easily be argued that the provisional IRA were already in operation, particularly in west Belfast, where the vocal calls for a renewed military offensive gained most traction in this period. On 22 September 1969, a group of armed men broke up a meeting of the Belfast IRA. Billy McKee, one of this groups leaders, and a staunch opponent of Goulding's, said the men 'were determined to break from Dublin,' as they 'realised the Dublin crowd and the Dublin leadership were nothing other than con men...so the northern lads got together and told them they would not have any more truck with the south, and the Dublin leadership.'<sup>37</sup> The 'organisational changes...and changes in tactics,' which the leadership were eagerly pursuing, were used to portray Goulding as weak, cowardly and unable to defend the northern nationalist people.<sup>38</sup> The nationalist tide was turning against Goulding in Northern Ireland. Men, such as Joe Cahill, who vehemently claimed the Dublin leadership, were working to destroy republicanism, became powerful opponents of Goulding. Sean MacStiofáin remarked, the Dublin leadership, acting under the instruction of Cathal Goulding, was no longer serving the membership, but was operating in the 'never never land of theoretical Marxism.'<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Justin O'Brien, *The arms trial* (London, 2000), p. 66.

<sup>38</sup> *United Irishman*, Jul. 1968.

<sup>39</sup> Seán MacStiofáin, *Memoirs of a revolutionary* (Dublin, 1979), p. 99.

Many of Goulding's comrades, particularly Tomás MacGiolla, who was a hugely popular figure with the membership, tried to remain impartial, at least publically so as to deal with the increasingly vocal calls for the abolition of the Goulding project and the re-establishment of an armed campaign. Few were as popular in the movement, as the late Tomás MacGiolla, so the leverage that his support lent to Goulding's agenda was a factor that should not be forgotten. MacGiolla hoped to use his popularity to deal with the traditional wings growing anger, but soon 'realised that they were not for turning.'<sup>40</sup> His wife, Mae, noted that 'Tomás followed Cathal...he respected what he was trying to do and felt the movement could not stay the way it was,' or it would decline.<sup>41</sup> Mae MacGiolla's remarks are insightful, as they highlight the delicate balancing act Tomás played was forced to play. Goulding called many meetings, as rhetoric and animosity boiled over, but the 'search for guns,'<sup>42</sup> which Ruairí O'Bradaigh spoke about, was already underway.<sup>43</sup> While Austin Currie made international headlines, in June 1968, by 'squatting' in a council house in Dungannon and demanding the local council take the plight of the '250' Catholic families into consideration, the IRA was heading swiftly toward schism and uncertainty.<sup>44</sup>

The split finally occurred, in December, 1969, when Goulding calculatedly ensured he had the numbers to push through a vote on political participation, having seen it rejected on a number of occasions. The specifics of the split, particularly whether Gerry Adams stayed in the hall and continued to support the Goulding agenda, or walked out, as he later claimed, are not important elements of the story, as he was not a major figure in the movement in this period. This schism was the culmination of years of traditional republican disillusionment, as they watched the movement evolve beyond its traditional ideological positions. For

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<sup>40</sup> Interview with Mae MacGiolla, County Dublin (Mar. 2012).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Ruairí O'Brádaigh, County Roscommon (Feb. 2009).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> *Irish Times*, 21 Jun. 1968.

traditional republicans, Goulding had gone too far and the movement, which he was creating, was unpalatable on many levels. Tom Maguire, the sole surviving signatory of the executive of Dáil Éireann, came out publically, on 4 January, 1970, to endorse the PSF/PIRA understanding of the republican struggle, which was a hugely important thing for all those involved, as his participation signified that the ‘flame of legitimacy had been passed on.’<sup>45</sup> The Provo’s, as they became known, declared ‘allegiance to the 32 county Irish republic proclaimed at Easter 1916, established by the first Dáil Éireann in 1919, overthrown by force of arms, in 1922, and suppressed to this day by the existing British imposed six county and twenty six county partition states.’<sup>46</sup> There was no place for left wing politics in their war.

In the years after the split, the Official IRA, which was the name the media gave to Goulding’s wing of the republican struggle, continued to maintain a large army and routinely clashed with the Provisionals, in Northern Ireland. It carried out assassinations, robberies and punishment beatings, while simultaneously growing its political agenda, and it appeared Goulding’s dual approach of the ‘gun and the ballot box’ could push the movement forward. However, failed military operations, such as the Aldershot Bombing, in 1972, where three cleaning ladies, a gardener and a Roman Catholic priest were mistakenly killed, and the shooting of a Catholic Ranger, William Best, destroyed the movement’s credibility and acted as a catalyst for change. In 1972, the Official IRA declared a ceasefire, much to the annoyance of many in the organisations militarists, particularly Seamus Costello, who felt the situation in Northern Ireland demanded a stronger military presence, not a retreat to safety. In 1974, he left the organisation and founded the Irish Nationalist Liberation Army, which was militarily similar to the Provisionals, but had a well-defined revolutionary left-wing agenda. Although Goulding and Costello were close friends, they grew apart after the split, as tensions boiled over and violence again flared on the streets of Northern Ireland, as each

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<sup>45</sup> English, *Armed struggle*, p.114

<sup>46</sup> *Irish News*, 29 Dec. 1969.



group sought to preserve status and expand its influence. After much loss of life, Seamus Costello was killed, in 1975 and though both groups agreed to stand down operations, and give peace a chance, resentments remained high in many areas, creating a perpetual paranoia, which failed to dissipate until weapons were decommissioned, in 2010.

In order to understand Cathal Goulding, or Cathal Woods, as he was later known, when he drank in Myshall, County Carlow, and lived under a false name, you have to understand the complexities that dogged his agenda in the sixties. He had spent a good deal of his life in prison, having diligently worked to fulfil the IRA's agenda, when he realised that the movement was caught in an endless cycle, and that a united Ireland was unobtainable, while bombing alone dominated the conversation. He was astute, intelligent and driven, but he was also ruthless, aggressive and determined. In a period of unprecedented crisis, he chose to move the organisation away from violence, rather than leap head first into open warfare, with a highly trained and better armed enemy. Many provisional revisionists, eager to subtly change the dynamics of Northern Irish society, so as to justify the Provisionals campaign, have castigated Goulding's supposed cowardice and propagated a myth that he was operating under communist instruction, as though a middle aged man was incapable of independent thought, and rallied their supporters to belittle his politicising agenda and demean his character. This was unfair, misleading and, given current SF policies, detrimental to their own politics, as they try to carve a place for their organisation in the system, which they once vowed to bomb into oblivion.

## **How did medieval beliefs about the spiritual world shape attitudes towards the church and its role in society?**

Aislinn McCabe

Mysticism, spirituality, and the role women played in this process were major features of the medieval age. This article will look at how medieval spiritual beliefs shaped attitudes towards the Church and its role in society, looking firstly at the spirituality and mysticism surrounding food and fasting, and secondly at the mystical experiences of women concerning the Eucharist. The medieval world was one which rested on the border between the physical, visible world of everyday life, and the ever present invisible spiritual world. The presence of this invisible dimension gave way to a siege mentality in the Middle Ages whereby many people felt that the evil forces in the spiritual world were attacking them daily. Medieval people saw themselves as being on the edge of existence, close to the end of time when the antichrist would attempt to destroy the Catholic Church, and then judgement day would come.<sup>1</sup> The numerous medieval images of the hell mouth show how their world was perceived as being on the brink of hell and that a person and their loved ones were poised on the tip of eternal damnation.<sup>2</sup>

Belief that judgement day was almost upon the people contributed hugely to shaping attitudes towards the church. Medieval beliefs about the spiritual world often shaped a person's attitude to the role of the church in society. In the middle ages there existed the idea that the church resembled a channel through which God's Grace was delivered, and that the nave of a church was symbolic to a ship which transported its passengers closer to God. The signs of the times, a phrase associated with catholicism referring to reading and interpreting

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<sup>1</sup> Bernard McGinn, 'Angel Pope and Papal Antichrist', *Church History*, 47 (Jun. 1978), p. 157.

