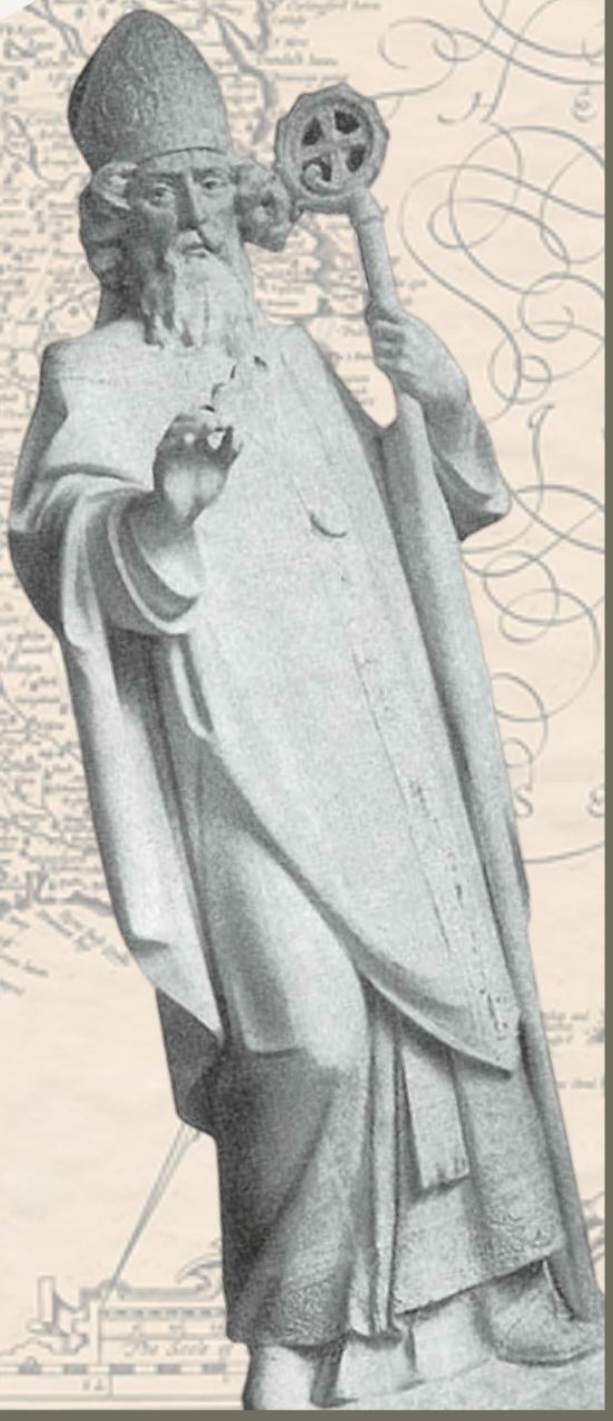
UCC Student History Journal

UCC Student History Journal
Est. 2024

Bogs & Borders

An Exploration of Irish Heritage and Local History



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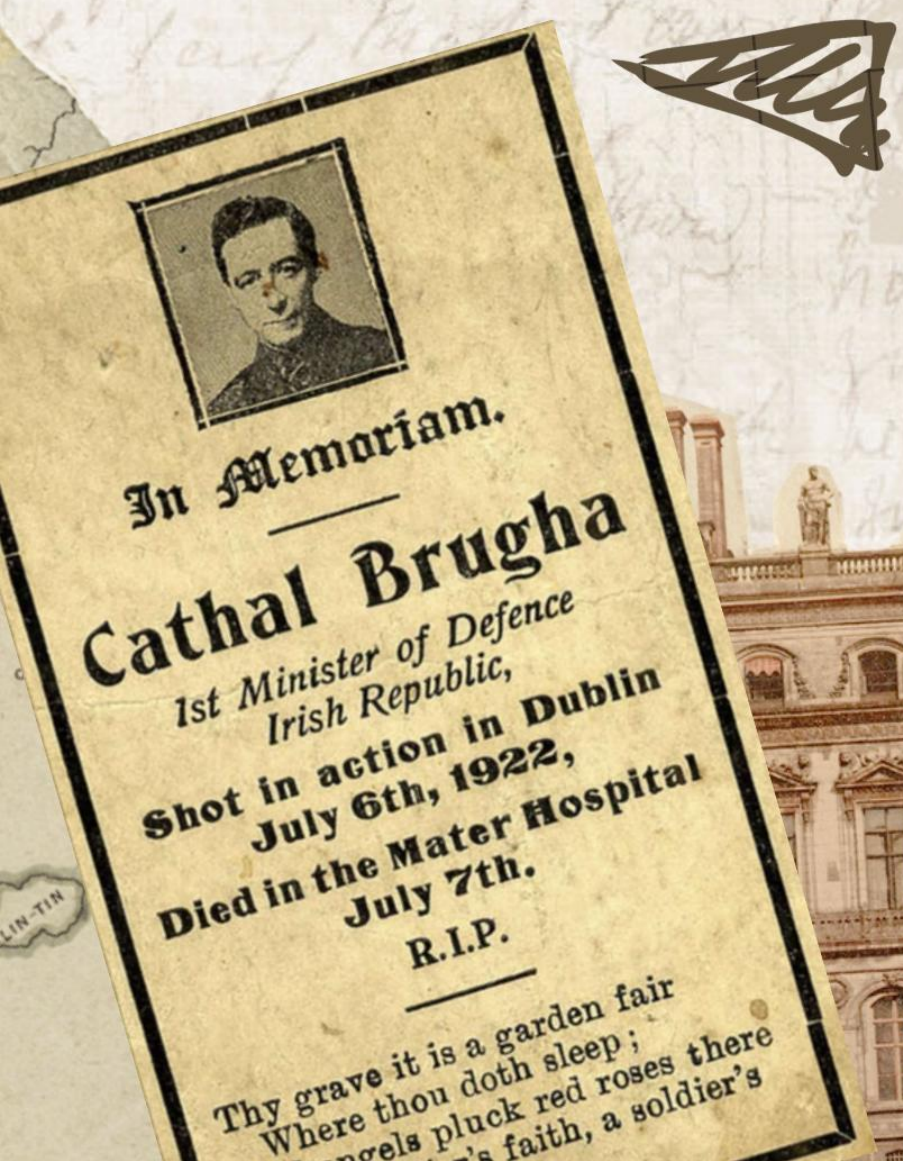

In Memoriam.
Cathal Brugha
1st Minister of Defence
Irish Republic,
Shot in action in Dublin
July 6th, 1922,
Died in the Mater Hospital
July 7th.
R.I.P.
Thy grave it is a garden fair
Where thou doth sleep;
ngels pluck red roses there
's faith, a soldier's

Letters from the Co- Editors-in-Chief

Germany Calling! (Again)

Living outside of Ireland, as is often a common position for an Irish person - especially of my generation, and compiling this third issue of the UCC Student History Journal has been a great challenge and a great joy. This issues theme of Irish culture, heritage and history perhaps only added too my sorrow and my delight in being separated from home.

Reading, editing, and compiling this issues submission allowed me to reflect on what it is to be 'irish', indeed if such a thing exists. I thought not only about our own perceptions of past ourselves, but also the Irish diaspora's views, and indeed the options of those outside of ourselves. Thus, I would like to thank each and every person who contributed to our project this semester - it means more than just a journal submission.

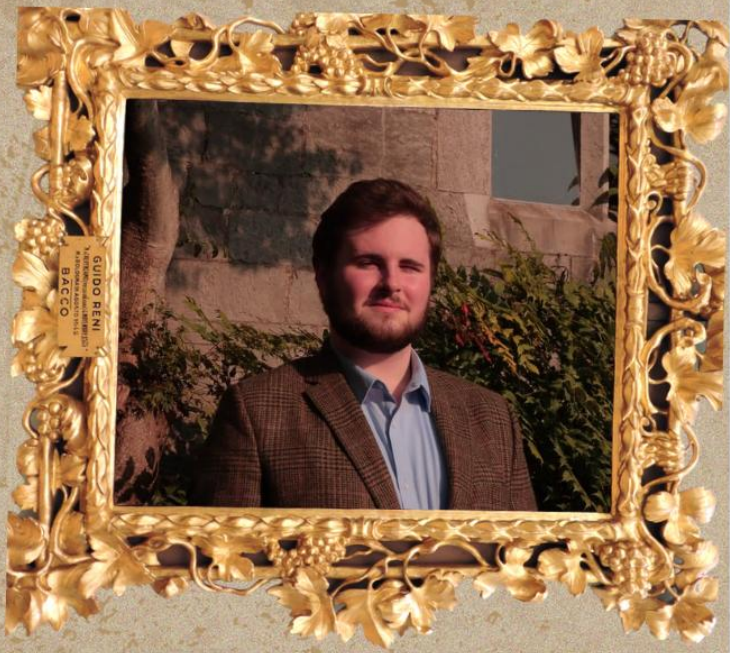
Along the lines of acknowledgements, I would like to thank the whole team, and indeed the entirety of our main committee. Chiefly I would like to thank Miss Rebbecca 'Becky-Histsoc' Burke in not only her unwavering commitment to us, but the entirety of history society over this past year.

And so, please enjoy the second issue!

Le Meas,
Emma P. Hurley.

In the brief lifespan of the UCC Student History Journal, I have met students, librarians, colleagues, and friends. By now, I shall have thanked them personally and I wish to express my gratitude to all those who contributed to this journal now. My reading of these submissions has underscored my understanding of the ability and imagination of the student. I hope we never lose sight of the fact that offering people, of all disciplines and backgrounds, a chance is something very important in fostering historical discourse. The diversity of focus and interest is truly something worth cherishing.
I dedicate my work, the editing and so forth of this edition, to the UCC History Society and my friend Adam.
I hope you, the reader, enjoy this edition as much as I have.

Yours sincerely,
Daniel Aaron O' Connell



UCC History Society

Chairperson's Address

It is with great pride, and a touch of bittersweet sentiment, that I welcome you to Volume II, Issue II of the UCC Student History Journal. This special edition, Bogs and Borders, delves into the landscapes, identities, and histories that define Irish heritage. As my final launch as Chairperson of HistSoc, this issue holds particular significance, not only as a reflection of our past but also as a celebration of the dedication and talent that have made this journal what it is today.

Ireland's history is shaped by its borders, both physical and cultural. From ancient territorial divisions to the political borders that continue to influence our national identity, these boundaries tell a story of resilience, conflict, and adaptation. At the same time, Ireland's boglands hold deep connections to our heritage, preserving echoes of the past in their layers. They are places of memory, where archaeology, folklore, and environmental history intertwine, reminding us that history is not just written in books but also embedded in the land itself.
This issue would not have been possible without the dedication of our exceptional editorial team. To Emma, Eoghan, and Daniel; your hard work, keen insight, and unwavering commitment have ensured that every piece within these pages meets the highest standards of scholarship. I am truly grateful for your contributions and for the enthusiasm you have brought to this project.

As I step away from this role, I do so with immense appreciation for the passion and curiosity that continue to drive this journal forward. The UCC Student History Journal stands as a testament to the richness of our shared past and the bright future of historical research at UCC. To our readers; thank you for your support, your interest, and your engagement. May this issue inspire you to reflect on the landscapes and legacies that shape our understanding of Irish heritage.

With gratitude,
Becky
Chairperson, UCC Student History Journal

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‘See their souls in Irish breasts arise’: heroes and Irish identity in the Seven Years’ War, 1756-63

Henry Swords

Trinity College Dublin

‘The History of the World … was the Biography of Great Men’.[1] So writes Thomas Carlyle, so write few historians today. Historians of eighteenth century Ireland are no different. They tend to think of developments in the century more in terms of systems than personalities: the ‘fiscal-military state’ exacted taxes and raised recruits for Britain’s seemingly incessant wars; ‘politicisation’ mobilised ordinary men against an entrenched Protestant elite.[2] Such analyses illuminate much about the century, but can sometimes fail to reveal the mindsets of the people who lived through it.[3] Their times might not have been completely shaped by Carlyle’s great men, but they, like anyone else, tended to personalise reality. Events had agents and, causes had leaders and followers.

This was obviously the case in war. The ‘fiscal-military state’ was not entirely a contrivance of statecraft. It had names and faces; allies and enemies. Above all, it had heroes; it had great men. The Seven Years’ War was no different. As in Britain, Pitt the Elder, Admiral Edward Hawke, Wolfe and a host of other great men commanded the affections and the hopes of a people who were at war. This should not surprise. The Seven Years War, after all, is often pinpointed as a high point of British feeling amongst the Protestant population.[4] But Irish identity was on the rise too.[5] This coloured how Irish received war heroes and imagined their deeds. These great men did not simply make history in Ireland; they were made in its image. And in Ireland, this image was increasingly national, increasingly Irish.

At the same time, it was British victories that brought people to the streets in celebration. The ‘Year of victories’, 1759, was cause for numerous outbursts of popular enthusiasm. The mayor of Dublin had to issue a proclamation against the breaking of windows after Admiral Edward Boscawen’s victory at Lagos in August.[6] This victory effectively disabled the French Mediterranean fleet; the defeat of the French Atlantic fleet at Quiberon Bay in November was the source of particular joy in Ireland. Celebrations occurred in Dublin, Limerick and Cork to mark it.[7] Cannons were fired, rifles sounded, bonfires blazed: all the usual trappings of a civic space engulfed by militaristic fervour.

Acclaim arose from victory, but it was unmistakably granted to the victor. This was the case with Edward Hawke. It was he who commanded the Western Squadron of the British Navy to victory at Quiberon Bay. This ruined French plans to invade the British Isles; the city corporations in Dublin and Cork awarded him the freedom of their cities in gold boxes for this.[8]

Perhaps this represented an Irish infatuation with the heroes of the mother kingdom. After all, it was alongside William Pitt, that paragon of British patriotism that Dublin Corporation awarded Hawke the freedom of their city. They gave Pitt his honour for the ‘numberless services rendered to his country in general and this kingdom in particular’.[9] Here we have a revealing formula. Pitt’s contributions as the patriot minister were worthy of recognition, but his service to ‘this kingdom’ – Ireland – was thought to be of value ‘in particular’.

Hawke’s worth was also perceived to rest on his contribution to Ireland specifically. Dublin Corporation presented him with the freedom of their city as a testimony of the high sense this city hath of the great and important service

[1] Thomas Carlyle, *On heroes, hero-worship and the heroic in history*, ed. George Wherry (Cambridge University Press, 1911), 14.
[2] For the fiscal-military state, see: Charles Ivar McGrath, *Ireland and Empire, 1692-1770* (Routledge, 2016), chs. 1-3; Patrick A. Walsh, ‘The fiscal state in Ireland, 1691-1769’ in *The Historical Journal* 56, no. 3 (2013), 629-56. For politicisation, see: Kevin Whelan, *The tree of liberty: radicalism, Catholicism and the construction of Irish identity* (Cork University Press, 1996); Padhraic Higgins, *A nation of politicians: gender, patriotism, and political culture in late eighteenth-century Ireland* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2010).
[3] On this discrepancy between historical analysis and historical culture in the transatlantic ‘Age of Revolution’, see: David A. Bell, *Men on horseback: the power of charisma in the Age of Revolution* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2020), 235-7.
[4] Stephen Conway, *War, state and society in mid-eighteenth-century Britain and Ireland* (Oxford, 2006), 200-4; Benjamin Bankhurst, *Ulster Presbyterians and the Scots Irish diaspora, 1750-1764* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 6-7.
[5] D.W. Hayton, ‘Anglo-Irish attitudes: changing perceptions of national identity among the Protestant Ascendancy in Ireland, ca. 1690–1750’ in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 7 (1988), 146-7.
[6] *Faulkner’s Dublin Journal*, 15 Sept. 1759.
[7] *The Universal Advertiser*, 15 Dec. 1759.
[8] *The Universal Advertiser*, 18 Mar. 1760.
[9] Rosa M. Gilbert, ed., *Calendar of ancient records of Dublin, in the possession of the municipal corporation of that city, vol. 10* (Dollard Limited, 1903), 398.

performed by him in defeating the French fleet under the command of marshal Conflans, whose known destination was to favour a descent on this kingdom.[10]

Cork Corporation was even more specific in their locus of concern: Hawke attained his honour because, their statement went, 'this City was saved from an attack of a large body of French forces'.[11] The overall meaning of Hawke's victory to the civic authorities in Dublin and Cork was clear: it was not merely a British victory but one that saved their own cities and country from French depredation. British heroes were revered, but their deeds were explained in local and Irish terms.

