

Erin Go Bragh: How Irish Independence Shaped the Modern World and the Legacy of the
1916 Easter Uprising

A Thesis

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the

Degree of Master of Arts

with a

Major in History

in the

College of Graduate Studies

University of Idaho

by

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June 2016

Authorization to Submit Thesis

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Abstract

The dawn of the 20th century saw twelve empires and nations holding sway over the majority of the Earth's lands and people. Those who lived within them would not believe that in just fifty years, all of these empires would be extinct. The event which set this new world in motion was the Easter Rising of April 24th to the 29th 1916 in Dublin, Ireland. While an initial failure, the Easter Rising and subsequent Irish independence within five years showed the colonial peoples of the world that they could achieve independence from their masters. However, the legacy of the Easter Rising has been analyzed and questioned over the past century. Over the course of this thesis, I will present, analyze, and show that Irish independence influenced the modern world and how its legacy has casted a long shadow over independence politics to this day.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Sean Quinlan, as well as Robert Caisley for accepting my request to be a part of my committee, the University of Idaho, the History Department and donors for the Graduate Student Grant, for which I was able to complete this thesis, my colleagues in the M.A. in History program for reading and proofing my thesis, my maternal grandmother for discovering my relation to Michael Collins, and Dr. Richard Spence, for putting up with my constant changing of topic as well as providing some valuable sources and points of interest for delving into along the way.

Dedication

To my loving wife for putting up with my early mornings, and to my little monster, who made this worth every sleepless night.

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Introduction

“Self-government is our right, a thing born to us at birth; a thing no more to be doled out to us by another people than the right to life itself; then the right to feel the sun or smell the flowers or to love our kind.” -Sir Roger Casement¹

Noon, Easter Monday, Dublin, 1916. In front of the General Post Office and to a crowd of onlookers, Patrick Henry Pearse read aloud from a proclamation establishing an independent Irish Republic. While the crowd would eventually disperse due to boredom, an important moment in the history of the world transpired that day. In the following week, Pearse and his compatriots would fight the British forces sent to quash their uprising, and without a shipment of captured Russian rifles from the Germans, would lose. Pearse and fifteen others would be executed by firing squad by the order of General William Blackadder. Martyrs all, within five years, Ireland would be free.

The important question of the Easter Rising has to be “que bono” -- who benefits? At first glance, no one. The rebels were poorly armed with outdated German rifles and summarily defeated by superior forces. However, the Irish uprising of 1916, a sideshow of the Great War, would have profound effects upon the intelligentsia of colonies around the globe, and upon revolutionaries planning their own risings. The independence of Ireland proved that colonies could become free from their imperial masters.

Over the course of research, the goal is to show the origins of Irish nationalism and how the decision to rebel around Easter 1916 came to pass. The elements of the conspiracy leading to the events of April 24-29, 1916 will be explored. The aftermath and its effects on

¹ AZ Quotes, “Sir Roger Casement”, accessed February 19, 2016.
http://www.azquotes.com/author/24388-Roger_Casement

the world will provide the path for future revolutionaries to follow, particularly that of Ho Chi Minh. Additionally, the legacy of the Easter Rising and its shadow over modern Irish politics will be looked at, particularly the events following the 50th anniversary. Some current commentators propose that the jubilee spirit of the celebration of fifty years since 1916 contributed to the Troubles and some accuse the modern Irish government of downplaying the importance of this moment in the struggle for independence. It is the equivalent of downplaying Lexington and Concord, and Bunker Hill in American history.

The argument has been made that Ireland's method of independence established a precedent for achieving it for other nations. What isn't explored is the effort which outside powers played in setting the stage for these event to transpire, whether it was their intention or not. The main event that instigated the independence of Ireland has been heavily scrutinized over the past one hundred years, from the British government to even the Irish political system so understanding how it became this way, as well as looking at the backlash against this unpopular view by some elements of Irish society, may give us insight into preventing such changes from happening to other histories.

Chapter One: A History of Woe

The history of Ireland up to the English conquest and thereafter, is a peculiar and tragic one. Unlike neighboring Britain, Ireland was never conquered by the Romans, much like western Wales and Scotland. It held an allure of mystery about it. Julius Caesar was the first Roman to describe the island in his campaigns of Gaul and he named it *Hibernia*.