<sup>2</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. Fr. 403, fol. 40r. beginning of the thirteenth century. From Gary D. Schmidt, *The Iconography of the Mouth of Hell: Eighth-Century Britain to the Fifteenth Century*, (London, 1995), p.161.

the signs of the surrounding world, pointed to a near end of the world for medieval people, thereby made God's grace and the church enormously significant. However, if one could find a surer, faster way of connecting with the spiritual world to achieve a dialogue with Christ, then one could be more certain of salvation in the soon-coming end of times. This mind-set ultimately led to the rise in mysticism and of practising one's own religion without the church in the middle ages.

Food itself was the central christian ritual as it involved the taking of the body of christ in the form of the Eucharist, this remained the most direct and convenient way of having an encounter with God. It is not surprising therefore that fasting became one of the most common ways in the medieval period of manipulating one's body in order to achieve a mystical experience with the divine. Food practices were hugely important to the Christian tradition with days of taking communion and days of fasting placed throughout the year. In fact, one could argue that much of the behaviour that defined a christian from other religions was food-related behaviour. The medieval preoccupation with food, particularly amongst women, was not unfounded. After all, the Church's teachings outline that sin entered the world when Eve ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, and that salvation comes to christians when they eat the Eucharist. Thomas Aquinas, for example, spoke of food as a sinful pleasure<sup>3</sup>, of fasting as 'the quality of being good when done for God'<sup>4</sup>, and of gluttony as a sin against oneself.<sup>5</sup>

Caroline Walker Bynum states when she explains that people in the medieval ages spoke of gluttony as 'the major form of lust, of fasting as the most painful renunciation, and of eating as the most basic and literal way of encountering God.'<sup>6</sup> Medieval thinking insisted that food excited lust and women would fall victim to this more so than men because of their

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<sup>3</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, XX 1a2ae, 31-39 (London, 1975), pp. 21-5.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>6</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, 'Fast, feast, and flesh: the religious significance of food to medieval women', *Representations*, 11 (Summer 1985), p. 1.

being more prone to sin. Therefore, by fasting women were not only controlling their food but also their sexuality. Voluntary starvation and intense rejection of food and drink were equated with the saints and saintly qualities.<sup>7</sup> Fasting soon came to symbolise a holy courage held only by the saints, and female saints especially were associated with severe and long-term fasting. This particular attitude toward the church in one way undermined its authority, because of the mysticism experienced with fasting, and yet at the same time it was only through the church that the Eucharist could be taken.

The main reason that the spirituality connected to food became so important to women was because food itself had a huge significance to females in the social and domestic sphere. Women prepared and distributed the food, while men enjoyed it. Fasting was seen as a spiritual control over one's physical, sinful body and women were drawn to fasting for the simple explanation that this was one of the few things they had control over and could give up. A major feature in women's medieval piety was the idea that the body had to be disciplined and defeated in order to feel the presence of the spirit within and protect it from sin.<sup>8</sup> In this context it is not at all surprising that number of women used their bodies in an attempt to experience contact with God. For both sexes, the eating of the eucharist involved eating the physical eucharistic bread and the spiritual body of Jesus Christ. Therefore, anyone who had taken part in the eating of the host had also in fact shared in an experience with the divine. It was only a selected few however, who actually felt transformed upon eating the eucharist or who experienced a miraculous event or encounter with God.

In the middle ages a huge devotion to the body and the blood of Jesus Christ, the *corpus christi*, came about. The Elevation of the Host did not exist before this time and only came about because of the *corpus christi* devotion. The transubstantiation miracle performed was proof of the spiritual world that people believed in so fervently. It also provided proof

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<sup>7</sup> Bynum, 'Fast, feast, and flesh', p. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

that one could not trust biological senses alone, seeing as they did not pick up or register that the bread and wine had been miraculously and utterly transformed. Mystical experiences were numerous, particularly for women, when it came to the subject of the Eucharist. Upon taking the eucharist they may have a direct encounter with God, or often feel that the bread changed to the blood of christ in their mouths. Blood piety soon became a major feature of female mysticism and devotion during the middle ages. Female mystics, who were denied access to the wine at mass, had repeated experiences such as this whereby, upon taking the eucharist, blood would flow from their mouth and they would experience a flooding ecstasy through their body, for example St.Catherine of Siena (1347-1380).<sup>9</sup>

Catherine's life provides an excellent historical account of a woman who manipulated her body by fasting in order to get closer to God. Catherine, like many other women practising severe long-term fasting, fused the extreme pain of her hunger with the agony Christ must have felt on the cross.<sup>10</sup> Raymond of Capua (1330-1399), Catherine's confessor, wrote detailed accounts of Catherine's life, illustrating how she slowly weaned herself off food until 'by the fupernatural power of God...fhe fufteined her life without eating and drinking at all. [sic]'<sup>11</sup> It was also recorded that on many occasions when Catherine was receiving the host, the Eucharist would move or even fly out of the priest's hands towards her.<sup>12</sup> The spiritual belief of the medieval period concerning the blood of christ is evident throughout the female saints own letters. Catherine opens her each of her letters in a similar manner: 'I, Catherine, servant and slave of the servants of Jesus Christ, write to you in his precious Blood...'.<sup>13</sup> Blood piety is a central theme in the life of Catherine and in her

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<sup>9</sup> Caroline Walker Bynum, 'The blood of christ in the later middle ages', *Church History*, 71 (Dec. 2002), p. 689.

<sup>10</sup> Walker Bynum, *Holy feast and holy fast: the religious significance of food to medieval women*, (California, 1987) p. 165.

<sup>11</sup> Raymond of Capua, *The Life of the Blessed Virgin, Saint Catharine of Siena* (Douai, 1960), p. 51.

<sup>12</sup> Raymond of Capua, *Life of Saint Catherine of Sienna*, E. Cartier (New York, 1960), p. 238.

<sup>13</sup> Kenelm Foster and Mary John Ronayne (eds), *I, Catherine: Selected writings of St Catherine of Siena* (London, 1980) p.136.

writings she frequently makes reference to the powers held in the blood: ‘for in the blood of christ we are made strong...since our reason is made strong in the blood of Christ we must drown ourselves in this sweet and glorious Ransom.’<sup>14</sup>

The spirituality surrounding food, that is to say the manipulation and control of food in order to achieve a mystical experience, had major consequences in shaping attitudes towards the church and its role in society. Mysticism was after all removing the role of the church in society. The spiritual beliefs concerning the Eucharist in particular contributed to shaping attitudes towards the role of the church in society. The direct connection with God felt by some women when receiving the host essentially avoided ecclesiastical control. Though the church was indeed responsible for dispensing the eucharist, the notion that the Church was not needed for a mystical experience undermined the church’s role in society. The spirituality and mysticism surrounding food occasionally manipulated religious authorities as well with women's eucharistic miracles sometimes being used in order to expose and castigate clerical corruption.<sup>15</sup> Mysticism and spirituality concerning food, fasting and the eucharist helped to shape attitudes toward the role of the church in society. It can be concluded that fasting and miracles of the eucharist were used as a form of mysticism as this time, particularly amongst women. Fasting provided a possible way of achieving an encounter with God by means of manipulation and control over the physical, while eucharistic miracles led to a surge in blood piety and were sometimes used to bypass clerical power and expose corruption. Spiritual beliefs surrounding food therefore did not leave room for any major influence from the Church in the lives of those practising mysticism through fasting or Eucharistic means as they no longer needed a medium for God’s Grace.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Bynum, ‘Fast, feast, and flesh’, p.13.