General James Wolfe's martyrdom on the Plains of Abraham at Quebec is held to be the pinnacle of British cult heroism in the Seven Years' War.[12] He was not the focus of contemporary adulation in Ireland.[13] One man who returned from this victory alive did gain wide recognition In Ireland. This was Admiral Charles Saunders. He commanded the fleet that carried Wolfe's forces to decisive victory in the North American sphere of war. He appeared in Ireland, coming ashore at Castlehaven and travelling up to Dublin. He received a rapturous reception on arrival. As was usual for a war hero, he received the freedom of the city. More remarkable were the 'great acclamations of joy' he received on entering the Theatre Royal on Crow Street.[14]

This should remind us that we are not dealing with classical heroes in the eighteenth century; even though a Roman sense of virtue was attached to war heroes. Admiral Saunders was not like Homer's Odysseus whose myth went further than the man himself, who could come home from Troy and be insulted – not recognised for the hero he was. Saunders could gain plaudits in life, rather than having to settle for mythical glory after death. He, like most famous figures in the eighteenth century, became a creature of the press whose renown rested on what he was doing in the now.[15] The heroes under discussion here were creeping tentatively towards being 'celebrities'.[16] The classical hero shaped the values of the people he fought for. The reverse is true of celebrities; they are receptacles of the hopes and aspirations of the audience whose attentive gaze they depend on for their status. The transition from classical hero to modern celebrity could have jarring effects. In 1763, readers of the *Dublin Gazette* could interest themselves in an advertisement for a 'Bay Horse called Granby'.[17] The Marquis of Granby was famous for losing his wig in victory at the Battle of Warburg in August 1760. Before, the duke of Granby's name would have been the preserve of epic poetry and theatrical drama. Now his name became a plaything: a badge of identity carried by a horse for its breeder. The fungibility of modern heroism makes it understandable that Irishmen and women moulded war heroes in a more 'Irish' way.

Granby was not the only man who had the dignity (or indignity) of being a fixture of the Irish equine world in the eighteenth century. We hear of horses running in Navan and the Curragh by the name of 'Prussia' - one in 1759 and another in 1760.[18] These racehorses registered the craze in Ireland for that German kingdom and, more specifically, for its ruler Frederick II (Frederick 'the Great'). Ships bore the name of the king, as did even a magician, 'Mr. Joseph Prussia', who crops up performing in Dublin and Cork in the early-1760s.[19] Frederick was also quite literally the toast of the town across Ireland. The Patriot club of Antrim, to give one example, raised a glass to 'the King of Prussia' in the aftermath of his famous victory over the French at Rossbach in November 1757. Some of their other toasts give a key to the meaning of Frederick's cult in Ireland. Fourteen swigs into their list of toasts, they also called for Frederick 'to animate the drooping courage of Britain'.[20] Frederick the Great was not only considered great in Ireland as an ally to Britain, but as an example to her too.

And Britain was very much thought to be in need of exemplary courage. Insecurities surrounding the decline of native masculine valour abounded in that nation.[21] This was not the case in Ireland. One episode that illustrates

[10] Rosa M. Gilbert, ed., *Calendar of ancient records of Dublin, in the possession of the municipal corporation of that city, vol. 10* (Dollard Limited, 1903), 417
[11] Richard Caulfield, ed., *The council book of the Corporation of the city of Cork, from 1609 to 1643, and from 1690 to 1800* (J. Billing and Sons,1876), 730.
[12] Nicholas Rogers, 'Brave Wolfe: the making of a hero' in *A new imperial history: culture, identity and modernity in Britain and the empire, 1660-1840*, ed. Kathleen Wilson (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 250.
[13] He was, however, the subject of poetic odes in the Cork press: *Cork Evening Post*, 29 Nov. 1759; *Cork Evening Post*, 3 Jan. 1760.
[14] *Universal Advertiser*, 18 Dec. 1759.
[15] Antoine Lilti, *Figures publiques: l'invention de la célébrité, 1750-1850* (Fayard, 2014), 98-106.
[16] For the eighteenth century as a key period in the development of the modern celebrity, see: Leo Braudy, *The frenzy of renown*: *fame and its history* (Knopf Doubleday, 1997), 14; Stella Tillyard, 'Celebrity in 18th-Century London', *History Today* 55, no. 6 (2005), 20; Lilti, *Célébrité*, 13-15; Brian Cowan, 'News, biography, and eighteenth-century celebrity', Oxford Academic, accessed on 6 November 2024, at https://academic.oup.com/edited-volume/43514/chapter/364256230.
[17] *Dublin* Gazette, 9 Apr. 1763.
[18] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 31 July 1759; *Dublin Gazette*, 29 Apr. 1760.
[19] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 17 Feb. 1761; *Cork Journal*, 11 Feb. 1762.
[20] *The Belfast Newsletter*, 20 Dec. 1757.
[21] Kathleen Wilson, 'Empire of Virtue: the imperial project and Hanoverian culture, c.1720–1785', in *An Imperial state at war: Britain from 1689-1815* (Routledge, 1994), 145-8.

this contrast was the fall of Minorca – at the time a British military colony. The British court martialled Admiral John Byng for his cowardly failure to relieve the blockade of that Balearic island; the Irish were left to vaunt the man he had left behind. His defence of Fort St Philip brought him a collection of freedoms of Irish cities and towns. Youghal Corporation gave him his award for his endeavours as 'a brave, gallant Irish hero'.[22] The Irishness of Blakeney was very much a point of pride. A poet published in the *Dublin Gazette* urged its readers:

> From Greece and Rome withdraw your wond'ring eyes
>
> And see their souls in Irish breasts arise.[23]

Not only could an Irishman better the disgraced Byng in courage; he could also rival a Caesar or an Alexander. This poem was written on the occasion of the erection of a statue to Blakeney on Sackville Mall in Dublin. This was the initiative of the Friendly Brothers of Saint Patrick. A look through the minutes of the head club in Dublin, or 'knot' in the Friendly Brothers' parlance, shows just how preoccupied they were with honouring Blakeney. They hatched the plan in 1757 and were still chasing down the 'knot' in Dungarvan for funds in 1762.[24] One historian has called this an act of 'self-promotion' on the part of the Friendly Brothers.[25] At this time of war there was thought to be no better way to do this than to cast a hero in stone – and an Irish hero at that. Much like his resistance of the French blockade of Minorca, Blakeney symbolised Irish virtue holding out against British vice.

More humble military men also performed this service for the Irish Protestant psyche. These came to the fore when the Seven Years' War came to Ireland's shores for a brief period – five days to be exact. The man who brought the fight to Ireland was François Thurot. He was meant to carry out a diversionary raid on the periphery of the British Isles on behalf of the main invasion force under the Duc d'Aiguillon. Hawke scuppered this plan at Quiberon Bay; Thurot was left idling in the North Sea in desperate need of supplies. Eventually he settled upon a raid on Carrickfergus on 21 February. They overcame the garrison there, extracted supplies from Belfast under threat of force, and made off again.[26]

This was not a glorious or glamorous affair, but Irish reactions would have it otherwise. Colonel John Jennings, leader of the garrison in the town, was forced to surrender after a short affray. His resistance was extolled regardless. The 'principal Inhabitants of Carrickfergus' gave an official notice of thanks for 'his gallant behaviour' in defence of their town. The more high-status members of the Irish parliament did likewise, and so did the 'sovereign and inhabitants of the town of Belfast'.[27] The latter body also took the time to thank 'our Countrymen who appeared so seasonably in our defence'. This was in reference to the thousands of militiamen in Ulster who, in defence of their homes, took up arms. Sometimes these arms were a bit rough and ready – nineteen were recorded to have assembled in Belfast armed with scythes attached to wooden poles. Their level of equipment might have been comical, but to contemporaries they were national heroes in the vein of William Blakeney. *The Belfast Newsletter* took the trouble to request 'an exact list' of 'the greatest number of men under arms'. This was published in an issue on 28 March. It detailed the 51 companies and their place of origin in Antrim, Down, and Armagh, their (named) commanders, and their activities on the day. A total of 5,352 men were said to have been mustered.[28] This list was a commemoration of a moment of local pride – of regional camaraderie in the face of a foreign threat.

The Thurot raid might have been conceived of as an Ulster affair alone. The national press would have it differently. The *Dublin Gazette* – an organ not noted for its patriotism – affirmed that 'it must afford true satisfaction to all true lovers of their country, to hear of the glorious spirit which animates their brethren in the north'.[29] It might be doubtful to us who the victors of Francois Thurot's plundering escapade were or whether it was of any real significance in the first place. But for Irishmen and women, it was a moment when they could congratulate each other as heroes of their own country.

At least some of them could. Rumours spread in Dublin that Catholics across the country celebrated the coming (not the defeat) of Thurot with bonfires.[30] Protestant enemies could be Catholic heroes. This is only logical.

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[22] Richard Caulfield, *The council book of the Corporation of Youghal, from 1610 to 1659, from 1666 to 1687, and from 1690 to 1800* (J. Billings and Sons, 1878), 698.
[23] *Dublin Gazette*, 20 Mar. 1759.
[24] Minute book of the Select Grand Knot, 1751-1778', p. 49, 154-5, in The Order of the Friendly Brothers of Saint Patrick Archives, Marsh's Library (FBO/2/1/1).
[25] Judith Hill, *Irish public sculpture: a history* (Dublin, 1998), 51.
[26] For accounts of Thurot's raid, see: Marcus de la Poer Beresford, 'François Thurot and the French attack at Carrickfergus, 1759-60', in *Irish Sword* 10 (1971), 255-67; Neal Garnham, *The militia in eighteenth-century Ireland: in defence of the Protestant interest* (The Boydell Press, 2012), 60-4.
[27] *The Universal Advertiser*, 8 Mar.; 18 Mar. 1760.
[28] *The Belfast Newsletter*, 28 Mar. 1760.
[29] *Dublin Gazette*, 1 Mar. 1760.
[30] Henry Brooke to Charles O'Conor, 15 Mar. 1760, in Charles O'Conor correspondence 1730–1766, Royal Irish Academy (RIA Bi1).

Catholics were held down by a variety of laws against their holding property, celebrating mass, and ordaining their own clergy. The adage of Britain's difficulty being Ireland's opportunity held true for them: a French invasion seemed to offer the best opportunity for overturning the penal laws and the Protestant Ascendancy that upheld them.

Needless to say, this seditious outlook did not appear in the press, it was not trumpeted by the guilds nor advertised in the streets. It was the reserve of private pens. Gaelic poetry is our main source for the voice of Catholic disaffection.[31] Hawke and Blakeney were not the heroes of their narratives. Any setbacks they had were cause for joy. One poet, Éadbhard de Nógla, a tailor from Cork, celebrated the downfall of Mahón in verse.[32] He rejoiced over 'Byng and his friends in sorrow' ('*Byng 's a chairde i mbrón'*). One of these friends was 'the gladiator Blakeney' ('*an gliaire Blácaigh*'). Blakeney was a hero to many Irishman; not so for de Nógla. A different cast of heroes reared their heads in his poem: the French naval commander who took Mahon, de la Galissonière, and, above all, Charles O'Brien, 6th Viscount Clare. Clare was a French military officer of the highest rank, a *maréchal de France*. As his title suggests he was of recent Irish descent, his family having fled to France in the aftermath of William of Orange's conquest of Ireland. De Nógla insisted that

> Tá bagairt le cian ar Iarla 'Chláir dhil (p. 120, l. 33-6)
>
> A thíocht faoin tír le táintibh slóghadh
>
> (there has long been a threat from our dear Earl of Clare
>
> To descend on the country with hordes of battalions).

Clare was Catholic Ireland's saviour, Catholic Ireland's hero, from de Nógla's perspective. His imminent return – signalled by Blakeney's fall in Minorca – would reverse the oppression of Catholics. Clare appears repeatedly in Gaelic verse in this mould, mostly in the poetry from his homeland in Munster, but in Ulster as well.[33] Irish heroes tended to wear red coats, but some belonged to the men of the Irish Brigade in the French Army.

The above-mentioned rumours of the Catholic celebrations in response to Thurot's landing were reported to Charles O'Conor of Belanagare, Co. Roscommon. He was an advocate of the Catholic elite's reconciliation with the British crown. It was hoped that public signs of Catholic loyalty would convince the British government to relax the penal laws.[34] Celebrating the depredations of a French privateer would not do from this point of view. When the threat of invasion loomed in 1759, bodies of Catholics came forward to express views that aligned more with O'Conor's. Catholic addresses of loyalty to George II abounded in the press. The 'Address of the Roman Catholics of the Town of Galway' is typical. The addressees presented themselves as 'his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects'. They congratulated the king 'on the unparalleled and extensive success of his arms in Europe and America'.[35]

The Catholic urban elite were now more inclined to celebrate the feats of British arms. This Church also voiced this shift in elite Catholic opinion. The clergy of Cork directed their congregations in February 1762 to offer 'your fervent prayers' to George III. They were also to give up these prayers to 'his officers, and his troops' so that there might be 'a glorious and happy conclusion to this war'.[36] Peace was the end of these prayers, but that the British were its beneficiaries speaks to a public acceptance of British heroes among Catholic thought leaders. But these views were public and they were expressed merely by leaders. What these men thought of the 'officers' and 'soldiers' in less publicly prayerful moments is open to question. Just as questionable is who were 'the Irish' and who were their heroes.

What is beyond debate is that Irishmen and women viewed themselves in the mirror of their heroes. Whether Protestant or Catholic these heroes were thought of in largely 'Irish' terms. Even during the Seven Years' War, when Irish national feeling is said to have been weaker than during later conflicts, these heroes were, if not Irish themselves, then celebrated as defenders of the Irish kingdom specifically. When they were Irish, they offered a point of pride amidst a period of widespread national shame in Britain. In many ways the reaction to these heroes prefigures the Volunteers. The Volunteers were flaunted as an example of an assertive and virtuous Irish identity

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[31] Vincent Morley, *The popular mind in eighteenth-century Ireland* (Cork University Press, 2017), 308.
[32] Éadbhard de Nógla, 'Is fada mo chiach gan riar an dántaibh', in Úna Nic Éinrí, ed., *Canfar an dán: Uilliam English agus a chairde* (An Sagart, 2003), 119-20.
[33] Morley, *Popular mind*, 151-4.
[34] Maureen Wall, 'The position of Catholics in mid-eighteenth-century-Ireland' in Gerard O'Brien and Tom Dunne, eds. *Catholic Ireland in the eighteenth century: collected essays of Maureen Wall* (Geography Publications, 1989), 94-6; *eadem,* 'The quest for Catholic equality, 1745-1778' in *ibid*., 117-18.
[35] *The Universal Advertiser*, 25 Dec. 1759.
[36] *Cork Journal*, 15 Feb. 1762.

against a degenerate and faltering British war effort against the American colonists.[37] Blakeney and the Ulster militiamen played a similar role in the Seven Years' War. This was a vital period in the formation of an 'Irish' identity, albeit one that was fractured, contested, and precarious. Heroes, and their reception and construction, were key players in this development. Heroes not only fought for nations; they made them.