Claudius Ptolemy provided the first map of Ireland to the Latin World in his *Geography*.²



Figure 1.1: Ptolemy's Map of Britain and Hibernia

With the fall of Roman Britain in the 5th century, Irish raiders swept western Scotland, England, and the whole of Wales and Cornwall. Most of these raids were for slaves; among those taken was the future St. Patrick. After his escape six years post enslavement, Patrick, or Patricius, converted to Christianity and was inspired to return to the land that enslaved him. Instead of the straight-laced Roman Catholicism of the continent,

² See Figure 1.1

Patrick infused his preaching with that of the local culture, such as changing the Celtic goddess Brigit to Saint Brigid³ and incorporating Celtic designs into Christian art. Thus his innovations created a unique branch of Catholicism informally called Celtic Christianity. Another key to Patrick's success was that he converted local chiefs and kings, using these public baptisms to bring about more converts.

After his passing, Patrick's teachings struck cords with some of the converts who created Irish monastic orders and traditions. They traveled to Britain and converted the Picts, and went to mainland Europe. These monks transcribed Latin texts to preserve the knowledge of the past. In a way, the Irish had a hand in saving civilization -- not through conquest, but through the preservation of holy works and classics, earning the nickname "the isle of saints and scholars."⁴

Sadly, it was not to last. After the coronation of Charlemagne in 800 CE, the first raids of Irish monasteries by Vikings occurred, culminated by the founding of the Norwegian Kingdom of Dublin in the mid-9th century, as well as the other major coastal cities on eastern and southern Ireland. The Vikings would do much damage to the Irish nation and learned communities; many monks were killed, their monasteries were burned, and their treasured works were torn up or destroyed. By the time of the Norman conquest of England in 1066, the Vikings had settled down and adopted Ireland as their new home, but there was no real unity, not like that in the time of Patrick and the High Kings of Tara.

In 1169, Englishmen went to Ireland with the intent of aiding the deposed king of Leinster, Dermot MacMurrough. Additional reinforcements arrived the following year, led

³ Youtube, "Irish History in Six Minutes," accessed February 19, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WIo3vHmWjI8>.

⁴ Youtube.

by Richard de Clare ‘Strongbow’, Earl of Pembroke. He married Dermot’s daughter and succeeded him in 1171.⁵ Henry II’s response was swift; he led an expedition the following October and established the Royal Lordship of Ireland. English and Irish relations were relatively calm for the next four and a half centuries, with the English monarchs ruling from afar and the anglicized Irish families ruling in their stead.

Most of England’s rule was within a region known as the Pale: an area “consisted of the coastal region from Dundalk to Dalkey, plus portions of the counties of Dublin, Meath, Louth, and Kildare.”⁶⁷ However, some of the nobility in England were worried that the English lords in Ireland were going native. In 1366, the Statutes of Kilkenny were passed which banned Englishmen from marrying into Irish families and forbade them from speaking Gaelic, among other damaging laws. The Statutes of Kilkenny were the first of the many anti-Irish laws passed and while they ultimately failed, the statutes did foster the idea that the Irish and English in Ireland were two separate peoples.

⁵ The National Archives, “Uniting the Kingdoms? 1066-1603: The Conquest of Ireland, 1169-72,” accessed February 19, 2016, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/utk/ireland/conquest.htm>

⁶ The National Archives.