## **‘Framing the women’: Putting two Tipperary women in the Great War picture**

Alice McDermott

The fifty-one month military operation that was the First World War was, perhaps, from the perspective of the soldiers, sailors, and air-force personnel from all sides who participated in its many manoeuvres, attacks, and battles, best described, variously, depending on the nature and extent of constantly unfolding real-time ‘local’ events and happenings, as a period of juxtaposing misery, drudgery, boredom, discomfort, danger, suffering, fear, and terror. This fact alone is, surely, sufficient to allow for the assertion that it is entirely unreasonable to even consider attempting to deny what should be the absolute right of all of the members of the participating armed forces, from each of the two opposing camps, to occupy the largest ‘chunk’ of the mainstream of factual Great War literature.

To further cement the attestation, briefly consider the following grim statistics. A total of approximately ten million men, somewhere in the region of a seventh of all those mobilised by the two sides throughout its more than four year duration, sacrificed their lives on the numerous and diverse battlefields and, to a lesser extent, in the assorted ocean based affrays, of World War One.<sup>1</sup> Close to eight million men, a ninth, more or less, of the entire contingent of British Expeditionary Force recruits who served during the years 1914 to 1918, and, consequently, given the relative evenness of numbers of casualties and fatalities (combatants injured, ‘lost’ and, thereby, unaccounted for, and killed) on both sides, about a ninth of the combined totality, were categorised as ‘missing in action’.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> David Stephenson, *1914-1918: the history of the First World War* (London, 2004), pp. 544-45.

<sup>2</sup> Niall Ferguson, *The pity of war* (London, 1999), pp. 295-296.

The majority of these were, unfortunately, for them and their families, friends, communities, and nations, presumed, and, indeed, most likely were, actually killed in action at different battle-sites and stages of the conflict as it continued to rage unchecked throughout those pertinent years. Something in the order of twenty one million men, almost a third of Britain's entire overseas units, equally, for reasons outlined immediately above, about a third of Germany's and its military partners', suffered physical injury or psychological trauma, and, undoubtedly, sometimes both, in the course of, from Britain's perspective, defending the Empire and its allies against what was widely regarded by all of same, throughout the period of the war's conduct, as German ultra-aggression and, from the point of view of the central powers, and, particularly, Germany, the dual motivations of the desire to annex and expand into parts of Europe not yet belonging to the Kaiser and his subjects and fear of being surrounded by enemies should the Austro-Hungarian Empire fall.<sup>3</sup>

With all due regard to the appalling and, it is widely agreed, reasonably accurate estimates of the numbers of men variously wounded, missing, and killed in action during same, it is not difficult to understand why, to this very day, the great war continues to defy any and all attempts at comprehensive analysis and assessment, particularly of its course and consequences, such was the magnitude of its multitudinous horrors and virtually global mayhem. In fact, the sheer vastness of the frightful catalogue of those service-men physically and/or mentally and/or emotionally injured and traumatised as a result of their participation in the war's assorted engagements, and missing and/or killed in action, also, of course, allows for the reiteration of the claim previously and recently made, that, without question, the truly shocking nature of their commonly held World War One exposures is more than sufficient to guarantee the entire body of men who served on both sides during the conflict their rightful

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<sup>3</sup> Hew Strachan, *The First World War* (London, 2006), pp. 35-42.



place at the centre, and in the bulk, of all of its documentation, literally, until time immemorial.

There are, however, questions that should be asked about the remainder of the available space on the Great War canvas which, of course, for however long it continues to excite interest and remark amongst historians and the public at large, remains ‘a work in progress’. In the context of the current article, six enquiries, in particular, spring to mind, four general in essence and two with specific reference to Ireland. The four wide-ranging questions regarding the actual nature and extent of the overall range of the 1914-1918 portrayal, as it currently exists, are as follows. Is its ultimate expanse finite? Does it have reserved places? Should access to its confines be limited or restricted in any way? Is disregarding or blocking some contributors from the composite an accurate or fair response to the war, particularly for the substantial numbers men and women who faithfully served throughout same? The two questions relating to Ireland are thus. Should nothing now be done, from the country’s perspective, about previously absent (because of circumstances outside their individual and collective controls) but nonetheless defacto, in other words, real, war-time participants, such as nurses, who are still strongly calling out, by simple virtue of their non-presence, for retrospective inclusion within its heretofore heavily fortified, perhaps, even, some might argue, selectively edited and air-brushed (for a wide variety of reasons) boundaries?<sup>4</sup> Is it, at this point in time, already too late to re-present these women for representation by factual inclusion in the picture that, so far at any rate, has steadfastly and resolutely endured, reshaped, regrouped, and evolved with seemingly never-ending alterations, as on-going newly emerging contingencies have necessitated and permitted, to

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<sup>4</sup> Most notably the facts that, firstly, as a participants collective, they were not encouraged to record their engagements in official histories and, secondly, the ‘New Ireland’ to which they returned at war’s end did not welcome any such documentations of the country’s colonised past.

further record details, outlines, and interpretations of what was happening and who exactly was where, why, and how, etc., throughout the period of the conflict?

The single, simple, and clear answer to the six questions is, surely, ‘no.’ It has to be because, on a very elementary level, there is, without question or exception, always scope for more, for others, particularly those casually, unappreciatively, and/or circumstantially dismissed thus far, from the First World War picture and for as long as people remain captivated by, amongst other things, the war’s poignant and often savage co-existing opposites, through the individual and, sometimes, collective behaviours, actions, and/or errors of its assorted participants, in other words, of hideousness and heroism, of intense darkness and even more intense light, the ability of the canvas to expand, absorb, present, and represent the ever unfolding cast of characters and types and sequences of events that continue to come to light and call for attention is, one could argue, infinite. Specifically, it is the painting’s capacity for unlimited expansion that is of particular interest and benefit to the writer of the current article whose stated aim, to put two Tipperary Great War nurses, literally, in their place, in other words, in the picture, is equally matched by the desire not to displace any of the men currently occupying distinct parts of the space.