[37] '"Let us play the men": masculinity and the citizen-soldier in late eighteenth-century Ireland', in *Soldiering in Britain and Ireland, 1750-1850: men of arms*, ed. Caitríona Kennedy and Matthew McCormack (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 185-7.

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The Outlook and Activities of Cumann na mBan during the Revolution

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A paramilitary organisation consisting of only women during a revolutionary time period in which misogyny was rife is one that warrants further examination. This essay will be looking at Cumann na mBan, and their outlook and activities during the Revolutionary period, between 1914 and 1926. A further look will be taken at their nationalist outlooks, and how it presents itself across time and different manners. It will also seek to contextualise the environment and time period that Cumann na mBan finds itself in, in an attempt to explain the outlook that they hold, and the reason for which they engaged in certain activities to begin with.

Founded in 1914 after merging with Inghinidhe na hÉireann, Cumann na mBan was a women's paramilitary organisation that was an auxiliary of the Irish Volunteers.[1] Cumann na mBan's main outlook was the promotion of an independent Ireland, as can be seen in their manifesto, where they state their objectives to be as follows:

1. To advance the cause of Irish liberty
2. To organize Irishwomen in the furtherance of this object.
3. To assist in arming and equipping a body of Irishmen for the defence of Ireland
4. To form a fund for these purposes, to be called 'The Defence of Ireland Fund'.[2]

Thus, these objectives within their constitution played a key factor in their future outlook and activities throughout the revolution. For example, in order for individuals to become a member of the Cumann na mBan, they were required to contribute towards the Defence of Ireland fund, whether that be through subscription or other methods.[3] Another example that show the extreme nationalism present that was present throughout the thoughts of Cumann na mBan can be seen through their reaction to the split of the Irish Volunteers in their choice to enlist within the British Army after John Redmond's appeal, with the majority of her members choosing to support the 10,000-14,000 volunteers that rejected the call to arms for Britain.[4] Those who chose to support the Irish Volunteers that accepted Redmond's calls, now the National Volunteers, also resulted in a split from the Cumann na mBan. Thus, what we can draw from this is that Cumann na mBan was extremely nationalistic in nature. If individuals were required to essentially donate to the cause of an independent Ireland, as well as be expedited if they were to be associated with the British army, despite the fact that WWI was on the horizon, we can ascertain that Cumann na mBan could be considered almost an extreme form of nationalism at the time. This idea is exacerbated even more by the fact that with the majority of the Irish Volunteers actually heeding Redmond's call, with just under 150,000 of them doing so.[5] And yet, despite the overwhelming support for Redmond, the Cumann na mBan still chose to support those that rejected his call. Additionally, in a statement that they put out following this split, they said, 'We came into being to advance the cause of Irish liberty ... We feel bound to make the pronouncement that to urge or encourage Irish Volunteers to enlist in the British Army cannot, under any circumstances, be regarded as consistent with the work we have set ourselves to do'.[6] Therefore, we can infer that Cumann na mBan was an organisation that was not just content with Home Rule, as Redmond was attempting to establish.[7] Rather, it seems clear that they wished to have a fully independent Ireland, instead of a legislation that provided self-governance at a national level, but still left Ireland as a colony under British rule.

Another outlook that Cumann na mBan held was the fact that they wished to help where they could in the fight for independence, regardless as to whether or not they would be able to carry arms. As they weren't allowed to carry arms, Cumann na mBan looked to circumvent this through a multitude of methods, one of which was to join James Connolly's Irish Citizen Army, where they were allowed to carry arms.[8] However, that was an individual level, and was not indicative of how Cumann na mBan as an organisation circumvented this restriction.

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[1] Lil Conlon, *Cumann Na MBan and the Women of Ireland, 1913-25* (Kilkenny: Kilkenny People Limited, 1969), 20.
[2] Angela Bourke et al., "Women and Politics in Ireland, 1860–1918," in *The Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, Volume V* (Cork University Press, 2002), 69–119, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1fkgbfc.6, 104.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Conlon, 13.
[5] Fergus Campbell, "The Evolution of Sinn Féin: Separatist Politics in County Galway, 1905–1918," *Oxford University Press EBooks*, February 3, 2005, 166–225, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199273249.003.0006.
[6] Joseph E.A Connell, "Cumann Na MBan," *History Ireland* 21, no. 3 (2013): 66–66, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44897536.
[7] Alvin Jackson, *Home Rule: An Irish History, 1800-2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), https://archive.org/details/homeruleirishhis00alvi/, 121.
[8] Dieter Reinisch, "Cumann Na MBan & Women in Irish Republican Paramilitary Organisations, 19691986," *Estudios Irlandeses* 11 (March 1, 2016): 149–62, https://doi.org/10.24162/EI20165980, 150.

That's not to say however, that they didn't play a large role in the activities of the revolution. The lack of restriction placed upon being a part of two separate paramilitary organisations is likely done so on purpose, as it would then allow for those who wished to take an active fighting role to do so. In fact, this could almost be seen as a form of encouragement, especially with the close ties that Cumann na mBan held with the Irish Volunteers, and its explicit tenets of being anti-British, and could then be considered encouragement to do so without having liability as an organisation for member's actions. This is exemplified by Constance Markievicz during the 1916 Easter Rising, who shot and killed a policeman during the earlier days of hostilities.[9] Alongside other Cumann na mBan members, Mary Hyland, Lily Kempson, and Helena Molony, Markievicz posted herself as a sniper during the Easter Rising.[10] Circling back to Cumann na mBan, and the question of their manner of which they circumvented the rule of not carrying weapons by encouraging taking up arms by joining a separate organisation, this seems like a prime example of this. Especially considering that she was actually a founding member of Cumann na mBan, it could come across as an attempt to set an example for other members.[11] If one of the founding members and leaders of the organisation was to take up arms and join the frontlines of the fight for independence, why shouldn't other members do so as well? Additionally, they also offered forms of rifle practice and maintenance, which could be once again considered encouragement for its members to join another paramilitary organisation on top of themselves, and fight on the front line.[12] Thus, the outlook that Cumann na mBan held on nationalism and Irish independence trickled into their actions in the fight for that independence during the Revolution and the Easter Rising.

On an institutional level, instead of taking arms to actively fight within the revolutionary period, Cumann na mBan focused on providing support to those that were fighting on the frontlines. With 60 branches already being set up across Ireland by October 14, there was an immediate attempt to provide training for what was believed to be helpful in the fight for independence from Britain.[13] These branches offered training and classes in first aid, foot drills, semaphore signalling, as well as the aforementioned rifle practice and maintenance.[14] The majority of this training and outlook was then displayed in the Easter Rising, with a large portion of the members acting as Red Cross workers, as well as couriers, and obtained rations for the men that were fighting.[15] On top of this, they also acted as intelligence gatherers, scouts, despatches, storing ammunitions and arms, making cartridges, as well as transferring arms from dumps on the other side of the city to insurgent strongholds, a trend that was happening during the Easter Rising, as well as future situations such as the Civil War and War of Independence.[16] These points make Cumann na mBan's outlook, and thus, actions, very clear. They are a nationalist organisation through and through, and despite not being able to join the Irish Volunteers as they were a male only group, they did everything within their power to assist them in the fight for independence. They were even willing to look past the misogyny present, just in an attempt to gain independence from Britain, which shows a strong emphasis on their nationalistic tenets. The supporting roles that they engaged in was a strong component in the support of the fight for independence, and were not without danger and risk either, especially when looking at reconnaissance missions and arms and explosives transportation, and their auxiliary role was a key factor in the ability of the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army to fight.[17] Additionally, due to their nationalist outlooks, they also played a vital role at the Four Courts. Cumann na mBan's members organised evacuations from the Four Courts after they were cornered, as well as destroying papers that could be considered incriminating, in an effort to help all of those who might be imprisoned as a result of the Rising, even at the cost of staying behind to do so.[18] Once again, this shows the dedication of the Cumann na mBan women, and their dedication towards the fight for independence, as some of these women even stayed behind to destroy these documents, risking their own freedom to do so, just so the fight for independence and nationalist cause could be continued.

Another outlook that Cumann na mBan held was a strong emphasis on Irish culture, and the attempted revival or maintenance of it. It was a belief held by the Cumann na mBan that by awakening the Irish culture and

[9] Ann Matthews, *Renegades: Irish Republican Women 1900-1922* (Mercier Press Ltd, 2010), 129-130; Joseph Mckenna, *Guerrilla Warfare in the Irish War of Independence, 1919-1921* (Jefferson, N.C.: Mcfarland & Co, 2011), 112.
[10] Christi McCallum, "'And They'll March with Their Brothers to Freedom': Cumann Na MBan, Nationalism, and Women's Rights in Ireland, 1900—1923 " (2005), https://web.archive.org/web/20081004020522/http://etd.lib.fsu.edu/theses/available/etd-04182005-153415/unrestricted/FINALFORMATTEDTHESIS.pdf, 62.
[11] Lindie Naughton, *Markievicz: A Most Outrageous Rebel* (Merrion Press, 2018), https://archive.org/details/markieviczmostou0000naug/, 125.
[12] Sharon Furlong, "'Herstory' Recovered: Assessing the Contribution of Cumann Na MBan 1914-1923," *The Past: The Organ of the Uí Cinsealaigh Historical Society*, no. 30 (2009): 70–93, http://www.jstor.org/stable/44554533, 75.
[13] Margaret Ward, "Cumann Na MBan, 1914-1916: The Early Years," in *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 2nd ed. (Pluto Press, 1995), 88–118, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18mbdpc.7, 103.
[14] Furlong, 75.
[15] McCallum, 51.
[16] Ibid, 75, 44, 84.
[17] Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, "The Women Who Died for Ireland," *History Ireland* 26, no. 5 (2018): 36–38, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26565935, 36.
[18] McCallum, 61-62, 84.

pride for it would also lead to an increased sense of nationalism.[19] Thus, they engaged in a multitude of different activities that they hoped would increase this sense of cultural pride, and thus, nationalism. An example of these activities presented itself in the form of holding dances and céilithe (social gatherings), in an attempt to create national pride, with their first annual dance held being in Cork, named Óglaigh na hÉireann.[20] Translating roughly to soldiers or warriors of Ireland, it was also co-opted to a degree by the Irish Volunteers, as they were thereafter coined as such.[21] Whilst this event was done in order to promote national pride, there was also the nationalist aspect of it, as it was used as a means for nationalists to meet one another.[22] Additionally, this is also displayed through the hanging of the tricolour.[23] This is important, as it shows that even with the promotion of Irish culture being a part of the outlook and goals of Cumann na mBan, all of their actions still have a nationalistic, independent pride as an undertone for all of their actions. Another example in which Cumann na mBan promotes national pride in order to garner nationalism can be seen on St. Patrick's Day of 1916, where the women of Cumann na mBan marched with the Volunteers, whilst simultaneously selling flags in an attempt to aid the 'Irish Language Movement'.[24] This is once again indicative of the ties and attachment that they have to Irish culture, and the maintenance of its nationhood. It is important to note that whilst there is an obvious attempt to promote and maintain Irish culture here, the distribution of these flags had a second motive attached to it, as can be seen through the monetisation of them, rather than freely distributing them. If it was truly just about the promotion of Irish culture, then it would make more sense to just give them out for free, rather than sell it. That secondary motive is most likely linked to the nationalist outlook of Cumann na mBan, and the aforementioned 'Defence of Ireland Fund' present within their constitution. There are records of Cumann na mBan donating money that they raise from events like these selling of flags, to the Irish Nationalists' Aid Association, which in turn gives said money to the Volunteers, such as on the 15th of March 1916, where the Volunteers acknowledged a receipt of 41 pound, 7 shillings, and 9 pence from Cumann na mBan.[25] That's not to say that the promotion of Irish culture was purely performative though, as there are other instances as well where there is no secondary motive to promote it apart from the fact that they believed it to be a necessity or for the benefit of Ireland. This can be seen through the fact that they attempted to only use Ireland-based materials for their uniforms, as well as using Gaelic for all promotional materials.[26] Thus, we can conclude that on top of the nationalist outlook that Cumann na mBan held, in terms of their want to be independent from Britain, they were also nationalist when regarding Irish culture, wanting to revive and maintain their culture that has been progressively eroded away by years of British occupation. Thus, this aspect of their nationalism also informed their policies and activity as well, overall displaying that Cumann na mBan is more than just a one-dimensional, nationalistic organisation that wished to be independent of Britain.

Following the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1922 and the War for Independence, Cumann na mBan didn't just disappear. In fact, they felt the need to continue their nationalist fight, as a part of their constitution, despite being banned by the government of the Irish Free State.[27] They felt the need to fight for those Nationalists that had been imprisoned, and the continued internment without trial.[28] Thus, Cumann na mBan felt the need to do what they could in order to pressure the government for their freedom, and joined in on the hunger strikes that the prisoners were partaking in in February of 1923, which eventually resulted in the release of all women that were imprisoned and engaging in hunger strikes.[29] However, following this, even more women of Cumann na mBan went on strike in March of 1923, with them being denied privileges that they felt they should have, such as the withholding of letters and parcels, which was eventually successful as well.[30] Whilst these examples are no longer a nationalistic outlook in the sense of an attempt to gain independence from Britain, or in the sense of being proud of Irish culture, it still is a form of nationalism in how they wished to protect and take care of all of those that fought to gain independence from Britain in the first place. A sense of pride, gratitude, and indebtedness to those that fought if you will. This outlook of nationalism drove the activities of the aforementioned activities. However, once this

[19] Furlong, 75.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Robert W White, *Provisional Irish Republicans: An Oral and Interpretive History* (Westport (Connecticut): Greenwood, 1993), 33; Richard English, *Armed Struggle: The History of the IRA* (London: Pan Books, 2008), 10.
[22] Furlong, 75.
[23] Conlon, 14.
[24] Furlong, 76.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Margaret Ward, "The Irreconcilables," in *Unmanageable Revolutionaries*, 2nd ed. (Pluto Press, 1995), 199–247, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt18mbdpc.10, 199.
[28] Kieran Glennon, *From Pogrom to Civil War: Tom Glennon and the Belfast IRA* (Mercier Press Ltd, 2013), 223.
[29] Stair na hÉireann, "1923 – a Mass Hunger Strike Is Launched by 424 Republican Prisoners in Mountjoy Gaol in Protest at Their Continued Detention after the War's End," Stair na hÉireann | History of Ireland, October 13, 2016, https://stairnaheireann.net/2016/10/13/1923-a-mass-hunger-strike-is-launched-by-424-republican-prisoners-in-mountjoy-gaol-in-protest-at-their-continued-detention-after-the-wars-end/.
[30] Sinéad Mccoole, *No Ordinary Women: Irish Female Activists in the Revolutionary Years, 1900-1923* (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 2004), https://archive.org/details/noordinarywomeni0000mcco, 117-118.

outlook of nationalism, which is what essentially drove the entire organisation, no longer had anything that could have activities attached to it, with most of their goals having been achieved, members of Cumann na mBan started turning towards other organisations or means that represented their personal views better. Large numbers of Cumann na mBan joined Fianna Fáil after its conception in 1926, essentially weakening the entire organisation to the point where they no longer held much influence or power.[31] Thus, we can make a final statement on Cumann na mBan's outlooks and activities. As an organisation who's outlook and activities were driven mostly by the want for independence from Britain, once this was achieved this, it's relevancy was no longer as strong, and despite their promotion of Irish culture in their outlooks and activities as well, there were plenty of alternative organisations that did the same, whilst representing perspectives that were more applicable and relevant to the times thereafter.