⁷ See Figure 1.2

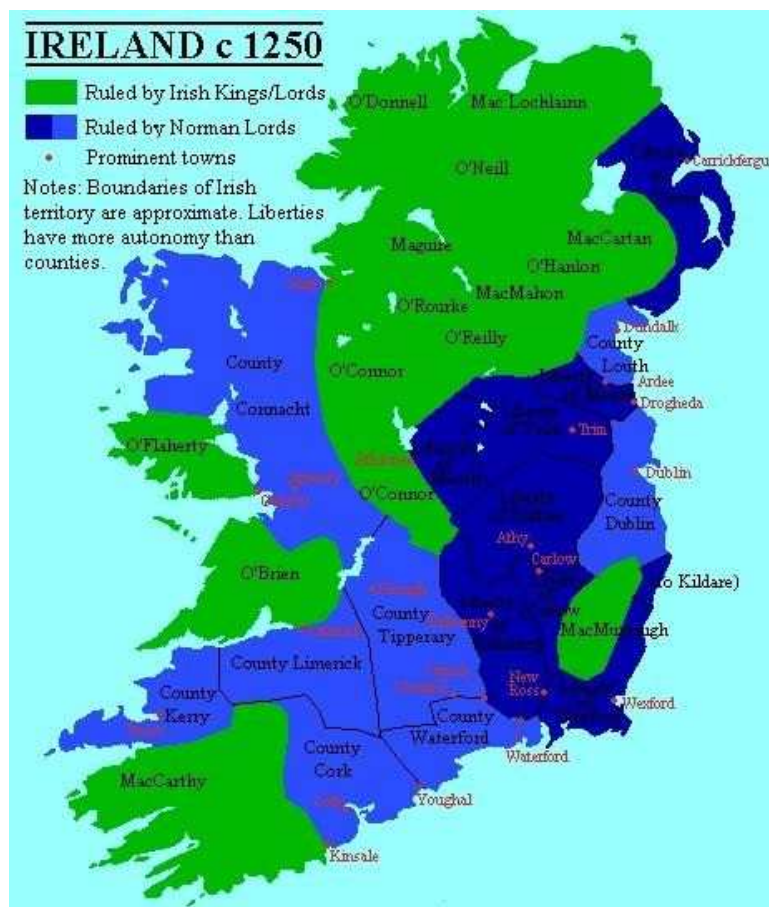


Figure 1.2-The Irish Pale under English Rule

The ascension of Henry VIII and his separation from the Catholic Church further changed how Ireland was viewed and treated by the English. The new head of the English Church stripped the Irish Catholic religious class of their lands, wealth, and position. Henry's daughters, Queens Mary and Elizabeth I, attempted to establish plantations in Ireland in the 1550s and 1590s, in Offaly, Laois, and Munster respectively. These would fail, in part, due to the unruliness of the native Irish.

Numerous Irish nobles, Hugh O'Donnell, Hugh O'Neill, and Grace O'Malley among others, resisted English rule for as long as possible. Grace O'Malley, who ruled the west coast of Ireland, was able to talk to Elizabeth as an equal, but there was no peace in Ireland

while the Tudors ruled. O'Donnell and O'Neill, two of the last chieftains in Ireland, fought the Nine Years War against Elizabeth's forces in Ulster from 1594 to 1603, where they surrendered to the Tudor forces without knowledge of the death of Elizabeth I. Under James I, the two men were pardoned and made earls. However, the "Two Hughs" were angered by the amount of land taken from them by these appointments and they left in 1607 with the promise to return with an army to free Ireland. They never returned, and with the loss of O'Donnell and O'Neill, Ireland was ripe for the taking. James I was the first English king to establish plantations in Ulster, which were the most successful of the settlements and began the path of turning Ulster into a Protestant stronghold.

The English Civil Wars had a devastating consequence for Ireland. When Oliver Cromwell took over in 1649 as Lord Protector, his Puritan forces set about a brutal campaign against the Irish. Massacres were standard operating procedure and the Catholics were told to go "to Hell or Connaught."⁸ Many of those who survived were forcibly removed from their homeland and settled in the English Caribbean. One-fifth to a quarter of the population at the time --approximately 500,000-- were killed during this bloodthirsty campaign, with just as many shipped away under the pretense of 'indentured servitude'. Under the law of unintended consequences, Oliver Cromwell's campaign of violence, murder, and exodus would plant the seeds of Irish nationalism. It also sharply divided the populace and established nationality lines. If you were Protestant, you were likely English. If you were Catholic, you were likely Irish or Gaelic English.

⁸ William Weir, *Fifty Battles that Changed History*, (New York: Barnes & Noble, 2004), 105-106.

However, there were attempts to quell the restlessness of the Irish by the English. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688 and the Battle of the Boyne in 1690,⁹ William III of Orange gave the Irish back the lands seized by the government over the past century in the Treaty of Limerick in 1691.¹⁰ However, this attempt was shot down by Parliament and the Penal Laws were brought into effect over Ireland in 1695. Under these new laws:¹¹

- Catholicism was outlawed and practicing the religion was forbidden.
- Catholic priests were forbidden from stepping foot in Ireland under pain of death.
- Catholics couldn't own property worth more than five pounds and Protestants could buy valuable property for just five pounds, even if the Catholic owner didn't wish to sell it.