The overall aim of the paper is to highlight, through the two examples presented as case studies, the importance of according World War One nurses, generally, and their Irish contingents, specifically, a greater degree of latitude in prevailing written record of same than has hitherto been granted to them, not least because of the character and wealth of the hitherto undocumented war-time experiences that they embodied and enshrined and that can, and, indeed, will, significantly and positively, contribute to the picture already sketched. There is, in fact, already widespread agreement amongst historians whose fields of specialist interest engage with Great War nursing inputs that military nurses from all sides who contributed so materially to overall medical treatment and care throughout the conflict have,

to date, not been granted due regard for their efforts , from any quarter, including their own, in existing documentation.<sup>5</sup> From the point of view of historical accuracy, therefore, the First World War written record is, so far, at any rate, patently, and, at the very least, partially incorrect because it is incomplete, and will, furthermore, remain so for as long as military nurses' imprinted outlines on the canvas are so astonishingly less substantial than their actual, or real-time, presences were throughout the event. Under-representation of Great War nursing contributions is, of course, as is the case with, and in, Ireland, even more critical when it virtually disregards an entire national effort at same.

With all of that in mind, and in a very small effort to increase their presence in the World War One picture, broadly, and with specific reference to Ireland, this article focuses on three inter-related issues: an overview of the general war-time nursing experience from 1914 to 1918; an account, with analysis, of the nursing careers throughout the conflict of two Tipperary women, Molly O'Connell Bianconi and Venice Hackett; and an estimation of the contributions of the two women to the aggregate of medical care during the war and an examination of the impact of the event on them, other women, and, in consequence, society generally in the years and decades that followed the defining occurrence. Like their male colleagues, the women who served as great war nurses came from every walk of life and spanned every level of the social hierarchy, although, it is commonly agreed, the vast majority of them, something in the region of four out of every five, came from middle and upper class backgrounds.<sup>6</sup>

In terms of their nursing credential, a minority were qualified nurses, in other words, professionals.<sup>7</sup> Professional war-time nurses tended to belong to one of two established nursing corps. The first of these was the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing

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<sup>5</sup> Janet Lee, *War Girls: The first aid nursing yeomanry in the First World War*, (Manchester, 2005), pp. 2-15.

<sup>6</sup> Richard Holmes, *Tommy: the British soldier on the western front 1914-1918*, (London, 2004), pp. 74-75.

<sup>7</sup> Hallett, Christine E., *Containing trauma: nursing work in the First World War* (Manchester, 2009), p. 64.

Service (QUAIMNS).<sup>8</sup> The second was the Territorial Force Nursing Service (TFNS).<sup>9</sup> The greater part of First World War nurses, however, were volunteering amateurs. A significant proportion of these joined the Voluntary Aid Detachment (VAD). Interestingly, and as previously noted, while most great war volunteer nurses belonged to the educated and wealthier classes, some, indeed, were aristocrats, the VAD also actively recruited not only what it termed nursing members but ‘cooks, kitchen-maids, clerks, house-maids, ward-maids, laundresses, motor-drivers, etc.’<sup>10</sup> It, therefore, attracted a small proportion of working-class women too. Other volunteering medical assistants signed up for military nursing service with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry (FANY). Again, most of the women who joined this unit were from privileged backgrounds. It is also worth noting that, while the VAD sought to recruit, in some instances throughout the war, what it termed motor drivers, the FANY required each and all of its volunteer nurses to be ambulance driver mechanics too! There were a number of reasons for this. Most notably, the FANY was very often deployed to fetch wounded and dying soldiers from diverse and precarious front lines of the conflict and, given the likelihood, in almost all such circumstances, of the potential dangers of both hostile and friendly fire, unstable driving conditions, poor or, indeed, no proper road surfaces, not to mention the vulnerabilities and needs of their precious cargoes of fallen soldiers, the women needed to be simultaneously able to treat the variously injured, drive them to relative safety and further care, and, when required, make emergency repairs to multifariously stricken vehicles.

Every volunteer nurse in all of the auxiliary nursing corps was required to complete what can probably best be described as accelerated training prior to being posted, either at Home Front hospitals (Home, in the case of Irish nurses, being either in Ireland or Britain) or

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<sup>8</sup> Siobhan Horgan Ryan, ‘Irish military nursing in the Great War’, in Gerard M Fealy, (Ed.), *Care to remember: nursing and midwifery in Ireland* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 89-101.

<sup>9</sup> Juliet Piggott, *Queen Alexandra’s royal army nursing corps* (London, 1990), pp. 46-56.

<sup>10</sup> Piggott, *Queen Alexandra’s royal army nursing corps*, p. 14.

at assorted front-line locations in all of the war's combat zones. Front-line positions, for both professional and volunteering nurses throughout the war, could be at: Advance dressing stations; Casualty clearing stations; Base Hospitals: which could be operating out of tents, huts, or more solid structures, depending on where precisely they were situated; Hospital Trains and/or Hospital Ships.<sup>11</sup> Training of volunteer nurses during the First World War was usually carried out by the British Red Cross Society or St. John Ambulance. It routinely consisted of a three month nursing and first aid programme. Upon completion of the course, volunteers were issued with first aid certification. Members of the FANY were, subsequently, additionally required to complete motor car maintenance programmes. They received further accreditation for same.

Following their assorted training programmes, volunteer nurses were issued with their postings. The types of locations to which they could be sent depended entirely on the nature of the choices each woman had made upon initially joining the various volunteer nursing units. This was because volunteering amateurs were invited to specify, upon enlisting, whether they wished to serve on the home front or at overseas medical stations for the duration of the war. Their wishes in this regard were, generally, taken into account. It is worth noting that, while choices during this time were as individual as each of the women who made them, broadly speaking, it was more likely to be single ladies who opted for overseas service.<sup>12</sup> Once they took up their new posts, whether at home or abroad, Great War volunteer nurses continued to be both trained and supervised throughout the remainder of their time in military service between the years 1914 and 1918, regardless of what was happening around them or, indeed, how proficient they became over time at nursing and

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<sup>11</sup> Alice McDermott, 'In Florence Nightingale's footsteps: a biography of Molly O'Connell Bianconi', *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2009), p. 132.

<sup>12</sup> Hallett, *Containing trauma: nursing work in the First World War*, p. 64.

sundry ancillary medical duties.<sup>13</sup> The following summary of the typical war-time experiences of great war nurses, previously identified as comprising the first component of the paper, is, therefore, focused on amateur as opposed to professional nursing engagements and duties throughout same although, it should be noted, in the main, untrained and trained medical staff of every description worked side by side during the conflict and, therefore, shared similar and, often, equal post-combat therapeutic functions and responsibilities.

Perhaps an appropriate starting place to present the World War One volunteer nurse profile is the following pen-picture of these women presented by Lyn MacDonald in her seminal text, *The Roses of No Man's Land*.<sup>14</sup>

...The ghost of Boulogne and Etaples and Rouen ought to be a girl. She's called Elsie or Gladys or Dorothy (or Molly or Venice)...Her ankles are swollen, her feet are aching, her hands reddened and rough. She has little money, no vote, and has almost forgotten what it feels like to be really warm. She sleeps in a tent...She is twenty three. She is the daughter of a clergyman, a lawyer, or a prosperous businessman, and has been privately educated and groomed to be a "lady". She wears the unbecoming outdoor uniform of a VAD or an army nurse. She is on active service, and as much a part of the war as Tommy Atkins.

On the face of it, no one could have been less equipped for the job than these gently nurtured girls who walked straight out of Edwardian drawing-rooms into the manifold horrors of the First World War. It was all a far cry from the old myth of the ministering angel.' These girls had to be tough. They worked in flooded operating theatres in Flanders where, in a big "push", there might be four operations going on at one time, and as many as ten amputations an hour. They nursed men with terrible wounds and saw them off to convalescent camp or laid them out when they died. They nursed in wards where the stench of gas-gangrenous wounds was almost overpowering. They nursed men choking to death as the fluid rose in their gassed lungs, men whose faces were mutilated beyond recognition, whose bodies were mangled beyond repair, whose nerves were shattered beyond redemption...