In conclusion, Cumann na mBan was a paramilitary organisation with activities driven mostly by an outlook of nationalism, at a revolutionary time in which there was an extremely tense relationship with Britain. The nationalist outlook presented itself in a multitude of ways, with the main one being the want from independence from Britain, but it was also supplemented by a national pride in Irish culture, the collection of money to further support other paramilitary organisations that shared similar values as they did, as well as the indebtedness they felt towards other nationalists that fought for their freedom.

[31] Ward, "The Irreconcilables", 201.

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Rochestown 1922: The Battle That Broke the Rebel City

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"*The Treaty is already vindicating itself. The English Die-hards said to Mr. Lloyd George and his Cabinet: 'You have surrendered'. Our own Die-hards said to us: 'You have surrendered'. There is a simple test. Those who are left in possession of the battlefield have won.*" – Michael Collins[1]

Introduction

The Battle of Rochestown, often referred to as the 'Battle for Cork', a pivotal clash in the Irish Civil War, was more than just a military engagement; it was a defining moment in the struggle for Cork and the broader fight between pro- and anti-Treaty forces. Following their defeat in the Battle of Dublin in early July 1922, the anti-Treaty Irish Republican Army (IRA) regrouped in Munster, establishing a defensive line stretching from Limerick to Waterford.[2]

Under Liam Lynch's leadership, a field army of up to 2,000 well-armed and experienced fighters formed the backbone of the resistance, supported by thousands of unarmed Volunteers and Cumann na mBan members.[3] Despite losing ground in Leinster and Connacht, the IRA remained confident that their guerrilla tactics and the so-called 'Munster Republic' would prolong the war and rally support to their cause. However, this optimism was short-lived. On 21 July, the National Army stormed Limerick and Waterford, shattering the IRA's defensive strategy. Though the republicans managed to hold off Free State forces elsewhere, particularly in the intense fighting near Kilmallock, the loss of two key cities forced National Army commanders to rethink their approach. A direct assault on Cork, the heart of anti-Treaty resistance, now seemed impractical.[4] Instead, they turned to an audacious alternative: a seaborne invasion.

Historical context

Nowhere was the deep rupture of the Civil War more pronounced than in Cork, where the division between the military and civilian populations laid bare the tortuous nature of the Treaty split. The county's IRA brigades, arguably the most formidable guerrilla forces of the War of Independence, overwhelmingly rejected the Treaty, yet the majority of Cork's civilian population supported it.[5] Even within the military ranks, neutrality was a significant force, with figures like Seán O'Hegarty and Florence O'Donoghue refusing to take up arms in the conflict, instead forming the 'Neutral IRA' in a bid to broker peace. The numbers, however, were stark.[6]

By July 1922, anti-Treaty IRA records listed over 10,000 men across the five Cork brigades, though many lacked combat experience or access to weapons.[7] Meanwhile, the pro-Treaty forces in the county were a mere fraction of that size as estimates suggested just 250 Free State troops on the ground, forcing the Provisional Government to retake Cork through seaborne landings rather than local military strength.[8] Yet, this overwhelming republican military presence was not reflected in the political sphere. In the June 1922 general election, anti-Treaty Sinn Féin secured only four of Cork's 15 seats, while pro-Treaty Sinn Féin, Labour, and other parties won the majority.[9] The stark contrast between political will and military allegiance underscored the complexities of Cork's Civil War experience, where public sentiment leaned towards stability, even as the county became an anti-Treaty stronghold.

In the early hours of 8 August 1922, the quiet ferry port of Passage West became the unlikely gateway for the National Army's bold amphibious assault on Cork. As the steamship *Arvonia* drifted into the harbour, tension rippled across the bay, anti-Treaty IRA forces in Cobh tracked its approach, loosing warning shots from

[1] M. Collins, *A Path to Freedom* (Cork: Mercier Press, 2010).

[2] D. Gannon, F. McGarry, *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, and Civil War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2022).

[3] *Ibid*.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] J. Borgonovo, *The Battle For Cork: July-August 1922*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012).

[6] *Ibid*.

[7] J. Borgonovo, *The Battle For Cork: July-August 1922*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012).

[8] *Ibid*.

[9] *Ibid*.

their machine guns.[10] The vessel remained silent. On the pier, an IRA sentry, wary but intrigued, fired a shot across its bows before cautiously approaching with a lamp to investigate. As he peered onto the deck, the flickering light revealed a sight that sent him scrambling back into town, over 200 pro-Treaty troops, crouched and ready for battle.[11] Within moments, they were ashore, swiftly securing the town and unloading reinforcements: 450 soldiers, an 18-pounder field gun, and armoured cars. Almost simultaneously, additional landings at Youghal and Union Hall brought another 350 Free State troops into the fray.[12] This was Michael Collins' masterstroke; an audacious move designed to reclaim Cork and deliver a decisive blow to the anti-Treaty IRA. The battle for the southern capital had begun.

Rochestown as a battleground

Although in contemporary Cork Rochestown is generally viewed as an affluent suburb, in 1922 it was utilised due to its railway connections and proximity to the water. By Wednesday, 9 August, the battle for Cork had reached its fiercest point, with heavy fighting erupting in the woods around the Capuchin College in Rochestown.[13] An estimated 300 National Army troops clashed with around 200 IRA Volunteers in a brutal contest for control of the high ground. The Free State forces held a decisive advantage, wielding superior firepower in the form of 18-pounder artillery and armoured vehicles. By securing the critical heights above Douglas, they paved the way for their advance into the Cork suburbs, leading them to Rochestown.[14]

As the battle raged through the dense woodland and rolling fields of Rochestown, the intensity of combat became evident in firsthand accounts. Reports from the *Cork Examiner* described the relentless exchanges of gunfire, with bursts of machine-gun fire echoing through the trees as both sides vied for control.[15] The National Army's artillery proved decisive, forcing the republicans into a fighting retreat. Eyewitnesses recalled the sight of smoke rising from the battlefield as anti-Treaty forces set fire to supply depots and abandoned vehicles to deny them to the advancing Free State troops.[16] By the time the National Army secured the area, casualties littered the fields, marking one of the bloodiest engagements of the Civil War in Cork.

The final blow came on Thursday, 10 August, when National Army troops pushed the IRA out of Rochestown, forcing the republicans into retreat. True to their guerrilla strategy, the IRA withdrew when victory seemed impossible, torching remaining military supplies and installations as they fell back through Cork city.[17] Smoke filled the streets as key infrastructure was sabotaged, with Parliament Bridge, Parnell Bridge, and Brian Boru Bridge damaged to slow the Free State advance. In a chaotic exodus, hundreds of IRA fighters fled westward in commandeered vehicles, many heading for Macroom.[18] Within days, the once-formidable IRA field army was scattered, its fighters dissolving back into their home areas to wage the next phase of the Civil War, one fought in ambushes and skirmishes rather than pitched battles.

The retreat from Rochestown marked the collapse of organised anti-Treaty resistance in Cork, but it did not bring an end to the conflict. As the National Army secured the city, IRA fighters who had escaped the battle quickly regrouped in the surrounding countryside, preparing for a prolonged guerrilla campaign.[19] The destruction of key bridges and infrastructure slowed the Free State's ability to pursue them, giving the republicans time to reorganise. However, the loss of Cork as a stronghold was a major blow to the anti-Treaty cause, signalling the end of conventional warfare in the region. With the National Army now in control of Ireland's second-largest city, the Civil War entered a new, more fragmented phase, characterised by hit-and-run attacks, sabotage, and reprisals rather than open engagements.

[10] D. Gannon, F. McGarry, *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, and Civil War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2022).

[11] D. Gannon, F. McGarry, *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, and Civil War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2022).

[12] *Ibid*.

[13] J. Borgonovo, *The Battle For Cork: July-August 1922*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012).

[14] *Ibid*.

[15] *Ibid*.

[16] J. Lynch, "Account of events by Dr. James Lynch, Medical Officer, Garryduff, Rochestown" (1922).

[17] J. Crowley, D. Ó Drisceoil, M. Murphy, J. Borgonovo, *The Atlas of the Irish Civil War*, (Cork: Cork University Press, 2024).

[18] *Ibid*.

[19] *Ibid*.

The account of Dr James Lynch

The best way to gauge the loss suffered is a typewritten account of Dr. James Lynch, a Medical Officer situated in Garryduff woods during the battle, provides a vivid and personal account of the intense and harrowing experiences during the battle.[20] Lynch details the Free State soldiers' arrival in Douglas on the night of August 9, 1922, after a failed attempt to delay them through the destruction of the road bridge at Rochestown.[21] His account underscores the chaos and confusion that gripped the area as both Republican and Free State forces clashed, with Lynch caught in the middle as a medical officer.

The narrative captures the sense of urgency and danger, as Lynch, along with his family, prepared for the inevitable onslaught. Despite the heavy firing, Lynch's resolve as a doctor remained steadfast, as he provided medical assistance to wounded Republicans and navigated the perilous terrain of the battlefront.[22] His movements, sometimes interrupted by gunfire or confrontations with soldiers, highlight the precariousness of his position.[23] Ultimately, his account not only illustrates the personal toll of war but also highlights the deep divisions within Irish society during the Civil War, as both sides, though ideologically opposed, shared a common heritage and a similar commitment to their cause. Through Lynch's testimony, a unique insight into the personal and communal struggles during one of the most turbulent periods in Ireland's history is gained.

The lasting effects of battle

The Battle of Rochestown was not only a military engagement but also a deeply personal and tragic confrontation between former comrades. On 9 August 1922, Free State soldier Flood was shot by anti-Treaty forces as he attempted to outflank a group of IRA Volunteers positioned at a sharp bend in the road.[24] Emerging through a gate, he was struck down by a burst of machine-gun fire. As he lay dying, Frank O'Donoghue, a republican who had fought alongside him in the War of Independence, broke cover, rushing to his side to take his hand and whisper an Act of Contrition.[25] This poignant moment epitomises the cruel ironies of the Irish Civil War, where former allies turned against each other in a bitter struggle over the future of Ireland. Today, the site of this encounter remains marked by the 'battlefield gate', its frame still scarred by bullet holes, silent witnesses to a past that continues to shape Ireland's historical landscape.

The Cronin cottage and the nearby 'battlefield gate' were at the epicentre of the fiercest fighting in Rochestown, serving as a flashpoint in the struggle for Cork.[26] Field boundaries, still visible today, became makeshift defences where anti-Treaty forces unleashed relentless machine-gun fire on advancing Free State troops. Among those pushing forward over the exposed terrain were veterans of the First World War, for whom the battle's intensity must have evoked harrowing memories of the Western Front. Their sacrifices were steep, James Gavigan, a former British soldier, was shot in the head and succumbed soon after, while James Madden was killed instantly by a shot to the forehead.[27] On the Republican side, nineteen-year-old Christopher Olden lingered for two days after a grievous wound before dying in the South Infirmary.[28]

The toll extended beyond the fighters to civilians as well; elderly residents William and Mary Cronin screamed in terror as their cottage became a battlefield, the place where anti-Treaty Volunteers Scottie McKenzie and James Maloney met their end.[29] A haunting photograph published in the *Cork Examiner* on 23 August 1922 captures the Cronins standing before the wreckage of their home, clutching bullet-riddled possessions.[30] Despite the region's rich maritime and railway heritage, the events of the Civil War remain largely absent from public

[20] J. Lynch, "Account of events by Dr. James Lynch, Medical Officer, Garryduff, Rochestown" (1922).

[21] J. Lynch, "Account of events by Dr. James Lynch, Medical Officer, Garryduff, Rochestown" (1922).

[22] *Ibid*.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] D. Gannon, F. McGarry, *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, and Civil War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2022).

[25] *Ibid*.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*

[29] D. Gannon, F. McGarry, *Ireland 1922: Independence, Partition, and Civil War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2022).

[30] *Ibid.*

memory, with only a single plaque in Passage West or Rochestown acknowledging the battle. Unlike other elements of Ireland's revolutionary past, these landscapes have been preserved not by intention, but by accident.

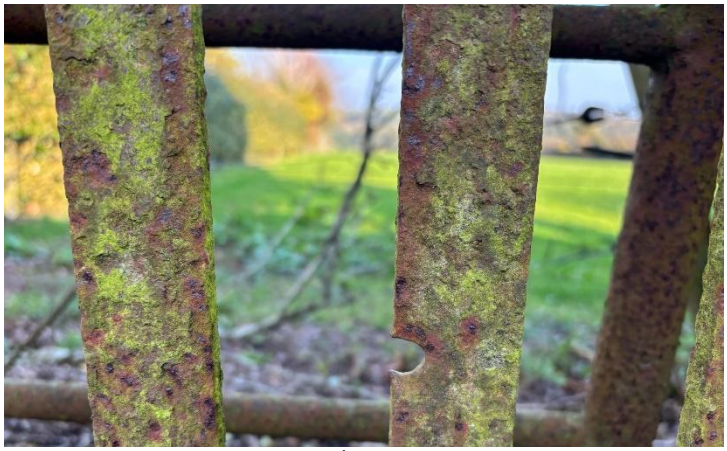

Figure . The bullet hole as of the 9th of February 2025 in the Battlefield Gate. Picture taken by Article Author.

Conclusion

The Battle of Rochestown, one of the largest and most sustained engagements of the Irish Civil War outside Dublin, marked a significant shift in the conflict's trajectory. Historians Andy Bielenberg and James Donnelly Jr. estimate that the battle resulted in 14 fatalities, with 9 National Army soldiers and 5 IRA Volunteers killed, while between 20 and 30 others sustained injuries, reflecting the intensity of the clash.[31] Beyond the human toll, the battle caused extensive economic and property damage in the region.

Despite these losses, the National Army, led by Emmet Dalton, succeeded in capturing Cork's major towns within a week.[32] However, delays in the Free State forces' movements along the northern front prevented them from linking up with Dalton's units in time to prevent the IRA from dispersing. This allowed the IRA to evade capture and regroup. In mid-August, IRA leader Liam Lynch's decision to shift to guerrilla tactics further complicated the Free State's efforts.[33] By mobilising experienced IRA fighters, Lynch transformed the province into a largely ungovernable area, signalling the end of the conventional phase of the war.[34] The subsequent shift to guerrilla warfare would prolong the conflict, as large-scale military operations became less effective against a mobile and elusive enemy

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[31] B. Keane, "Cork deaths War of Independence and Civil War 1916-1923" (2015).

[32] J. Borgonovo, *The Battle For Cork: July-August 1922*, (Cork: Mercier Press, 2012).

[33] *Ibid*.

[34] *Ibid*.

Same Old Song and Dance: The Story behind Midleton's Most Destructive Floods of the Twentieth Century

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Introduction

The East Cork town of Midleton stretches out across the flat, low-lying land between and slightly beyond two rivers, and runs up the hills to the North. The Owenacurra river cuts down through the town's West side and the Roxborough river sits at the Southern end of Main Street. These rivers have permeated Midleton's history with disastrous floods. Further on East, the residential areas of Park North and Park South lay on opposite sides of the Roxborough. The Owenacurra and Roxborough rivers eventually meet on the edge of town before joining the much larger Ballynacorra river.

The newspapers used to refer to the floods in simple reports. Perhaps three, or even four, sentences concerning the damage to buildings and livestock. The quantity of reporting peaked in 1911 when a flood had interrupted the town's weekly market and brought it to a quick end.[1] In 1931, a flurry of news reports would detail a series of Midleton's most devastating floods, including the first investigation into the causes of Midleton's flooding and the development of preventative measures.