While Ireland was granted its own parliament, only male, well-to-do Protestants could vote or become Members of Parliament, or MPs. For the time being, the Catholics festered their resentment and hatred of the Protestants, while the Protestants held contempt for the Irish parliament's limited power. Much political and philosophical discussion on their mistreatment was a keystone of Irish thinking during the Enlightenment. Jonathan Swift, author of *Gulliver's Travels* and an Irish expat, asked in his Drapier's Letters,

“Were not the people of Ireland born as free as those of England? How have they forfeited their freedom? Is not their Parliament as fair a representative of the people as that of England?”¹²

In 1791, Theobald Wolfe Tone, an Irish thinker and the father of Irish republicanism, answered in his *Argument on Behalf of Catholics in Ireland*:

⁹ “Irish History in Six Minutes.”

¹⁰ *ibid*

¹¹ Weir, *Fifty Battles*, 105-106.

¹² Project Gutenberg, “The Prose of Johnathan Swift, Vol. VI: The Drapier's Letters,” accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/12784/12784-8.txt>.

“We are free in theory, but slaves in fact. When high prerogatives was tumbled to the ground, gentle influence succeeded, and with infinitely less noise and bustle, retains us in our bonds. Before 1782, England bound us by her edict; it was and odious and not a very safe exertion of power; *but it cost us nothing*. Since 1782, we are bound by English influence, acting through our own Parliament; we cannot in justice accuse her, for she is only to be traced by the mischief she silently and secretly distributes; but our suffering is aggravated by this galling circumstance, that we purchase restriction of trade, and invasion of constitution, at a very dear rate.”¹³

The American and French Revolutions had a defined impact of the Irish, as they saw that people could in fact rise up and defeat their masters, and claiming independence and a new government. Following their example, Wolfe Tone led a revolt against English rule in 1798, acting as a “lightning conductor” and “bringing together ideas about liberty, independence, and popular sovereignty and applying them to the Irish situation.”¹⁴

Unfortunately, his revolt failed and he would die in prison in 1798. However, despite his own limitations and self-criticism, Wolfe Tone’s “commitment to democracy was genuine and profound.” His legacy was that of the United Irishmen and their successors in the Irish Republican Brotherhood, with the goal of an independent and secular Irish republic in mind.

However, the movement was undermined by the Act of Union in 1799-1800, which disbanded the Irish Parliament and sent the Irish MPs to London. From this time to about the middle of the century, many wealthy Englishmen set up massive estates and built grand manors across the Irish countryside. Along with this move, Dublin had many of its important buildings built, including the General Post Office in 1818 (a building that will be important for the Easter Rising). With the Act of Union, the promise of Catholic emancipation was an important focal point for Irish republicanism, and it drew many supporters and advocates.

¹³ Ucc.ie “An Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland,” accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/published/E790002/index.html>.

¹⁴ Irish Philosophy, “Wolfe Tone’s Argument on Behalf of the Catholics of Ireland,” last modified June 20, 2013, accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.irishphilosophy.com/2013/06/20/wolfe-tone/>.

Among them was Daniel O’Connell, who formed the Catholic Association and used any and all legal means to secure emancipation.¹⁵ He was overwhelmingly elected to represent Clare in 1828 thanks in part to support from Catholic clergy (and their influence on the poor), as well as the forty-shilling freeholders.¹⁶ With his election, the whole country was aflame with support for emancipation. The British Government granted it in April 1829, and O’Connell was deemed the undisputed, unofficial leader of Ireland. His second movement, the repeal of the Act of Union, failed to gain traction, and O’Connell would leave Ireland for Genoa due to his failing health. He died in May 1847, four months after he left his seat in the House of Commons and had given “a touching speech in the House of Commons in which he appealed for aid for his country.”¹⁷

The aid that O’Connell appealed for was relief for the Great Potato Blight, or Famine, of 1845-1852. By the time the Blight began, one-third of the Irish population was wholly dependent on the potato for substance. Most of the populace were tenant farmers, living and working on huge estates owned by mostly absentee landlords. These landlords had agents and Protestant middlemen running their estates while they (the landlords) lived in London. The Irish tenants lived on these farms at-will, and could be evicted on a whim by the landlord, his agents, or his middlemen. The Irish, unable to know which day they would be evicted, never improved their housing and tended to live in dirt huts: windowless, with a

¹⁵ While O’Connell had agreed and approved of the principles of the United Irishmen in regards to emancipation, he disagreed with their methods.