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<sup>13</sup> Lyn MacDonald, *The roses of no man's land*, (London, 1980), p. 91.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

Throughout all of this, the volunteer nurses rose magnificently to the occasion. In leaking tents and draughty huts, they fought another war, a war against agony and death, as men lay suffering and dying from the pain of unimaginable wounds (and the trauma of unbearable psychological overload).<sup>15</sup> As, essentially, outlined in MacDonald's description of the typical nursing duties of volunteer, and, indeed, all medical personnel throughout the conflict, the ten most common great war wounds suffered by the army, navy, air-force, and, to a smaller extent, the self-same members of the assorted medical team, were: external physical injuries caused by mustard gas; internal damage caused by same; battle force trauma or surgical amputation; blindness; external injuries caused by gun-shot and machine gun-fire; internal damage caused by same; puncture wounds caused by bayonets and swords; psychological damage, often referred to as 'shell-shock'; heatstroke; and frostbite.<sup>16</sup>

For the entire duration of the First World War, all of the members of the vast numbers of medical teams on both sides that catered for variously wounded combatants and, to a lesser degree, front-line non-combatants on both sides of the conflict, stretcher-bearers, volunteer nurses, professional nurses, and army doctors, who were, unfortunately, sometimes caught in the cross-fires, had to look at, closely examine, and treat patients who had been subjected to these types of dreadful injuries, damages, disfigurements, shocks, and traumas. They had to do so, almost always, with inadequate, in some cases, hopelessly so, training and/or experience, because all World War One medical personnel, even the skilled professional nurses and doctors, were constantly being confronted with physical and psychological war-wounds that had, quite literally in many cases, never been seen prior to this, therefore, never been intellectually and empathetically understood, and, consequently, treated to best effect. The medical staff, for example, was largely unfamiliar with the causes, course, and effects of, and, therefore, the most appropriate remedial action for what came to be known as 'shell-

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<sup>15</sup> MacDonald, *The roses of no man's land*, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret R. Higonnet, *Nurses at the front: writing the wounds of the great war* (Boston, 2001), pp. 57-63.

shock', one of the most common psychological traumas of that particular conflict. Medical personnel were also quite unused to the injuries and damages inflicted on the human body by poisonous gas, first used by the central powers in 1915, and subsequently by both sides for the remainder of the war. Initial reactions to poisonous gas threats and to the havoc they wreaked, on the part of both the allies and their opponents, were, on the whole, unsuccessful, both militarily and medically.

Regardless of the nature and extent of combatants' multitudinous physical and psychological great war-wounds, all of the members of the miscellaneous medical teams, on both sides of the conflict, who served throughout the four year confrontation had to interact with, tend to, and treat each patient without giving expression to varying combinations, depending on a wide variety of personal, local, time, and fatigue related circumstances, of pity, fear, unease, consternation, horror, and/or, even, disgust. It was, after all, the men (for the most part, although there were lesser numbers of women treated for a wide assortment of great war wounds and traumas) with the injuries who were going to have to physically and/or psychologically carry them henceforth, in some cases, temporarily, unfortunately, however, and much more frequently, for the remainder of their lives. And, perhaps, even more importantly, for any, some, or, indeed, all medical personnel involved in the care of variously stricken combatants, to emotionally respond or react as just described was almost to actively and collectively condemn their patients, while still treating them and their new wounds, to disquiet about regular and similar reciprocation from others in the future. Of course, carers and healers not expressing any of the suites of unhelpful emotions recently listed was of very little real help, apart from that just signified, to those 'marked' in varying physical and/or psychosomatic degrees by war wounds but it was, crucially, a small but nevertheless good start for each patient's future as part of the fraternity of that war's war-damaged, furthermore, it was what they all needed, and it was the very least that they deserved.



It was this approach to First World War therapeutic care that entire medical teams on both sides of the conflict for its duration, including volunteer nurses, had to engineer, nourish, and grow and, as previously noted, for many of the physical injuries and mental traumas treated, there were no existent, time tried and tested blueprints, no instruction manuals, only the collective wills, hearts, and minds, the rudimentary medical supplies, equipment, and surroundings to try to do the very best for every patient, always, in every circumstance. This overall therapeutic style, conducted, as it had to be, in a whole new way, was, arguably, the greatest challenge, burden, and, quixotically, privilege for all of World War One's medical teams on both sides of the conflict for its duration.

Great war nursing records are, in the main, incomplete. They are also, in comparison with those of soldiers, sailors, and air-force personnel during the same period, under-analysed and under-assessed. There are a number of reasons for this. Perhaps the one that springs to mind most readily is that women's World War One contributions have, to date, tended to be regarded, by historians and the wider public, as less exciting and significant, and, therefore, less note-worthy than those of men.<sup>17</sup> Whatever the precise nature of the various causes, a major upshot of the condition is that it is, unfortunately, virtually impossible to establish, with any degree of accuracy, how many women, professionals and volunteers, on both sides of the divide, provided military nursing service throughout the First World War. In the context of both trained and amateur Irish great war nurses, however, probably because there were fewer of them than of any other allied national grouping at the time, there is a remarkable degree of both consistency and certainty amongst interested historians that somewhere in the region of 4,500 women from the country provided war-time nursing

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<sup>17</sup> McDermott, 'In Florence Nightingale's footsteps', p. 132.

services, 'at home', in other words, in Ireland or Britain, and overseas.<sup>18</sup> Two of these women were Molly O'Connell Bianconi and Venice Hackett.

Molly O'Connell Bianconi was a volunteer nurse for whom the First World War sharply defined not only the early years of her adult life but all of its subsequent ones too. In this regard, she was mirroring the entire World War One generation whose lives were equally shaped and fashioned by the outbreak and ensuing and long drawn out conduct of the four year conflict. The simple fact of the time, after all, was that, for Molly and many of her contemporaries, their very first adult career and life-style choice was, quite literally, war inspired, in the widest sense of that particular term. A war triggered front-line calling was also, of course, particularly from the perspective of ladies like Molly who choose to respond to same, the absolute antithesis of what of what she was reared, educated, and expected to do with her person and time by a sizeable proportion of both family and friends. She still made the unconventional selection. Molly was born on 22 December 1896 to John and Arabella O'Connell Bianconi. She was, as her name, perhaps, indicates, a descendant of two of Ireland's most distinguished public figures, Daniel O'Connell, 'the Liberator', instigator of Catholic Emancipation and, at the time of his death, proponent of the campaign for Repeal of the Act of Union, and fellow Catholic, Charles Bianconi, founder of the country's first public transport system, the 'King of the Irish Roads'.<sup>19</sup> Bianconi's daughter, Mary Anne (after whom her grand-daughter, affectionately known throughout her life as Molly, was named), married the Liberator's nephew, Morgan John O'Connell, in 1865. Mary Anne and Morgan John had one son, also named John. He was Molly's father. Molly, therefore, was the great-grand-niece of Daniel O'Connell and the great-grand-daughter of Charles Bianconi. At the

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<sup>18</sup> Caitriona Clear, 'Fewer Ladies, More Women', John Horne (ed.), *Our war: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin, 2008), p. 162.