The purpose of this article is not to determine the cause of Midleton's floods nor to catalogue the entirety of the aftermath, but instead to provide a comprehensive narrative surrounding key figures and events. Furthermore, even though this article will discuss the multiple potential causes of 1931's floods, it should not serve to influence any understanding of climate change and its effects on Midleton today.

Spring Storms

On the 7th of March 1931, after a week of terrible rain, Midleton's rivers had overflown their banks. In the northern, more rural area of Midleton, the Owenacurra burst its banks and its current submerged large swathes of land.[2] Further South, between the clash of the Owenacurra and the Roxborough, the water ripped through the Parks and continued up through the Main Street, and down onto Thomas Street.[3] To one Cork newspaper, the Roxborough was a "raging torrent".[4]

The flood forced homeowners in the Parks to abandon their homes and ground floors of Thomas Street's buildings suffered severe water damage.[5] The most expensive of damage was caused to the underground telephone and telegraph lines running beneath Midleton. This effectively isolated surrounding villages from the town and the rest of Cork.[6] The Post Office, responsible for the infrastructure, dispatched workmen to repair the damage,[7] however, their efforts would unfortunately amount to nothing more than a waste.

Nearly a month later, on the 1st of April, another vicious storm tore through Ireland and surpassed the mayhem of March's floods.[8] The water broke free of Main Street and continued by a couple hundred meters up onto Connolly Street.[9] Finally, a few days after the floods began, the floodwaters, of up to four feet in certain areas,[10] eased and slipped away from the streets, back into the Roxborough.[11]

The largest number of buildings on record had been damaged by the floods.[12] The poorer classes, belonging to the Parks and the ground floors of Thomas Street's houses, suffered the most due to the Roxborough

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1 — —, 'Midleton' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 31 July 1911).

2 — —, 'Flood in Midleton' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 7 March 1931).

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*

5 *Ibid.*

6 — —, 'Telephonic Interruption in East Cork' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 9 March 1931).

7 *Ibid.*

8 — —, 'The Incessant Rain Causes Alarm and Damage' *Evening Echo* (Cork, 1 April 1931).

9 — —, 'The Incessant Rains' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 2 April 1931).

10 — —, 'A Welcome Change' *Evening Echo* (Cork, 2 April 1931).

11 — —, 'Improved Conditions' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 3 April 1931).

12 *Ibid.*

flooding.[13] These floods left a large portion of Midleton's population homeless and destitute. For farmers and agricultural workers too, the floods brought a sincere change of nature to their livelihoods. Livestock near the Owenacurra and Roxborough were swept up by the currents and drowned.[14]

The Investigation Begins

Earlier, before September 1927's general election, economic devastation stalked East Cork. While all branches of industry suffered, those most closely tied to the land and malt fell into the deepest pits of despair. Edmond Carey, a local businessowner and Cumann na Gaedheal party member, campaigned on combating the constituency's rising unemployment rate and providing relief to landless agricultural workers.[15] The role of agriculture and malt varied considerably from town to town, but the catastrophic economic conditions of East Cork made it virtually impossible to ignore that a new form of action was required. Carey, having previously served for fifteen years on the Midleton Urban District Council and two years as a Cork County Councillor,[16] would later be elected to Dáil Éireann.

Upon election, and in his contributions to assemblies of the Dáil, he spoke of the continued rise of unemployment in East Cork and his desire to spur local bodies to action, and to create public works schemes to alleviate the pressures felt by his constituents.[17] Ironically, Carey stated that the level of unemployment was so inconceivably awful that "[a]t present time the people [of East Cork] are scarcely able to hold their heads above water."[18]

As never before, the floods of 1931 seized the national attention and provided Carey with an opportunity. Much of his support was directed at public works schemes, and as a business owner of the town's Main Street and a dedicated public servant, Carey decided it would be worthwhile to take a long stroll along the Roxborough.

In the immediate aftermath of April's floods, Edmond Carey and his colleague Bertie O' Flynn, a South Cork Board of Public Health engineer, travelled along the Roxborough,[19] the river which had caused the most destruction. Unlike previous floods, an extensive survey was conducted, with both men examining the river's conditions and the damage it had caused along the way.[20] With pressure building from the rest of the Midleton Urban District Council,[21] O' Flynn eventually provided a report of his survey to the South Cork Board of Public Health on the 15th of April. It was revealed that the poor conditions of the Roxborough, further East and not of the section which ran through the town, were to blame.[22] Following O'Flynn's presentation of the facts, Carey suggested that the Board should endeavour to discover who exactly was responsible for the upkeep of the river,[23] and thus by extension who was ultimately responsible for the devastation caused by the Roxborough's flood.

While Carey continued to serve as the political fist of those seeking to resolve Midleton's floods, it is O' Flynn's surveys and reports which would come to define the responses of local and national bodies. For him, it was simply apart of his job description, but his findings would have deep implications for any future discourse or actions taken.

Finger Pointing in the Dark

There is a narrow strip of land, extremely narrow, which separates the Roxborough from the road leading to the Midleton Distillery. In 1825 Messrs Murphy & Co. bought the complex, formerly a woollen factory and

[13] — —, 'Improved Conditions' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 3 April 1931).
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] — —, 'Dáil Elections' *Irish Examiner* (19 April 1927).
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] Dáil Deb 26 October 1927, vol 21, no 5.
[18] Dáil Deb 26 October 1927, vol 21, no 5.
[19] — —, 'Midleton Floods' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 4 April 1931).
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] — —, 'Midleton Floods' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 10 April 1931).
[22] — —, 'Engineer and Cause' *Evening Echo* (Cork, 15 April 1931).
[23] *Ibid.*

barracks,[24] from the Midleton estate, and they transformed it into a whiskey distillery.[25] The distillery has stood at the historical apex of the community for generations, and it had quickly become one of East Cork's largest employers and had fallen under the ownership of the Cork Distilleries Company. Next to the complex, along the Roxborough, sat an aqueduct and a mill race, a remnant of the former woollen factory and still in use by the distillery during the events of 1931.[26]

In Cork City, during one of the South Cork Board of Public Health's weekly meetings, the committee was quick to task the board's law agent with determining who was responsible for the flood.[27] Shortly thereafter, the engineer submitted a new report. He explained that the Roxborough had first overflowed its bank within nearly a kilometre of the mill race, but the Cork Distilleries Company had denied any liability for the flood.[28] Furthermore, it would later be discovered that O' Flynn's remedies were not carried out by anyone involved with the matter.[29] Activity surrounding April's flood began to dwindle after this occurrence, until further floods struck Midleton in November. Although these floods did not reach the same levels of destruction as April's floods, it did cause a major health concern and left the town's poor homeless once again.[30]

Following the floods, the Midleton Improvement Association approached the Cork Distilleries Company and other organisations urging them to act, and when they wouldn't, the Midleton Urban District Council began to viciously attribute the blame to any organisation who can be conceived as being involved with the matter.[31] Two days later, the solicitor of the Cork Distilleries Company wrote to the Irish Examiner. He denied any liability on behalf of the Company despite the evidence gathered by O' Flynn and insisted that the Midleton Distillery was a victim, not a perpetrator, of the floods.[32] The Midleton Urban District Council themselves denied any responsibility, and blamed the Distillery Company, County Council, and eventually the South Cork Board of Public Health.[33] The struggle of assigning responsibility continued, but eventually the Board agreed with O' Flynn and Carey to organise the immediate flow of funds to relief efforts designed to repair the Roxborough.[34] A notice was also given to the Midleton Distillery to clear the small portion of the land they eventually admitted responsibility for.[35]

Fixing the Problem?

On the 10th of May 1932, a year after April's floods, Bertie O' Flynn prepared a scheme granting £100 to remedy Midleton's flooding.[36] The Distilleries Company offered to contribute £10 and to take preventative measures against damaging the river, so long as the company was indemnified of all responsibility.[37] A further £700 was provided for drainage works,[38] which should have improved the conditions of the Owenacurra along Midleton's Mill Street. The works are reported to have been completed as of the 16th of February 1933.[39]

None of these measures attracted significant change, and neither would any future measures. Despite the chaos of 1931's floods, there are no optimistic outcomes to be found. In place of the floods, local bodies would turn their attention to other pressing matters, and the Roxborough and Owenacurra continued to pester Midleton's inhabitants right up until today. To make matters worse, the South Cork Board of Public Health's law agent

[24] F. Keohane, *Cork: City and County* (1st edn, Yale University Press, 2020) 513.
[25] *Ibid.*
[26] F. Keohane, *Cork: City and County* (1st edn, Yale University Press, 2020) 513.
[27] — —, 'Engineer and Cause' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 16 April 1931).
[28] — —, 'Grants' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 14 July 1931).
[29] — —, 'Midleton Council' *Evening Echo* (Cork, 11 June 1931).
[30] — —, 'Extensive Damage in Midleton' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 25 November 1931).
[31] — —, 'Its Causes' *Evening Echo* (Cork, 23 November 1931).
[32] — —, 'Many Preventative Proposals' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 3 December 1931).
[33] — —, 'Discussion at Urban Council' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 26 November 1931).
[34] — —, 'Midleton Flooding' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 8 December 1931).
[35] *Ibid.*
[36] — —, 'Members' View' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 10 May 1932).
[37] *Ibid.*
[38] *Ibid.*
[39] — —, 'Its Future' *Evening Echo* (Cork, 16 February 1932).

determined that the board held no responsibility for Midleton's floods and that only the national government should be held responsible.[40]

On the 2nd of December 1931, in one of his final contributions to any Dáil debates and in which he provided his final advocacy for drainage schemes to the national assembly, Carey was dismissed by Teachta Dála Michael J. Kennedy as merely giving another "lecture about local authorities".[41] Carey's potent cry for empowering local bodies and their overseeing of public works was extinguished with his emotional and unrestrained query following Kennedy's remarks, bringing into question whether they had "no brains" in his part of the country.[42] The debate of the role of local bodies would continue, but Carey, long dissatisfied with his Dáil colleagues, would slump back down in his seat and remain silent as arguments erupted around the chamber.

Carey would continue to lose his seat in 1932's general election and would never rise to the same level of influence again. He would however remain an active participant in local politics. His, and of course O' Flynn's, investigation and resolutions for Midleton's flooding would come to an abrupt halt, but their desire to improve the conditions of the town would continue far beyond their initial efforts.

Conclusion

To be sure, Carey, O' Flynn, and other public servants did not lack any accomplishments. They had failed to achieve enduring measures against Midleton's awful floods; however, they had succeeded in the very least at spearheading efforts which would eventually become repetitively renewed by those who inherited their frustrations. Like their historical counterparts, today's population of Midleton have experienced the worst floods of their generation, and I do not hesitate to assert that a similar lack of immediate compensation or preventative measures have left the town crippled in fear of the future.

Paschal Sheehy, RTÉ's Southern Editor, wrote that the delivery of a permanent flood relief scheme should be expected within the next decade,[43] but nearly a century has elapsed since this issue was brough to the attention of the country and its decision makers. Is not this lack of action a disgrace to Ireland? Even more than the dismissal of Edmond Carey by his peers, have the events which have transpired over the last hundred years of Midleton's history not been enough to discredit any promises of future action? Perhaps. But then again, perhaps not.

Midleton, more often than not, is an unassuming town, wedged between the Owenacurra and Roxborough rivers, but it carries a distinct mood, one which alludes my vocabulary and is felt in each part of this country. To borrow the words of another, it is the "cold and rook-delighting heaven"[44] I have to come to known, but there is still much to do and much to be learnt about her.

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[40] — —, 'Midleton Flooding' *Irish Examiner* (Cork, 8 December 1931).

[41] Dáil Deb 2 December 1931, vol 40, no 19.

[42] Dáil Deb 2 December 1931, vol 40, no 19.

[43] P. Sheehy 'One year on from Storm Babet floods that put Midleton under water' (*RTÉ*, 18 October 2024) < https://www.rte.ie/news/munster/2024/1018/1476096-midleton-flooding/> accessed 9 March 2025.

[44] W.B. Yeats, *Selected Poems* (1st edn, Penguin Modern Classics, 2000) 21.

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The legal standing of women in Early Irish Law, particularly regarding marriage, inheritance and legal authority

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The status of women in early Irish law was changing however, early medieval Ireland was still governed by male led kingdoms that were highly patriarchal. Women did, however have their own rights and were protected by the law in many ways, specifically against abuse and mistreatment. They had many causes for demanding divorces and there was legislation in place to protect women in such circumstances as a divorce where she is not in the wrong. This was uncommon for the time period and the legal standing of women can be clearly shown through such law texts like *Cáin Lánamna*. The legal standing of women changed greatly in quite a short period of time, especially in regard to property and inheritance. By observing the legal standing of women their roles and responsibilities are clear and so is what could happen if they fail in their duties. This also shows what the most important values were in early Irish law, the emphasis put on the family, children and ensuring inheritance give a clear image pf how Early Irish society functioned on a day to day basis as a society.

The coming of the Christian church had great influences on marriages in early Ireland, as when it arrived men could have multiple wives, could obtain divorces for many reasons or simple because they both agreed and for many more reasons. None of these were approved by the Christian church. Marriages were split into three categories that depended on who brought money and land into the marriage. If they both did, it was referred to as a marriage on common contribution. The other two types of marriages were marriage on the man's contribution or on the woman's contribution. If the woman came in on equal standing and status as her now husband then she was known as a 'woman off joint dominion, a woman of equal lordship'. This meant that neither could make any legal contracts without the others agreement. This was not necessary when dealing with household matters and all needed to run it or small matters on farm work. Both could also have their own property they owned separately and they could do with it what they liked as long as it did not affect the other spouse financially. The difference here is that the price for land and property was an individual's honour price and for a woman that is married her honour price is half of her husband's price. In the case of a divorce, they both left with what they entered the marriage with. However, the joint assets are split into three categories. Land, labour and livestock. Land and livestock are split evenly and in the case of a no-fault divorce labour is also divided equally. Then in the event of a divorce where one is innocent and one is the guilty party, the labour is divided into three and each get a third and the innocent party gets the last third as a form of compensation.[1] Women did have the rights to property but it depended in their social status and it was still rarely to the same standing as her husband.

In a marriage of the man's contribution, he brings the land and all other properties while the woman enters with little to no contribution. In this case the husband can make any contract he wishes and does not need the permission of his wife. This wife has less rights then in a marriage of joint contributions. She may still oversea any matters of household concerns such as food and or domestic items. If the woman is of the same social status as her husband then she may void any contract she does not agree with. In this type of marriage when divorcing the woman leaves with very little as she did not bring much into the marriage. She may take half of her own things she made herself and a third of the dairy. If the divorce is based on her being the guilty party then she receives very little. It was different again if the marriage was on the woman's contribution then she keeps her property and if innocent the man leaves with very little. That is only of he played an active role in helping his wife in managing her estate. If he is the guilty party in the divorce then he walks out with that he contributed. If the wife is off higher status then she raises her husbands based on her own unless he is higher born then she is.[2]

In medieval Ireland a person's standing was mostly based on wealth and position. A person's wealth was derived from how much land they owned and what they could make of their wealth regarding cattle and other

[1] Cosgrove, A., *Marriage in Ireland*, College Press Ltd, 1985. Page 1-8.