¹⁶ Clare County Library, “Daniel O’Connell (1775-1847),” accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.clarelibrary.ie/eolas/coclare/people/daniel.htm>.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

single room and no chimney.¹⁸ The state of the Irish was so desolate that the French sociologist, Gustave de Beaumont, remarked:

“I have seen the Indian in his forests and the Negro in his chains, and thought, as I contemplated their pitiable condition, that I saw the very extreme of human wretchedness; but I did not then know the condition of unfortunate Ireland. . . In all countries, more or less, paupers may be discovered; but an entire nation of paupers is what was never seen until it was shown in Ireland.”¹⁹

When the Blight began in October 1845, the British Prime Minister, Sir Robert Peel, organized a scientific commission to examine the problem. Meanwhile, other theories persisted about the cause of the blight, but the most damning was that of religious-minded social reformers in England, who “viewed the blight as a heaven-sent ‘blessing’ that would finally provide an opportunity to transform Ireland, ending the cycle of poverty resulting from the people’s mistaken dependence on the potato.”²⁰ Peel, understanding that the blight would result in mass starvation, pushed for the repeal of the Corn Laws in order to supplement potatoes with grains for the at-risk Irish population.

However, despite his best efforts--including buying two ships full of Indian corn out of his own pocket for distribution-- starvation set in, as the relief effort led by Charles Edward Trevelyan refused to supply the population with much needed foodstuff. Sir Robert Peel resigned as Prime Minister after his Conservative government fell from power after the backlash of the Corn Laws repeal.²¹ He was replaced by Trevelyan and a Liberal government. Trevelyan ordered the closing of the food depots across the country, as his

¹⁸ The History Place, “Irish Potato Famine: Introduction,” accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/introduction.htm>.

¹⁹ The History Place, “Irish Potato Famine: Before the Famine,” accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/before.htm>.

²⁰ The History Place, “Irish Potato Famine: The Blight Begins,” accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/begins.htm>.

²¹ The History Place, “Irish Potato Famine: The Great Hunger,” accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/hunger.htm>.

laissez-faire principles insisted that the Irish would become “habitually dependent” on the British government, even after the end of famine. Trevelyan insisted that private entities provide relief for the populace. This proved disastrous as low wages, irregular paydays, and lack of efficient distribution led to many people dying and food riots ensued as homegrown crops were shipped off to England. The winter of 1846-47 was the worst in living memory as houses were buried up to the roof with snow, and the poor of Ireland, having sold everything of value in order to avoid eviction, had to listen to the hungry cries of their starving children. Even the public relief projects that were started in 1846 and 1847 did little to alleviate the hunger of the population. Many would die from associated diseases such as “typhus, dysentery, relapsing fever and famine dropsy, in an era when doctors were unable to provide any cure.”²²

The utter disregard to the plight of the Irish led to Prime Minister John Russell attempting to relieve the starvation by free soup, provided through charity soup kitchens in 1847.²³ However, even this didn’t stop further deaths. The landlords, in a desperate bid to get some worth out of their lands after accumulating massive debts, began to forcibly evict their tenants. Those who left ahead of the evictions begged their way to Britain, where the sight of them --emaciated, diseased, and half-naked-- infuriated many in Parliament.²⁴ The government blamed the landlords for causing the famine and forced them to provide relief out of their own pockets. However, a financial crash in 1847 led to no money being available to relieve Ireland. In response, the government set up boards to collect revenue to pay for relief. When this failed, the British Government turned up the pressure on the boards

²² *Ibid*

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ The History Place, “Irish Potato Famine: Financial Ruin,” accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/ruin.htm>.

to collect their taxes by any means necessary. These cruel methods, including seizing the remaining livestock, any furniture, or valuables, left many of the remaining farmers homeless and wandering the countryside since the workhouses already in place were filled to capacity. Angry and starving, many of the evicted farmers turned to violence against their landlords, killing a number of them. A number of Irish, members of an underground movement called Young Ireland, attempted to start an insurrection that year, but it was swiftly dismantled by the government.

Alarmed by the violence, the British government sent in troops to maintain order, even suspending the right of *habeas corpus*²⁵. Many Irish found in rebellion against London were sent to the penal colonies in Australia throughout 1848. The winter that year was the worst of them all and is immortalized as the “long night of sorrow.” Still, the British government passed harsher measures against the population. For their part, the Irish were not idle in waiting for death. The potato disaster of 1848 sparked a new exodus to America, where one million Irish left their homeland for the United States, while some men and boys committed crimes in order to be shipped to penal colonies to at least get a decent meal.²⁶ Ireland’s population would never truly recover the losses it felt during the famine and the subsequent exoduses.²⁷

²⁵ “Show the corpse” in Latin.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ See Figure 1.2