<sup>19</sup> Molly Bianconi and S.J. Watson, *Bianconi: king of the Irish roads* (Dublin, 1962), p. 1.

outbreak of World War One, Molly was attending finishing schools, initially in Namur in French speaking southern Belgium and subsequently in Paris, France.

Soon after hearing news of the eruption of hostilities, instead of formally finishing, finishing school, she choose to conclude her studies by leaving, in 1915, aged nineteen, to join the VAD, like so many others of her social class, as earlier mentioned. For her specific three month nursing and first aid programme, she was sent to a hospital in Yorkshire in England. This was, in fact, a typical posting, for instruction purposes, for new VAD recruits in 1915, in a conventional hospital far from any of the war's many combat zones. They were, after all, professionally unqualified carers and therefore, essentially, required crash courses in elementary nursing and first aid procedures in fully functioning home front hospitals before being despatched overseas where conditions were altogether cruder and more frenetic. Having successfully completed the basic instruction programme offered at the hospital, Molly subsequently volunteered to attend a motor car maintenance module. By so doing, she was, as noted earlier, effectively securing admittance to the FANY. Molly was deemed to have successfully passed the Mechanics Programme sometime in 1916. At that point in time, she was twenty years old. Armed with basic training in nursing, first aid, and motor car maintenance, Molly applied, and was immediately welcomed into, the FANY. She then awaited her first overseas posting. While so doing, she would have known, because she had volunteered to do so when she joined the FANY brigade, that she was guaranteed to be going to some part of the front line of the conflict, although she would have had no idea exactly where that might be amongst the numerous great war battle lines dotted at that time throughout a significant proportion of the globe. She would also have known that her new job entailed driving ambulances: maintaining their engines and bodies, sometimes under extremely hostile conditions, on the way to and from various battle sites; assisting stretcher bearers to gather soldiers who were hurt or dying; administering prompt emergency medical

care, when possible, to injured soldiers for whom, always, delays with same meant additional pain and, in some cases, long term/permanent injury or death; transporting the wounded and dying, where feasible and/or necessary, depending on a wide variety of individual and/or local factors, for further treatment, attention, and care. She would, of course, have known that such work, in those places, and at those times, was, to put it simply, fiercely dangerous.

In August 1917, then aged twenty-one, Molly and her First Aid Nursing Yeomanry contingent were sent to Amiens in France. As we now know, all of the western front in 1917, Amiens included, was probably even more dangerous and frenzied than it had been a year earlier, not least because the Germans and their allies, by then free of the war in the East, had thereby greatly reduced their vulnerability to multi-fronted military distractions that had previously fragmented not just their combined attentions but also their troops and weapons resources. The central powers, therefore, were in prime position, in what was the third year of World War One, to relentlessly, and in an integrated manner, pursue their enemies positioned as they were throughout France and Flanders. That, in short, is what they endeavoured to do. In the midst of all the chaos and slaughter that ensued, Molly carried out her duties, as was subsequently noted by a number of her superiors, with extraordinary skill and courage on this, her first great war overseas posting. In so doing, she gained a reputation for hard work, innovation, bravery, courage, endurance, and flair. Molly and her company of FANYs were transferred to St. Omer, also in France, early in 1918. This, it can reasonably be inferred, was in direct response to the Kaiser's newly launched spring offensive. Molly's group arrived in St. Omer at the beginning of April and spent from then until the summer helping to evacuate the wounded in what, as is now widely known, was part of the Allied powers' immediate and reactive retreat from the Kaiserschlacht. Throughout this time, too, because, as has been very recently noted, she had previously demonstrated the nature and extent of her mettle in Amiens, she was thorough, dedicated, inspiring, and fearless in the

conduct of her nursing work. Indeed, she was subsequently awarded a Military Medal (MM) for the manner in which she carried out her duties throughout the period of the Allied retreat. She received the Military Medal from King George V, sometime between April and late July 1918, together with a citation for bravery, addressed to her and six of her nursing colleagues, which read:

Miss Molly O'Connell Bianconi, FANY.

For conspicuous devotion to duty during an (sic.) hostile air raid. All these lady drivers were out with their cars during the raid, picking up and in every way assisting the wounded and injured. They showed great bravery and coolness, and were an example to all ranks.

Of almost equal distinction, Molly was also mentioned in General Plummer's dispatches for bravery in the field in relation to her overall deportment throughout the same airborne enemy attack. She was one of the first, of very few women, to be singularly honoured with both distinctions, during the consecution of World War One. Molly returned to Ireland soon after the ending of the First World War on 11 November 1918. Having, by all accounts been hugely influenced by her own and other participants' war-time experiences, Molly, for the remainder of her life, during which, like her great-grandfather, Charles, she worked for another half century, carved out for herself a series of fascinating and unconventional career opportunities.<sup>20</sup> Briefly, and by way of illustration, she was, after the war and, indeed, until the time of her death, in turn, a model, hotel proprietress, junior officer in the British Army during World War Two, writer, and affiliate of the Irish Georgian Society.<sup>21</sup> The known facts relating to her career as a mannequin are as follows. From the start of her return to Tipperary, it was clearly apparent that she was not prepared to settle into a life of

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<sup>20</sup> Over the years, the author has, over the years, interviewed a number of people from the Boherlahan/Ardmayle region of Tipperary who either personally knew Molly or had parents or grandparents who did. Every one of them has commented on the profound impact that the Great War had on her. Their names and contact details (where they have granted permission to be identified).

<sup>21</sup> McDermott, 'In Florence Nightingale's footsteps', p. 137.

busy idleness.<sup>22</sup> Instead, she left home again, sometime before the end of 1918, and travelled to London where she settled. The move was, most likely, because she had already met the man, a British Army officer, whom she married, in that city, the following year. It is equally fairly well established by the author that she wanted to continue to experience a fuller life.<sup>23</sup> Broader encounters with reality, in all of its aspects, had certainly been the case for her and her volunteering nursing colleagues throughout the Great War, hardships and the suffering of others notwithstanding. There appears to be no doubt that she continued to seek, over the next half century, opportunities for journeying and excitement that were outside the narrow confines of the life, prior to the war, determined for women of her social class.

Once established in London, she began working as one of the city's first live fashion models. She remained in the position until her wedding in December 1919.<sup>24</sup> Of particular interest in the context just outlined, and, of course, continuing the trend initially established when she first went to war, is the detail that Molly, in the immediate aftermath of the war, was willing to become one of the first women in the capital to earn money by providing her services in an entirely new career outlet for same.<sup>25</sup> Upon the break-up of her marriage, she returned to Longfield House. Finding the house and estate in urgent need of repair, thus far in her working life unafraid, indeed, apparently eager, to explore the road less travelled, and having laboured constantly since she was nineteen, Molly decided, in the early 1930s, to secure a hotel licence and establish a business venture on the premises. This, too, would have been an unusual career choice, in Ireland and elsewhere, for women in the 1930s. From then until the outbreak of the Second World War, she successfully ran Longfield House as a hunting, shooting, fishing lodge. Immediately war was declared, Molly, like many of her

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<sup>22</sup> MacDonald, *The roses of no man's land*, p. 43.

<sup>23</sup> In the course of several interviews with descendants of locals who worked for her after the Great War, frequent references made by her regarding same have been highlighted.

<sup>24</sup> She married Captain Arthur Stanley Watson, Queen's Royal West Surrey Regiment, on 18 December 1919, at Brompton Oratory in South Kensington.