[2] Cosgrove, A., *Marriage in Ireland*, College Press Ltd, (1985). 8-10.

assets. Their status was decided by considering their wealth, birth, profession and fame. Ireland was a hierarchical society that was separated into classes. Being high born or highly trained certain profession meant your standing was better than that of someone with no land or fame. For women this meant that if they had their own money or land then they were of a higher station. This is important as it explains the way an honour price was decided. If a person committed a crime then they had to pay an honour price to the victim or their next male kin. They could also be compensated if they were humiliated and their reputation was damaged. This honour price was based on their status.[3] A woman's honour price was a portion of her fathers until she was dependent on her husband. When she married and if she was of a lower status then her honour price was half of her husband's and he would receive it as her next male family member.[4] A woman who became a nun had different rights as she could enter contracts without owning land and swear oaths. Nuns were an exception to the majority of women in Ireland at this time.[5]

Regarding divorce there were fourteen separate reasons a woman could demand a divorce. This was the case if a man was impotent or could not have children, if the man was a homosexual or if he shared intimate details of their sexual relationship with others. A woman could also divorce her husband if he abandoned the family or left the family to become a priest. The reasons a woman could divorce a husband were centred around protecting her physical and mental wellbeing. In some ways Irish law did protect women in many ways and this is seen when a woman could divorce her husband for abuse. A man could strike his wife but if he left any marks then she had grounds to divorce him. This was even if it was only bruising and went away after a period of time.[6]

In the case of women getting married and becoming the second wife or *adaltrach,* the first wife has different rights. She has the right to physically abuse the new wife to an extent for a short period of time after she enters the household. There are limits to how badly she may hurt the new wife. The first wife could also demand a divorce if her husband married a second wife.[7] She could also demand a divorce if her husband seduced her with a magical charm or if he did not tell her of his impotence. When a husband commits these actions he must pay an honour price and usually part of the bride price. The decision of whether or not the remained married was left to the woman as it was her who was wronged. Having the right to ask for a divorce was unusual for a woman of this time to have.

A marriage was negotiated by a man on behalf of himself but a woman was represented by her father or closest male relative. This was a very important position as it was the relative or her father's job to act on her behalf and ensure that if she is wronged that he sues in her defence. They also handled the property and money exchange. A husband gave an amount of money agreed and gave half before married. This payment was given to the father for his daughter's first marriage, this was called '*coibche*' and it is suggested that a woman receive a portion for this payment for herself. A woman then from the seventh or eighth century a woman could receive the payment in whole. This was a large development for women's status as they now had a piece of their own wealth.

The price of the payment was dictated by her honour price which was half of her fathers or a third of her grandfathers. A woman's family did however equal this payment in a form of dowry. In this situation of a dowry being paid that was equal to bride price then the marriage was then one of equal contributions. A marriage of no dowry was used for second or third wives and wives of low social status or even concubines. They had a much lower standing than they first wife. In the case of the *coibche* being given when a man is already married the payment is then forfeited to his first wife. This is as long as she is carrying out her marital duties. It is believed that this was to control and reduce having multiple wives.[8]

In about one in five families there could be no sons to inherit the property from a man and if he had a daughter she became a '*banchomarba'* a female heiress. She would have family members ensuring she is

[3] Latvio, R. *Status and Exchange in Early Irish Laws. Studia Celtica Fennica* 2 (2005) 67-69.

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[7] Kelly, F., *Marriage Disputes, A Fragmentary Old Irish Law-Text*, Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 2014. 3-5.

[8] Cosgrove, A., *Marriage in Ireland*, College Press Ltd, (1985). 14-18.

managing the inheritance properly and after her death it would pass to her father's closest relatives. This is why it became common for a woman in this position to marry the next make that was in line to inherit after her, to ensure that her children would inherit after her death. This could be a first or less commonly a second cousin and was highly forbidden by the church. However, it was allowed by law and so continued until a much later period. This meant that the property was kept in the father's family and not to the husband of the daughter. A father could still gift his daughter land along with her brothers. Another way a woman could gain property is through a divorce or as a gift in exchange for sexual actions. This was down as 'land of the hand and thigh'.[9] Regarding a woman's rights to ownership, it is also said that according to Saint Patrick that women could in the eighth century hold their own property and possessions. We also know that according to him women were legally able to give whatever personal jewellery and goods to the church if they wished.[10]

When a girl reached the age of fourteen she was considered old enough that she could now be betrothed to a man or she could take the veil and become a nun. The rise in the Christian church brought a new option. There were not really alternative to marriage beforehand.[11] In the case of marriage there were many other kinds of unions, each were used to define a sexual relationship in which a child could result. Women could be split up into five types of women. Three of which were considered legitimate women, a woman that was a first wife, a first wife who had sons and a woman who was engaged to be married by pre-agreement of the man and her family. The other kinds of women were women taken by the man without the permission of her family and women who were in a relationship with a man but not engaged nor with her family's permission. Other such situations mentioned in the early Irish law text were that of a union of rape and others of that nature. All of these types of marriages and unions are to give legal background as to the position of any children that could come from the unions themselves.[12]

In normal circumstances both the mother and father shared the raising of children equally. However, this was not always the case. The father became solely responsible for the child if said child is a result of rape or if he gets another man's slave or firsts wife pregnant without permission. He also raised the child if the woman was insane or he had a relationship without her father's permission and if his own wife was too unwell to raise the child. A woman did not have to raise a child if she was disabled, a servant or satirist. A woman did however have to solely raise a child if she had the child with a male slave without his owner's permission, if the father was a priest or satirist and if she was a prostitute.[13]

For women who were raped the consequences the man faced depended on the status of the woman. If a woman was the first wife, a nun or a girl who was of marriageable age then the full body price was paid. For a secondary wife, only half must be paid. The honour price of the woman's next male family member had to also be paid, whether a husband or father, as a crime against the woman was a crime against the man too.[14] This is due to the fact that women in early medieval Ireland, though they had more rights and liberties than most women in the rest of Europe at this time, did love in a patriarchal society. Of which they were passed from the possession of their fathers to their husbands. Women could not stand as witness in most legal situations as they were believed to be too biased to be trusted. However, women were very important as witnesses in the few circumstances that they were allowed. If a wife denied her husband sex due to her menstruation then a woman was needed to examine the wife to prove she was telling the truth. A woman could also refuse if she was pregnant and feared sexual intercourse would harm her child. Early Irish law was very protective of women and children. Abortions and infanticide were strictly forbidden.[15] Anything that could possibly harm a child was taken very seriously and

[9] Cosgrove, A., *Marriage in Ireland,* College Press Ltd (1985). 10-14

[10] O Croinin, D., *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (2nd ed.). Routledge, (2016). 152.

[11] Kelly, F., *Marriage Disputes, A Fragmentary Old Irish Law-Text,* Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies (2014). 1-2.

[12] Cosgrove, A., *Marriage in Ireland,* College Press Ltd (1985).18-21.

[13] Eska, C., *Cáin Lánamna : An Old Irish Tract on Marriage and Divorce Law*, BRILL(2009). 19-20.

[14] Eska, C., *Cáin Lánamna : An Old Irish Tract on Marriage and Divorce Law*, BRILL (2009).13.

[15] O Croinin, D., *Early Medieval Ireland 400-1200* (2nd ed.). Routledge, (2016). 149-150.

another situation that was considered a reason for divorce was if a husband failed in his duty to get his wife whatever she was craving during her pregnancy as it was believed that to deny her could cause harm to the baby.[16]

The status of women in early Irish law changes throughout a short period of time. While Irish women did live in a patriarchal society where their worth and status was based off of their next male relative, they could inherit from their fathers for their lifetime and could own their own property in as early as the eighth century. This was unheard of in most of Europe during the medieval period and they had many more liberties and freedoms than other women of their time. While they were still in the care of their closest male relative, they had their own rights and were protected in many areas of the law, especially in marriage. The society of early Ireland holds children at its centre and it could be said that children were the most important in any matter as they were who would inherit the land and power of their families. The status of women appears to be then based off their ability to act as a wife and a mother and legal texts very clearly show this and what the consequences of their failure could be.

[16] Eska, C., *Cáin Lánamna : An Old Irish Tract on Marriage and Divorce Law*, BRILL (2009). 19.

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The Origins of Ireland's First National Park

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Irish nationality has long been constructed on images of landscape. For almost two centuries the claims of Irish nationalists and militant republicans have been adorned with evocations of the beaty of various landscapes covering the west coast from Donegal to Cork. Most prevalent among nationalists of this kind was the writers of *The Nation* such as Thomas Davis (1814-1845) and the Young Ireland movement.[1] It can also be found earlier in the work of William Drennan.[2] Poems, prints, and paintings reflect a distilled image of landscape functioning as a national symbol, something which, in the rapid retreat of the Irish language and many Irish cultural practices, Irish people could root their sense of nationality in. Several examples of unique natural beauty recur in these images, with one of the most prevalent since the eighteenth century being the Killarney environs. In the United States in the 1870s a concept emerged of a "National Park", which was designed to protect exceptionally scenic areas of natural beauty from private exploitation for the national good and compared the role of these national landscapes in the identity formation of Americans to the civic and cultural monuments of Europe.[3] Despite this, there was no great push from the nationalist movement prior to or after independence to establish an Irish national park, and the circumstances which resulted in the 1932 Bourn Vincent Memorial Park act and an eventual establishment of a series of Irish national parks were exceptional. Killarney's attested for scenic beauty and importance to the national identity have little to do with the maintenance of its environs and eventual donation to the Irish state, rather it is the result of the management of two estates from the eighteenth century onwards and the whims of their American proprietors in the twentieth century.

Today's Killarney National Park lies entirely within the historic barony of Magunihy, based on the demesnes of the estates of the Herberts of Muckross and the Brownes of Killarney, the latter acquiring peerage in the nineteenth century as the Earls of Kenmare. The Brownes arrived in Killarney first, with Valentine Browne (d.1589) receiving lands in the Munster plantation for his service to the crown as an auditor of the same plantation. He resided in Ross Castle, formerly the residence of the O'Donoghue's, who were loyal to the Desmond revolt. He came into land disputes with the McCarthy Mórs, a Gaelic family loyal to England in the Desmond revolt, over whether his territory was within their earldom of Clancare, but the Brownes remained and the McCarthys would eventually be pushed out of Killarney by economic circumstance.[4] Browne's grandson, also Valentine, would become 1st Viscount Kenmare under James II, but after the loss of the Williamite wars this Valentine Browne (1638-1694) lost much of his land, including Ross Castle, which became a military barracks.[5]

The Brownes, a Catholic family in penal-law Ireland, were conscious of their image and the tenuousness of their ascendancy. They maintained their lands through only having single male heirs as to not subject their lands to gavelkind laws.[6] A third Valentine Browne (1695–1736), grandson of the previous Valentine, built Kenmare House next to Killarney town with a view of the Lakes of Killarney in an area now aptly known as the "Demesne" to replace his family seat of Ross Castle. In doing so, he endeavoured to design ornate, fashionable gardens which framed the natural picturesque of the Killarney landscape.[7] Present in this design is an attempt to integrate the fashionable early-eighteenth century garden with the wild of the landscape beyond it, so that one could enjoy the excitement of the mountains across the lakes from the civility of a garden which would be typical on a contemporary English estate. Browne did not live the typical life of an English, or Irish ascendancy, Baroque estate dweller; his family was spread across Europe in Catholic strongholds such as Portugal and Brussels, while his life was dominated by litigation with the state over the forfeiture of his grandfather's estate.[8] This would

[1] Michael Huggins, "A Cosmopolitan Nationalism: Ireland and the Risorgimento," in *Britain, Ireland, and the Risorgimento*, ed. N. Carter (London: Palgrave Macmillan): 33-4.
[2] Julia Wright, *Representing the National Landscape in Irish Romanticism,* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2014): ix-x.
[3] John C. Miles, *Wilderness in National Parks: Playground or Preserve,* (University of Washington Press, 2009): 9-10.
[4] Anthony McCormack & Terry Calvin, "Browne, Sir Valentine," in *Dictionary of Irish Biographies,* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).
[5] Éamonn Ó Ciardha, "Browne, Sir Valentine," in *Dictionary of Irish Biographies,* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).
[6] Finola O'Kane, *Ireland and the picturesque: design, landscape painting and tourism 1700-1840,* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2013): 62-7.
[7] *Ibid.,*
[8] Éamonn Ó Ciardha, "Browne, Valentine," in *Dictionary of Irish Biographies,* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).

continue beyond his early death and until the time of his son, Thomas Browne (1726-95). Thomas was intent on living in Killarney and to improve his lands, which had languished under his father's land agent. He was among the first to see the value of tourism in Killarney, but as the century progressed the baroque style of the Killarney estate became unfashionable, and a new estate began to be recognised as a preferable example.[9]

The Herberts of Muckross and Cahernane did not come to Killarney as planters, but as land agents of the 3rd Lord of Castleisland, another Herbert who was granted Desmond land in North Kerry in the Munster plantation. They rented their lands, mostly south of the Browne on the peninsular of Muckross Lake, from the McCarthys. Edward (fl. 1753) was likely the first Herbert to have built his residence at Muckross and married a member of the Browne family despite himself being Anglican.[10] We often see that despite the sectarian difference, the Herberts and Brownes were very close and often intermarried and socialised together, which may explain the interconnectivity of the two estates. Both families also mined on their lands extensively in search of copper in the Eighteenth Century, which would finance the construction of a new residence at Muckross. The Herberts also intermarried with the Gaelic McCarthys, and after the death of a relation in 1770 the title-less family inherited the Muckross estate, including such sites as Muckross Abbey.[11] In the Eighteenth Century, Muckross Abbey, Ross Castle, and the landscape of the two estates that defined Killarney began to amass an international renown and English travel-writers, playwrights, and poets began to incorporate the town as a symbol of a mythical Irish past. The respective landlord played their roles in the popularity of the location and began to promote tourism in the town and cultivate the image which tourists might expect, along with personally accommodating high-profile guests.

Throughout the late-eighteenth into the nineteenth century, Killarney developed an identity as a necessary site for travellers. In 1776, *A Description of Killarney* was published in London, which includes a summary of all the sights deemed exceptional in the small town, including Henry Arthur Herbert's new house in Muckross, which the anonymous author found unimpressive.[12] The same year *A Description* was published, Herbert would be visited by the famous agriculturalist Arthur Young, who not only praised the scenic route from Nedeen (now Kenmare) to Muckross but also Herberts improvement of the land to the end of making agriculture productive and for the construction of the Brickeen bridge which became a staple of twentieth-century postcards.[13] Young also mentions the view of the lakes from the Browne estate, and remarks of the lakes that are split between the two estates that they "among the lakes I have seen, can scarcely be said to have a rival."[14] This being the sentiment of one of the most renowned travel writers of the late-eighteenth century, it was soon echoed throughout English society and the Killarney travel journal was soon an oversaturated literary market such as accounts from Isaac Weld in 1807. Accounts of Killarney, while recognising the beauty or historicity of sites such as Ross Castle, Muckross Abbey, or Inisfallen, tended to focus on the scenic, natural beauty, evoking similar fascination to the new world landscapes which would inspire the invention of national parks.

One of the most famous visitors the town received was Queen Victoria in 1861, which solidified the reputation of Killarney as a premier tourist destination. This was evident earlier in the century – a French map from 1800 depicts the island of Ireland with a single local map of Killarney in the corner, indicating it as a site of primary national importance[15] – but advancements made prior to the arrival of Victoria increased access and capacity. Hotels rapidly developed throughout the Nineteenth Century. In 1776, Young made exceptional note of the high cost and low supply of accommodation relative to demand in the burgeoning hub of tourism, with at least the former being untrue by the time of the royal visit.[16] In 1854 the Great Southern and Western Railway company opened a route from Mallow to Tralee including a station at Killarney, which would also be the site of a the Railway Hotel, now the Great Southern. By the time the Railway Hotel was established, Killarney was a hotbed of large luxury hotels, some of which, like the Railway Hotel, lay inside the town, while others dotted the North

[9] O'Kane, 67-8.
[10] "The Herbert Family," Muckross House Research Library, accessed 5 March 2025.
[11] *Ibid*.
[12] *A Description of Killarney*, (Pall-Mall: Dodsley, 1776): 13.
[13] Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland, 1776-1779*, (Pall-Mall: Cadell, Strand, & Dodsley, 1780): 288-291.
[14] *Ibid*., 298.
[15] Jean-Denis Barbié Du Bocage, *L'Irlande*, (Paris, 1800), BnF Gallica.
[16] Young, *A Tour in Ireland*, 298.

shore of the Lower Lake.[17] Apocryphally, Henry Arthur Herbert (1815-66), who constructed the current Muckross House in the Scottish baronial style with a more favourable view of Muckross lake than the house commented upon by the anonymous *Description* author, had hoped to receive a peerage as a result of the royal visit, which spend two days in his own home.[18] The Brownes also hosted the Queen for a night, but had long since received their peerage in 1801, rendering 5th Viscount Valentine Browne as Earl of Kenmare, Lord Castleross, and regained ownership of Ross Castle.[19] The Barracks in the castle was destroyed and the site intentionally styled as a medieval ruin, the Earls staying instead in Kenmare House. For both families this period was a peak of their reputation, as the Brownes benefited from Catholic Emancipation and peerage, while Henry Arthur Herbert became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland as an M.P. of the Liberals.

For both families, this was followed by a decline which put the scenery of their estates in peril. The Brownes for a while enjoyed prominence as the religious leaders of the largely Catholic town, organising fundraising for the construction of a Belgian Franciscan Friary in the town – the first since the destruction of Muckross Abbey – and in 1873 constructing a new house and gardens for themselves near the then-new Cathedral, for which they commissioned the ornate pulpit in the early twentieth century. Their fate changed dramatically in 1913 when the new mansion was destroyed in a fire, and while the family would remain owners of their lands from Knockreer house until the 1950s, they would never fully recover from this blow.[20] The decline of the Herberts began earlier, with Henry Arthur's death just five years after the royal visit. Under the ownership of his son, "Harry" Herbert, the house and demesne was rented out for hunting parties and wealthy guests for much of the time. His time of ownership was also one of poor investment, rendering the Herbert family in dire need of money and with the land acts having reduced the viability of rent in the eyes of the gentry, Harry Herbert elected to sell the entire estate on auction.[21] The estates of Kenmare and Herbert were generally looked upon favourably by the residents of Killarney, as the tourism brought work for boatmen and jaunting carts, and the lands were relatively accessible to locals. It was, then, reacted to with some relief when the land was purchased out of auction by a wealthy in-law of the Herberts, Lord Ardilaun of the Guiness family. The series of purchases underwent by either estate are integral to the story of the modern Killarney National Park, as in each occurrence it is seemingly miraculous that the estate was sold wholly intact and the house and park maintained. It was thought that under Ardilaun that Ireland may well receive a national park prior to independence, as he had previously donated St. Stephan's Green to the city of Dublin, but he continued to rent it as a hunting lodge until one of its American visitors showed interest in making an offer.[22]

William Bowers Bourn II was a wealthy mogul who made his money in the San Francisco gold and banking boom, who also came to own much of the city's electrical and water supply.[23] His intense interest in the aesthetic beauty of the old world and a visit to Muckross House led him to not only model his own estate south of San Francisco after the environs, but to purchase it outright as a wedding gift for his Daughter Maude and son-in-law Arthur Rose Vincent, an Anglo-Irish descendant of the Limerick Vincent family. In this period of ownership, the gardens and Muckross would be designed to their present state, and with the support of Bourn, the couple did not require to make the estate profitable, so the environs could be maintained while the estate existed at a loss. This continued until the 1929 death of Maude Bourn-Vincent, after which point Bourn began to desire to sell the estate. Vincent, having grown attached to the estate and not wanting it to be fractured, leveraged his position as Senator in the Irish Free State to convince Bourn to sell the estate to the state.[24] The result of this was the 1932 Bourn-Vincent Memorial Park Act, which established a precedent for state management of a national park. Bourn, a lifelong fan of Yosemite National Park, was particularly enthusiastic for this solution. However, at this time the park was to remain under the control of the commission of public works, like pre-existing city parks, with no new institutions to reflect the novelty of the concept.[25] Ireland would lag behind Western Europe in

[17] *Kerry Evening Post,* July 15, 1854; *Kerry Evening Post*, September 16, 1854.
[18] Bridget Hourican, "Herbert, Henry Arthur," in *Dictionary of Irish Biographies*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).
[19] James Quinn, "Browne, Valentine," in *Dictionary of Irish Biographies*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).
[20] *Irish Times*, 1 September 1913, 5.
[21] "The Herbert Family," Muckross House Research Library, accessed 5 March 2025.
[22] *Kerry Evening Post*, 29 November 1899, 3.
[23] For more on the Bourn family, see Ferrol Egan, *Last Bonanza Kings*, (*University* of Nevada Press, 1998).
[24] "The Bourne Vincent Family," Muckross House Research Library, accessed 5 March 2025.
[25] 10-17, Bourn-Vincent Memorial Park Act, 1932 (Ireland).

establishing a system of national parks, and what was incorporated from Muckross is only one third of the current land of Killarney National Park, the majority still being in the private ownership of the Earldom of Kenmare.

In 1965, Killarney locals such as Dr. Frank Hilliard, founder of the Trustees of Muckross House, voiced concern over the management on the park, and how the area once renowned internationally was, under the Irish state, being managed more as an experimental farm than national park.[26] By this point, the Browne estate had also come into the ownership of Americans: the devoutly catholic McShains. John and Mary McShain married in 1927, Mary coming from significant wealth and John leading the third largest construction company in America, responsible for the construction of much of Washington D.C.'s official buildings. Being Irish-American, the couple brought their racehorse-breeding initiatives to Ireland in 1955 and in 1960 purchased much of the Kenmare estate, including the converted horse block which now served as Killarney House. They resided full-time in Killarney, and in 1973 made the donation of Inisfallen Island and its pre-Norman monastery to the Irish state, along with placing Ross Castle in its custodianship.[27]

Despite being widely reported on as a national park in 1932, Muckross did not properly become such until changes in the 1960s, which hinted at consideration of a larger area than the Bourn-Vincent Park.[28] By 1979, the Killarney National Park began to be realised in full as the majority of the lands held by the McShain family was donated on the condition that it remain a part of the Killarney National Park in perpetuity. In addition, upon Mary's in 1998, the remainder of the estate was included.[29] Thus, Killarney National Park, Ireland's first national park in theory, was a project which progressed slowly throughout the twentieth century and largely relied upon the consolidation of the Browne and Herbert estates in multiple sales and donations. The fame of its scenic beauty began in the eighteenth century and took on a national and celebrity character in the nineteenth. Despite being an object of admiration from monarchs to nationalists, the history of the national parks formation, like much of its visitors, is largely Irish-American. The donations of the Bourn and McShain families forced a reluctant Irish state to embrace the management of an actually existing national park, rather than to be comfortable with its contribution to post-card sales.

[26] *Evening Echo*, 27 April 1965, 8.
[27] Deirdre Bryan, "McShain, Mary," in *Dictionary of Irish Biographies*, (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2009).
[28] *Kerryman*, 19 December 1964.
[29] Jim Dunne, "Killarney house and land donor dies at 91," *Irish Times*, 4 December 1998.

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"Keeping The Faith" – Examining the Nationalist Reaction to The Most Reverend Dr. Daniel Cohalan's Excommunication Decree, December 1920

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"Thou Shalt not Kill"[1] - the sixth commandment and the moral dilemma plaguing the parishes of Ireland from the outset of the War of Independence. No one was more concerned for the moral quality of his 'flock' than The Most Reverend Dr. Daniel Cohalan, Bishop of Cork. A self-proclaimed nationalist, Dr Cohalan rose to national infamy on the advent of his excommunication of IRA soldiers during Sunday morning mass on December 12th, 1920. A censure that would cause "half of the congregation" to walk out in protest.[2] His relationship with republicanism would naturally continue to sour throughout the ensuing Civil War – coming to a bitter crescendo at his refusal to church the body of hunger-striker Denis Barry in 1923.[3]

The Bishop of Cork was the only member of the clergy to issue such a censure against 'physical force' republicans, and in less than savoury timing. The night previous, Cork city had suffered terrible damage at the hands of British forces, who set a series of fires across the city centre in reprisal for a handful of actions carried out by the IRA, including the ambush at Kilmichael and an attack on Auxiliaries at Dillon's Cross earlier that evening.[4] Whilst the remains of Cork City were still smouldering, Bishop Cohalan proceeded to add fuel to the fire of an already contentious relationship between his Lordship and the IRA executive.

What is unique about this decree, among other things, was the reaction to it from civilians and combatants alike. Despite the Catholic majority within the IRA, Dr Cohalan's censure was met with no widespread resignations.[5] Both Dr. Cohalan and his decree of excommunication were met by widespread public condemnation and disregard. This paper will explore the theological and political opposition to Dr. Daniel Cohalan's December excommunication and the effect such opposition had on the membership and support for the IRA.

Bishop Daniel Cohalan was not in principle opposed to Irish independence, and his nationalist tendencies mildly troubled the British government at the advent of his consecration as auxiliary Bishop in 1913.[6] His residential secretary, Fr. Thomas Duggan, recalls, "If Daniel had not been sickled o'er by the pale cast of theological thought, he could have been an IRA man, as ardently patriotic at any".[7] Despite his somewhat nationalistic tendencies, his reputation among supporters and members of the Sinn Fein government before the December 1920 excommunication were already strained. The genealogy of this fracture finds its roots before he assumed his position as the 'full' Bishop of Cork.

His Lordship, in his capacity as Auxiliary Bishop, functioned as an intermediary in negotiations between the Irish Volunteers and the British authorities in Cork during the crisis and confusion of Easter Week, 1916. Auxiliary Bishop Cohalan, in his role as intermediary, juggled genuine concern for the fate of Cork City, his convictions as a Nationalist, and indeed, his own reputation within the city.

Amidst the destruction of Dublin City during Easter week, the British Government was tasked with neutralising the immobilised volunteers outside of the Pale – chiefly in Cork. Dr Daniel Cohalan, alongside Lord Mayor Thomas C. Butterfield, were entrusted with the task of getting MacCurtain's Volunteer Brigade not only to stand down but also relinquish their weapons.[8] The Bishop's deal – (indeed that is how it was perceived by Volunteers), was presented to, and accepted by Tomás MacCurtain in the middle of Easter Week. MacCurtain put the proposal to his men - that the volunteers would not join their comrades in Dublin and that all arms were to be

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[1] Exod. 20:13 (NRSV)

[2] Typescript interview with Michael V. O'Donoughue, Engineer Cork I. Brigade IRA and GAA President 1952-1955, WS1741, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[3] Dáil Éireann Debates, 21 Nov 1923 Vol. 5, No. 14.

[4] Martin Frederick Seedorf, "The Lloyd George Government and the Strickland Report on the Burning of Cork, 1920," *Albion* 4, no. 2 (1972): 59–66, https://doi.org/10.2307/4048122. 60.

[5] Tom Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland* (1949; repr., Cork: Anvil Press, 1981).

[6] Typescript interview with Michael V. O'Donoughue, Engineer Cork I. Brigade IRA and GAA President 1952-1955, WS1741, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[7] Typescript interview with Thomas Duggan, Secretary to Bishop of Cork, WS551, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[8] Typescript interview with Liam de Róiste, Member of Sinn Féin WS1698, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

surrendered to the bishop.[9] In return, there would be no arrests made by the British Government, and the Volunteers' arms would not be confiscated. On the night of the 26th of April 1916, the Cork Volunteers who had paraded in Macroom on Easter Sunday gathered at Volunteer Hall on Sheares Street to hold a private vote on the bishop's proposal. MacCurtain relayed to his men Dr. Cohalan's fears about "Cork being surrounded by the British", and his insistence that they hand in their guns.[10] The vote passed with a reasonable majority, and the arms were handed in to be stored by the Lord Mayor in Hanover Street.[11]

The British Government did not uphold their promises of no arrests and no confiscations. British troops "arrived in force"[12] to raid the Volunteers' weapons store in the immediate aftermath of 1916, and in the weeks following, thousands of arrests took place across the country, including Cork. Although some initial blame for the arrests fell on Terence MacSwiney and Tomás MacCurtain – who many perceived as being too naïve and too trusting of British assurances, some accusing volunteer fingers found Bishop Cohalan. It was at His Lordship's insistence that the Cork Volunteers surrender, and he himself had assured MacSwiney and MacCurtain of the promises made by General Stafford,[13] and many felt as if the volunteers wouldn't have engaged in negotiations at all if not for Bishop Daniel Cohalan's insistence.[14] Indeed, in some later accounts of the aftermath of the events of 1916 in Cork, bishop Daniel Cohalan is 'credited' with immobilising the Cork City Irish Volunteers.[15]

Though the Bishop himself protested these arrests,[16] he was met with the ire of the volunteers, namely Terence MacSwiney, whose wife Muriel recounts "that Terry was very annoyed with him [Bishop Daniel Cohalan] on account of the arrests and would prefer not to see him".[17] MacSwiney's sister Annie recalls the bishop's acute awareness of the reputation loss caused by the post-Easter week fiasco. During the chaos of arrests across Cork City, Annie appealed to the bishop to intervene, stating that it was "a matter in which his honour was at stake." The bishop solemnly responded, "I know it and I am seeing it."[18]

Bishop Dr. Daniel Cohalan did not endear himself to the Sinn Féin loyal in the years after 1916, declaring in July 1917 that "The Sinn Féin party […] is henceforth on its trial", and "so far, there has been no authoritative statement of constructive Sinn Féin policy."[19] His Lordship exhibited further suspicion of Sinn Féín intentions by his reluctance to subscribe to the Dáil Loan, despite personal deputation made to him by Terence MacSwiney.[20] Michael Collins also expressed a series of frustrations at the bishop's lack of support for the Dáil Loan.[21]

Cohalan, like many other members of the clergy, aided Sinn Féin activists in Cork in raising a sum of £23,000 to fight conscription.[22] It is alleged by Connie Francis Neenan that Bishop Cohalan stole the £23,000 after it was determined that conscription was not to be introduced into Ireland.[23] Bishop Cohalan himself stated that he intended to utilise the money entrusted to him to construct a new Cathedral in his diocese.[24] Local Cork folklore suggests that Cohalan would only return the money at the production of a receipt by donors. Despite declaring Terence MacSwiney a divine martyr for the cause of Irish Freedom, and presiding over the Lord Mayor's

[9] Typescript interview with Liam de Róiste, Member of Sinn Féin WS1698, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[10] Typescript interview with Michael Murphy, Commandant Cork IRA 1921, WS1547, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[11] de Róiste, Interview.

[12] Murphy, Interview.

[13] Francis J. Costello, *Enduring the Most, the Life and Death of Terence MacSwiney*, 2nd ed. (Brandon/Mount Eagle, 1996). Pp 67-68.

[14] Typescript interview with Eithe MacSwiney, Sister of Terence MacSwiney, WS119, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[15] O'Donoughue, Interview.

[16] Typescript interview with Muriel MacSwiney, Widow of Terence MacSwiney, WS637, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[17] Muriel MacSwiney, Interview.

[18] Eithe MacSwiney, Interview.

[19] David W Miller, *Church, State, and Nation in Ireland, 1898-1921* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1973). 392.

[20] Letter from Michael Collins to Terence MacSwiney, 9th of April 1920, PR4/3/008, Cork City and County Archives, 32 Great William O'Brien Street, Cork, Ireland.

[21] Costello, *Enduring the Most*, 69.