<sup>25</sup> Pat Beauchamp, *FANY goes to war* (Dublin, 2011), p. 17.

former colleagues in the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry, re-joined the colours and, then aged forty-three, prepared for overseas service.<sup>26</sup> She was offered a commission as a Junior Commander (the equivalent army rank was that of Lieutenant) in the Auxiliary Territorial Service (ATS). She served with the ATS until 1945. When the war ended, she returned to Tipperary where she immediately re-launched Longfield House and demesne as a hotel for, in the main, British paying guests. She brought that career venture to an end; however, as she was approaching her sixtieth year, to undertake a mission that had become more and more important to her as the years went by. In what must have been one of her most ambitious projects to date, certainly almost of equal note with her two world war endeavours, she elected, with a co-writer, Col. S.J. Watson, M.B.E., to produce a biography of her great-grandfather. She devoted the next ten years of her life to co-writing the account of Charles Bianconi's life. The book, *Bianconi: King of the Irish Roads*, was published, to somewhat muted critical acclaim, in 1962. Regardless, the endeavour was, once again, outside the realm of a usual or typical work engagement for women, even in the context of the 1960s.

In the years immediately leading up to, and following, the book's publication, Molly gave radio interviews and talks, in both Britain and Ireland, on Bianconi's coaching empire. This, too, was a rather unique occupation for a woman at that time. Her final work related endeavour, in keeping with her ever-evolving, always engaging, and utterly pioneering previous pursuits, involved negotiating with the Irish Georgian Society with a view to handing Longfield House into their permanent safekeeping. She hoped, in this way, to oversee its restoration and its presentation to the nation. She died on 29 August 1968, before her last work related, and philanthropic, endeavour could be accomplished. It is, perhaps, worth remarking here, with no small measure of regret, that neither she, anyone close to her, nor, indeed, the many agents of 'official' Ireland at the time who could have intervened,

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<sup>26</sup> Janet Lee, *War girls: The first aid nursing yeomanry in the First World War* (Manchester, 2005), pp. 249-58.

thought to lay claim to the same intellectual, articulation, and recording abilities she had demonstrated by encouraging her to draft her own life experiences, not least her Great War account. Consequently, they have remained undocumented until very recent times. In conclusion to her rather remarkable life, it is undoubtedly the case that, throughout the fifty years of her post-great war working life, interestingly and unsurprisingly, Molly fully embraced both the spirit and the letter of independence and gender equality that she and the rest of her generation of (largely) young men and women, albeit unbeknown to them, fought for (in the widest sense of the term) and won across the bloody battlefields of that inaccurately named war-to-end-all-wars. Consistently throughout those years, also, she widely displayed the charisma, entrepreneurial spirits, and people-skills of both of her well known ancestors!

Venice Clementine Henrietta Hackett was approximately ten years older than Molly O'Connell Bianconi. Born on 27 February 1887 in Milngavie, Stirlingshire, Scotland, she was the second of six children born to Edward Augustus and Emilie L. Elliott Hackett at the time of her birth, Venice's family, as previously observed, was residing in Scotland where her father, a civil engineer, was engaged as the Contractor's Engineer with special responsibility for improvement works on the Craigmaddie reservoir project on behalf of Glasgow Corporation Waterworks. A few years later, in July 1889, Edward Augustus Hackett was in a position to return his family to Ireland when he was offered, and readily accepted, the assignment of County Surveyor for Tipperary South Riding. That was the beginning of the family's connection with Clonmel and, indeed, the wider county. Venice, at the time, was a mere two and a half years old. Venice Hackett, it should be stated, is, at present, the subject of detailed investigation by the writer of the current paper. Because the study is still ongoing, results are incomplete. The following facts regarding her life and, in particular, her First World War nursing career, have, however, been ascertained. Although



born in Scotland, as noted, Venice was first returned to Ireland, together with some, at least, of her immediate family, for the occasion of her baptism.<sup>27</sup> She was baptised into the Church of Ireland on 20 September 1887 at Castlearmstrong, Lemanaghan, County Offaly. Along with the rest of her family, as formerly observed, Venice, while still a very young child, became a new permanent resident of Clonmel, County Tipperary when her father took up his new post as cartographer for the constituency of its South Riding. It is reasonable to assume that, by virtue of her social status, Venice was well educated. She was, for example, then aged fourteen, listed as a scholar by her father in the 1901 Census of Ireland. The schools that she attended and the nature and extent of her scholarly achievements, however, have yet to be ascertained. For the same reason, class position, it is also sensible to presuppose that, in the years between her school leaving and the outbreak of the Great War, she was never in paid employment outside the home. Simply stated, she probably did not work because women of her general standing were neither expected nor encouraged to do so. Exactly how she occupied her time throughout those years has still to be established.

At this point in the investigation, it has, however, been possible, by means of a variety of sources, to sketch a brief outline of Venice Hackett's World War One nursing contribution. Over the course of time, it is hoped to conduct a much more comprehensive examination and analysis of same. Thus far, confirmed details of her war-time experiences are as follows. According to her First World War Service Record, obtained from the British Red Cross, Venice formally registered her offer to serve with a Voluntary Aid Detachment sometime in August 1916.<sup>28</sup> Voluntary Aid Detachments, it is, perhaps, helpful to note at this point, were initially inaugurated in 1909 by the British War Office when it established what it called the Scheme for the Organisation of Voluntary Aid. Under this proposal, county branches of the

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<sup>27</sup> Baptismal records, show the attendance of her parents, only at the event.

<sup>28</sup> Details obtained by Michael Dolan, Commonwealth War Graves Photographic Project.

British Red Cross organised individual sections across Britain and Ireland that were collectively referred to as Voluntary Aid Detachments.

The Detachment to which Venice was assigned in August 1916, when she was first approved for enrolment in the VADs, was Tipperary 4. She was immediately assigned the rank of House Member. Aged twenty nine upon admission into same, she was slightly older than the average VAD whose pen-picture, supplied by Lyn MacDonald, was reproduced earlier in the article. On 6 March 1917, she was selected for overseas nursing service. Her section's first posting, as medical assistants to professional nurses and doctors, was at the Hotel Christol in Boulogne. It was at that hotel that a Base Hospital had earlier been established for Allied forces. Its official designation was No. 7 British Red Cross. Venice worked, presumably with scheduled standard rest and recuperation periods, at the Hotel Christol from 12 April 1917 until 10 October 1918. Tragically, Venice's second posting in Boulogne proved to be both brief and fatal. Unfortunately, she had contracted Spanish Flu at some recent point previously. As is now widely known, the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic was responsible for the deaths of more people than was the 1914-1918 global conflict.<sup>29</sup> Her service record referred to earlier, lists her as having served in Hotel des Anglais from 10-14 October 1918. The fact remains, however, that she must have departed on sick leave within a period of closer to forty eight hours after freshly taking up her second overseas position. Prior to 14 October she was actually already on her way home, she had, in fact, been returned as far as London, when she succumbed to the deadly virus and died there on 13 October 1918. Her Death Certificate, issued at St. Mary's hospital in Marylebone on the day, identified pneumonia resulting from influenza as the official cause of her death.<sup>30</sup> She was thirty one years old at the time of her demise. Her death was announced in a number of local

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<sup>29</sup> John M. Barry, *The great influenza: the story of the deadliest pandemic in history* (London, 2005), p. 47.