[22] Connie Francis Neenan Memoirs, Ref. PR7, Cork City and County Archives, 32 Great William O'Brien Street, Cork, Ireland.

[23] *Ibid*.

[24] Irish Catholic Directory and Almanac, 0904359840, Kelly Library, University of Toronto, Joseph Street, Toronto ON M5S 3C2, Canada.

funeral, months previously he told hunger strikers in Cork Gaol, on the 68th day of their hunger strike, "that they were committing suicide and were acting against the teaching of their church"[25].

The December 12th excommunication decree did not appear in a vacuum. Cork County had become the bloody epicentre for violence during the war of Independence, with a substantial portion of the fighting taking place in the bishop's native West Cork. Fr. Duggan notes in his testimony to the Military Archives that the Bishop of Cork was particularly disturbed by the ambush in his hometown of Kilmichael just over two weeks prior to the issue of his censure, and that "it is noteworthy, the fiercest fighting men at Kilmichael were of the bishop's own blood and stock".[26] The Kilmichael ambush, described by Tom Barry himself as "carnage",[27] weighed heavily on the bishop's mind in the weeks leading up to the burning of Cork, as did the other reprisal carried out by the IRA at Dillon's cross the very day before his excommunication decree.

Much ink has already been spilled on the theological[28], personal, and political reasoning behind Bishop Dr. Daniel Cohalan's excommunication decree on December 12th, 1920, and thus will not be discussed at length here.

It is the matter of how the Bishop of Cork's decree that,

> *"Anyone who shall, within this diocese of Cork, organise or take part in an ambush or in kidnapping, or otherwise shall be guilty of murder, or attempted murder, shall incur, by the very fact, the censure of excommunication"*[29]

did not result in any large disruption of IRA activity or support for the organisation. Only two recorded cases exist of officers stepping down on account of the excommunication decree in Cork. Captain Charlie Cotter, Schull Company, 3rd Cork Brigade, recalls the resignation of Paddy O'Neill, 1st Lieutenant, and Jack Whooley, 2nd Lieutenant.[30]

Every other account of IRA morale during the period portrays a steel resolve to continue, despite the genuine fear of the state of their souls. Tom Barry writes in his memoirs that "every active service man in our Brigade continued the fight […] and the IRA practised their religion as before"[31], and Michael O'Donoghue, of the Cork 1st Brigade, states that "on the contrary, city Volunteers steeled themselves".[32] This is not to say that there were not legitimate fears regarding salvation amongst the largely Catholic IRA, as Florence O'Donoghue recounts that "the insensate denunciations of their Bishop and clergy were a source of pain".[33] Many Catholic combatants felt as if they were staring down the barrel of eternal damnation, as Cork IRA Captain Seán Healy expressed his fears at the time regarding "the thought of being deprived of Christian burial, in fact being buried like a dog, for serving our country in her hour of need"[34] Yet, how does it come to pass that a deeply Catholic people ignore the pronouncement of their own bishop without the outright rejection of their faith?

Firstly, the language and content of the excommunication sermon proved unpalatable to nationalists, combatants, and civilians alike. The censure is undoubtedly targeted towards the IRA, although the bishop states his intent to scorn all sides. The mentions of 'ambush,' a tactic idiosyncratic to the IRA of the War of Independence, solidified to the people of Cork that this excommunication was aimed particularly at the Irish Republican Army. In a sermon delivered on the 19th of December – a follow up thematically to the previous week's sermon, Dr. Cohalan doubles down on this line of thinking, calling the ambushes "not very valiant" and suggesting the IRA engage in traditional warfare.[35]

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[25] Text interview with Daniel F. O'Shaughnessey, Irish Volunteers and IRA, Limerick 1921, WS1435, Bureau of Military History, Military Archives, Cathal Brugha, Barracks Rathmines, Dublin 6.

[26] Duggan, Interview.

[27] *Ibid*.

[28] Pádraig Corkery, "Bishop Daniel Cohalan of Cork on Republican Resistance and Hunger Strikes: A Theological Note," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (June 2002): 113–24, https://doi.org/10.1177/002114000206700202.

[29] St. Patrick's College Maynooth., *The Irish Catholic Directory and Almanac for 1922* (Dublin: James Duffy and Co. Ltd., 1922). 503-504.

[30] Cotter, Interview.

[31] Barry, *Guerilla Days in Ireland*, 57.

[32] O'Donoghue, Interview.

[33] Florence O'Donoghue, *No Other Law* (Anvil Books, 1986).

[34] Typescript of Interview with Seán Healy, Captain Cork IRA, 1921, WS1479.

[35] Copy transcription of sermon delivered by Daniel Cohalan, Bishop of Cork, at Masses in the Diocese of Cork regarding the murder of Tomás MacCurtain and violence in Cork, MS 31,148/3, National Library of Ireland 7-8 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

Liam de Róiste writes that the content of the original sermon on December 12th lent itself to the general public interpreting the sermon as a means "to justify the right of the English to rule in Ireland and condemn every action on the part of Irish people to defend themselves or assert their independence"[36] De Róiste notes that this assertion might not necessarily be true, but rather this is the widespread interpretation, and perhaps why it was rejected by the public so wholeheartedly. Indeed, many scorned the bishop for his contribution to British Propaganda, as they believed that Cohalan had fed into the idea that Corkonians had burned their own city, an idea picked up by Westminster and Unionist-aligned newspapers alike.[37] In his December 19th sermon, he asserts that although Cork City itself was destroyed by agents of the British government, it was but a natural consequence of "false teachings of persons who should know better"[38] Those false teachings, per Bishop Cohalan, were the idea that Ireland is a sovereign Independent State, and that the Irish Republican Army, acting in capacity as Irelands official military force had the authority to resist Crown Forces.

News also spread throughout the city that the Bishop of Cork had met with General Strickland that morning, which "infuriated all of Cork".[39] Some, including Liam Lynch, believed that the excommunication had come at the behest of the British Government itself.[40] Florence O'Donoghue recalls Lynch dismissing the excommunication, saying, "Old Cohalan had dinner with Strickland I suppose, before he took the pen in his fist, but nobody minds him now."[41] It, therefore, became easier for the IRA to dismiss Cohalan as an unpatriotic mouthpiece influenced by the British position, and the excommunication as a mere "act of treachery, and most outrageous disloyalty toward his own people".[42]

The Irish Republican Army and the Sinn Féin government were not prepared to wage war with the Catholic Clergy of Ireland but were still steadfast in their reasoning and reassurance as to the legitimacy and morality of their actions. Bishop Daniel Cohalan believed that the proclamation issued by Dáil Éireann in 1918, of an independent and sovereign Irish Republic was not legitimate according to Church teaching, and therefore, the Irish Republican Army's physical force policy was completely unlawful.[43] Naturally, the IRA and its leadership took the opposite view, perhaps outlined best by Seán O'Hegarty and Florrie O'Donoghue in a letter to be sent to Papal Nuncio, Paschal Robinson, written in an attempt to overturn this excommunication. In this document, they outline the legitimacy of ambushing as an act of warfare and their legitimate authority from the Irish republican government.[44] The elements of Irish political power that Bishop Daniel Cohalan might view as 'more legitimate' condemned, or at least partially condemned, the Bishop's December pronouncement. In a meeting of the Cork Corporation Council immediately following the destruction of Cork, J.J. Walsh says that the suffering inflicted on the people of Cork "should have raised the resentment of one in the position of His Lordship,"[45] rather than the condemnation of his own people. The Corporation do not denounce Bishop Cohalan in explicit means, but rather allow, as Lord Mayor Dónal O'Callaghan suggested, "people to do now as they had always done – follow their consciences".[46] The Bandon Rural District Council, perhaps using their own conscience, were more explicit in their condemnation, unanimously passing a vote to protest against the Bishop of Cork and to express their belief that Dáil Éireann had "the right to dictate how Ireland's Army shall carry on the fight for Irish independence".[47]

Although the pronouncements made by the Republican Political institutions proved important in maintaining the morale of the IRA, most soothing and most effective in quenching any republican retreat were the actions and pronouncements made by other Catholic Clergy. This fact appears in the military witness statements of many IRA combatants. Bishop Cohalan's excommunication was built on the Catholic theological concept of the 'Just War' tradition, which ascertains that violence must only occur in extreme circumstances, be

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[36] Entry by Liam de Róiste on December 14th, 1920, Liam de Róiste Diary, 0271/4, Cork City and County Archives, 32 Great William O'Brien Street, Cork, Ireland.

[37] Belfast Newsletter, "Dr. Cohalan's Warning to the Murder Gang," *Belfast Newsletter*, December 14, 1920.

[38] Sermon delivered by Daniel Cohalan, December 19th, 1920.

[39] O'Donoghue, Interview.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Ernie O'Malley, *On Another Man's Wound* (1936; repr., London: Four Square Press, 1961).

[42] Connie Nennan, *Memoirs.*

[43] Daniel Cohalan, "The Bishop of Cork," *Freeman's Journal*, February 7, 1921.

[44] Florence O'Donoghue and Seán O'Hegarty, Draft appeal by Seán O'Hegarty and Florence O'Donoghue to the Most Reverend Paschal Robinson, Papal Nuncio, for cancellation of a decree by the Bishop of Cork, 13 December 1930, MS 31,268, National Library of Ireland 7-8 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

[45] Evening Echo, "Cork Corporation, Meeting of Council," *Evening Echo*, December 13, 1920. 4.

[46] *Ibid.* 4.

[47] Skibbereen Eagle, "Bandon Rural Council," *Skibbereen Eagle*, January 1, 1921. 5.

at the behest of a competent authority, and have a relative chance of success, among other things. Bishop Cohalan believed that Dáil Éireann and the IRA did not possess these factors.[48] The three main crusaders against Cohalan's theological basis for the December 12th Censure were Count George Noble Plunkett, Father Dominic O'Connor, and Professor Alfred O'Rahilly.

Count Plunkett, who obtained his noble title from the Papacy itself, wrote to the bishop immediately following his censure, correcting his Just War Theology. He writes,

"The Divine Justice is not directed against the men who fight for the rights He gave their Nation, but against the Pagan rulers of a foreign nation who deny Ireland's liberty by brute force"[49]

Indeed, this is a point developed on by Capuchin Father Dominic, (Terence MacSwiney's confessor and casual chaplain to the IRA), in a letter dated 15th December 1920, addressed to Brigade Adjutant, Cork no. 1 Brigade, Florence O'Donoghue. In the text, Father Dominic explains briefly the theology behind the Bishop of Cork's excommunication decree. He notes that the IRA might ordinarily be excommunicated for the grave sins outlined by the bishop in his sermons, but the IRA is carrying out such acts "with the authority of the State – the Republic of Ireland", and that such acts are not only permissible under these circumstances, but "moreover a right and duty", and "good and meritorious". He also encourages O'Donoghue to "let the boys keep going to mass and confession and communion as usual".[50] It is worth noting that the decree of excommunication did not stop IRA men from attending Catholic mass and receiving Catholic sacraments as they did before, as most witness testimony from practising Catholic combatants recalls that very few priests were willing to deny them communion or confession.

Finally, the most damming critic of His Lordship's decree was Professor Alfred O'Rahilly of UCC, whose theological prowess proved to be the ideal remedy for the worried souls of the Cork Bishopric. Perhaps also damning to Bishop Dr. Daniel Cohalan was his rather one-sided public feud with O'Rahilly. O'Rahilly, a member of the Cork Corporation and Registrar of UCC, was not only an accomplished theologian and mathematician but also a respected member of the Cork Community. O'Rahilly had previously outlined the moral justifications for the Irish resistance to British Rule in Ireland, in his essay, "Some Theology about Tyranny", published in October of 1920. Drawing much on Scholastic philosophy and theology, Professor O'Rahilly details the necessity for resistance when "oppression becomes intolerable", and "the natural right of self-defence inherent in every community"[51] He also criticises the rigid standards that have become part of the Just War tradition, especially noting the difficulty to ascertain what an outcome of success means, and what exactly a mandate for revolt pertains to in this context.[52] It is important to note that O'Rahilly is not a proponent of physical force nationalism, nor does he make any reference to the contemporary situation in Ireland. His public feud with Cohalan began in December of 1920, when Cohalan referred to Alfred O'Rahilly as Cork Corporation's "lay theologian".[53] This resulted in a public letter published a week later by O'Rahilly in the Independent, in which he rejects the "very serious libel on my [his] character".[54] This public spat not only drew attention to the critical reception of Bishop Cohalan's Just War theology but also further added marks against his very character. George Gavan Duffy refutes any legitimacy of Cohalan's excommunication to Monsignor Ceretti, Undersecretary of State to the Vatican by detailing strongly "on that gentlemen's erratic character, as shown by his [Bishop Cohalan's] public acts, his attack on O'Rahilly etc."[55] Liam de Róiste records the utter confoundment his pronouncements, especially those made against O'Rahilly were met with in Cork.[56]

In conclusion, Bishop Dr. Daniel Cohalan's decree of excommunication was met not with mass panic or retreat, but in such a solemn, silent, and certain promise from the people of Cork to continue their fight for Independence. His own parishioners made it clear their faith was in the IRA and the Church, but not him, whose reputation had taken succinct and severe hits before and during the chaos of the censure. This is a point illustrated by the

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[48] Corkery, "Bishop Daniel Cohalan of Cork on Republican Resistance and Hunger Strikes", 117.

[49] Letter from Count George Noble Plunkett to Daniel Cohalan, December 13th 1920, MS 11,408/8, National Library of Ireland, 7-8 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

[50] Letter from Father Dominic O'Connor to Florence O'Donoghue, December 15th, 1920, MS 31,170, National Library of Ireland, 7-8 Kildare Street, Dublin 2.

[51] Alfred O'Rahilly, "Some Theology about Tyranny," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 15 (1920). 301-307.

[52] *Ibid.* 310 -312.

[53] Cohalan, December 19th Sermon.

[54] O'Rahilly, Alfred. "An Explanation Called for - the Bishop of Cork and a Layman's Character." *Irish Independent*, December 28, 1920.

[55] Royal Irish Academy , "Documents on Irish Foreign Policy - Volume 1," Documents on Irish Foreign Policy, February 12, 2020, https://www.difp.ie/volume-1/1921/vatican/53/#section-documentpage.

[56] de Róiste, Diaries.

continuous mass walkouts whilst their bishop made his political proclamations and their mass walk-ins when such anti-patriotic homilies were finished. The IRA, guided by their own political convictions, and the careful shepherding of certain theologians – laymen or ordained priests alike kept their promises to their faith and to their republic all the same. In this, the first Church-State conflict of a self-governing Ireland, the State, by keeping the faith in themselves and in the Church as a larger body, won.

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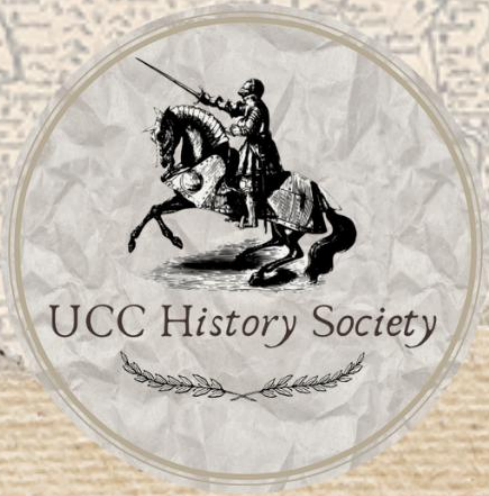
This Issue of the UCC Student History Journal is dedicated to "Becky Histsoc".

Mise Éire:
Vaignighe mé ioná an Chailleach Béarra.

Pádraig Anraí Mac Piarais, 1912.



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