<sup>30</sup> Raymond Metters, *Who answered the bugle call? Kilbeggan and neighbourhood during World War One* (Kilbeggan, 2011), p. 73.

and national newspapers, including the *Clonmel Chronicle*, on and around 19 October 1918.

A quantity of additional factors regarding Venice and her immediate family, included in the death notices in the various newspapers at that time, contribute even further to the tragedy of her unfortunate and untimely death, as can be seen from the following:

Very sincere sympathy with Mr and Mrs E.A. Hackett and family has been occasioned by the announcement of the death in London of Miss Venice C.H. Hackett, whose engagement to Captain (Acting Major) H.K.D. Evans, MC, Hussars, was so recently announced. Coming in such circumstances, and so quickly following the deaths of three of Mr Hackett's sons, two of whom fell fighting in France, the sad event is very much deplored amongst the people of the South Riding of Tipperary amongst whom the deceased young lady was highly esteemed.<sup>31</sup>

Accorded the status of a First World War casualty, Venice Hackett is buried in a Commonwealth War Grave at Liss Cemetery in Ballycumber, County Offaly. She is also commemorated on a 1914-18 Memorial to the Fallen, together with her two brothers, in St. Mary's Church of Ireland in Clonmel.

Individually and collectively, Venice and her brothers Eric and Learö Hackett made the ultimate Great War sacrifice. And for their family and those others with whom they shared their hearts and lives, three of the six children had fallen within a two year period during the war to end wars. Finally, what was the nature and scope of the World War One contributions of the two Tipperary women, Molly O'Connell Bianconi and Venice Hackett, and how did the four year conflict impact on them, other women, and, consequently, trans-global society generally? Three distinct and incontrovertible facts make this multi-faceted question somewhat difficult to answer. Firstly, for a set of complex reasons, many of which have been documented by the writer of this article in a piece currently awaiting publication elsewhere, no First World War Irish nurse, volunteer or professional, in the immediate aftermath of the conflict or, indeed, the decades up until recently during which surviving participants continued to recount their war-time experiences, has committed to public written

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<sup>31</sup> *Clonmel Chronicle*, 19 Oct. 1918.

record individual details of same. Equally, no comprehensive Irish war-time nursing narrative was undertaken either at the time of its cessation or, indeed, subsequently. Secondly, in a broader context, and previously alluded to, World War one nursing records, globally, are, at best, sporadic in terms of their collective coverage of the event from the perspectives of all of the various women who, and their equally diverse associated medical units that, treated injured and dying soldiers throughout those years. Thirdly, and, likewise, noted heretofore, 1914-18 worldwide nursing records, as well as being irregular in consistency, to date, are also insufficiently analysed and assessed, either independently or, indeed, collectively, by historians and medical personnel.

Nevertheless, certain unassailable truths regarding some, at least, of the issues raised in the enquiry can, in the context of this paper, be offered for circulation and review. At the outset, regarding the essence and extent of what Molly O'Connell Bianconi and Venice Hackett offered to the great war effort, and in the absence of any significant verifying documentation, simply stated, and yet profoundly gratefully acknowledged, they, together with all the medical personnel worldwide who worked at both Home Front and Front Line facilities throughout the conflict, brought degrees of care, attention, compassion, hope, and comfort to serving men, and, to a much lesser extent, women, injured in body and/or mind as a result of their various participations in same. In the words of Margaret Higgonet, assessing the overall nursing contribution to that defining event, 'nursing (was) a kind of resistance to the physical and spiritual destruction wrought by war.'<sup>32</sup> In other words, the character of their work was not merely narrowly medicinally focused when it came to treating their war-wounded patients. Because it was usually broader than that, it was almost as if, by virtue of its wholesale benevolence throughout four years of potentially mortal peril for military crews on both sides of the divide, it also contained echoes of rescue, deliverance, salvation, and

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<sup>32</sup> Higgonet, *Nurses at the front*, p. 23.

reclamation. Such an assessment of its merits is certainly borne out by even a cursory review of war-time patients' private and public reminiscences of same still widely available for scrutiny. This, perhaps, was the ultimate measure of the war-work of nursing and associated medical staff generally during that particular conflict.

It is also the case that the scale of both Molly's and Venice's personal contributions to the First World War medical effort can be further appraised in light of, in each instance, one single fact as already noted. Molly O'Connell Bianconi was awarded the Military Medal for bravery by her superiors. This was (and, indeed, still is) the definitive public recognition of war-time conduct and ministrations. Venice Hackett laid down her life in the service of her patients, colleagues, and seniors. This was (and, likewise, still is) the ultimate sacrifice in times of conflict. Next, by virtue of their World War One presence, Molly, Venice, and, in truth, their global nursing colleagues, too, in as widespread a sense as the numbers in their ranks indicated, particularly in the immediate aftermath of the ending of hostilities, offered women's ability to meaningfully participate in, contribute to, and appreciably improve medical missions, in battle zones as had been so recently ably demonstrated, and, indeed, elsewhere, from then on, in new and less restrictive ways than had been the case previously. This, too, was a significant contribution, not just for women's rights, entitlements, and recognitions, but for society, and progress, generally. The First World War, in fact, unsurprisingly, significantly positively impacted on individual women, like Molly O'Connell Bianconi, and, presumably, Venice Hackett, had she survived, in terms of the more enlightened choices, opportunities, additions and changes to their lifestyles it, paradoxically for such a tragic event, created for them. Of course, the general improvements to the working and living circumstances of individual women's lives in the aftermath of World War One resulted, too, in positive collective changes to women's existences. In the words of Lyn MacDonald, assessing the impact of the 1914-1918 conflict on same:

‘It was here that women achieved a quiet but permanent revolution, by proving beyond question they could do anything...They were not content to return to the old life of busy idleness...and set out to carve themselves a place in what was still a man’s world. They moved wholesale into commerce. They became teachers, doctors, social workers, pharmacists, journalists, ran dairies and chicken farms. They won the vote and the right to work in the face of formidable opposition and the obdurate philosophy that a woman’s place was in the home...(In short) they earned liberation long before liberation earned itself a capital L.’<sup>33</sup>

Apart from stating that, undoubtedly, women’s liberation has had inevitable, fundamental, complex, long-term, mainly positive, and still on-going consequences for society globally in the years and decades since, it is not the writer’s intention to examine the matter further in the current context, not least because it has been adequately treated by historians like Janet Lee, Margaret Higonnet, and Christine Hallett. Therefore, it is, of course, highly unlikely that anyone, including the vast majority of women, then or since, thought that the price paid by great war combatants, in human misery, injury, disfigurement, disability, and death, for the birth of gender equality which was, after all, just one of several unplanned ‘side-issues’ arising from the main event, was in any way tolerable when measured against the gain. On the contrary, individual and collective privately and publicly expressed sentiment, from 1918 to the present, seems to suggest that the ‘war to end wars’ was, and continues to be, viewed, simply, as a tragic waste of (mostly young) lives. Such an observation is not, of course, intended as a negation or undermining of the parts played by nurses, including those from Ireland, in underpinning, shaping, and, indeed, helping to improve the medical care and treatment of military and associated personnel injured in such a myriad of ways while serving within the armies of the two opposing camps throughout the First World War. On the contrary, it is offered as testament to their courage and endurance in what were, by any standards, extremely hard times for all concerned.

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<sup>33</sup> MacDonal, *The roses of no man’s land*, pp. 7-9.

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