Figure 1.2: "A Terrible Record" political cartoon

After the first successful harvest of potatoes in 1849, the Great Potato Famine was considered over; however, hunger would still remain a problem in Ireland in the immediate years following the blight.²⁸ The bankruptcies of the landlords continued to see the forced eviction of families in order to cover the debts and an additional 50,000 families were forced from their petty homes in the five years following the Famine.²⁹ Most important of all, the failure of the government to combat starvation and disease opened the eyes of many Irish. To them, the British government and the Union was a death sentence. In many ways, the Great Potato Famine was the pivotal moment in the history of Ireland; her own Stamp Act. With the 1848 rebellion's failure, the Young Ireland movement fled westward and eventually morphed into the Fenian Brotherhood. Others, such as James Stephens, stayed in hiding and

²⁸ The History Place, "Irish Potato Famine: After the Famine," accessed February 21, 2016, <http://www.historyplace.com/worldhistory/famine/after.htm>.

²⁹ *ibid*

formed the Irish Republican Brotherhood or IRB.³⁰ These two organizations would be the beginning of the modern Irish nationalism, and the IRB would play a key role in securing independence.

³⁰ *Ibid*

Chapter Two: The Path to the Rising

While Germany, Great Britain, and the other empires were focused on other areas of the world, Ireland began to change. The failure of the British government to respond to the Great Potato Blight caused many of those remaining on the Emerald Island to demand change. In their mind, it was the fault of Parliament and not an economic philosophy that caused the deaths and subsequent diaspora.³¹

The failure of the Irish Revolution of 1848 had not have brought about the desired results. Many of the leaders and members of the revolt, most notably John Mitchel of the Young Irishmen, were exiled or given commuted death sentences.³² One of those believed dead after the revolution was James Stephens, whose obituary was printed on August 19, 1848 in the *Kilkenny Moderator*.³³

“Poor James Stephens who followed Smith O’Brien to the field, has died of a wound which he received at Ballingarry whilst acting as aide-de-camp to the insurgent leader. Mr. Stephens was a very amiable, apart from politics, a most inoffensive young man, possessed of a great deal of talent, and we believe he was a most excellent son and brother. His untimely and melancholy fate will be much regretted by a numerous circle of friends.”³⁴

However, Stephens had instead fled abroad to escape persecution by the British government. After spending some time among the French republicans following this flight, James Stephens returned to Ireland in 1856 disguised as a beggar³⁵ where he set about

³¹ Alan J. Ward, *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism*, (Arlington Height, IL: AHM Publishing Company, 1980), 39.

³² *Ibid*, 50-51.

³³ Irishidentity.com, “James Stephens: The Kilkenny rebel and Fenian leader,” accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.irishidentity.com/stories/stephens.htm>.

³⁴ *Ibid*.

³⁵ Multitext.ucc.ie, “James Stephens,” accessed March 1, 2016, http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/James_Stephens.

founding the most important organization in the modern Irish independence movement: the Irish Republican Brotherhood, or IRB.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood was founded in 1858 by Stephens and others in Dublin.³⁶ John O'Mahony in New York City founded the Fenian Brotherhood, or FB, the American branch of Irish nationalism.³⁷ Both organizations believe in the use of force and violence in achieving Irish independence. Interestingly enough, Stephens and O'Mahoney knew each other from their time in Paris and both men formed their core ideological beliefs during this time. Both men also participated in the reaction against Louis Napoleon's overthrow of the Second French Republic in late 1851.³⁸ This involvement in the street fighting as well as study of revolutionary secret societies shaped how Stephens and O'Mahoney formed and ran the IRB and the FB respectively.

Both organizations were separate in their goals, but united in their ideas. The Fenian Brotherhood was able to operate openly in the United States and was able to draw more members through the post-famine Irish diaspora than the IRB, which had to operate in secret.³⁹ However, both organizations were able to consolidate through a massive public campaign to return the body of Terence McManus, a minor figure of the 1848 uprising, to native Ireland in 1861.⁴⁰ This reawakened nationalist fervor in millions of Irish Americans and native Irish cemented the two organizations under one banner. This consolidation across

³⁶ Fenians.org, "From Rebels to Revolutionaries: a brief history of the founding of the Fenians and the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in Ireland and the United States, March 17, 1858 by Peter Vronsky," accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.fenians.org/fenianbrotherhood.htm>.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Ward, *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism*, 52.

⁴⁰ Fenians.org

two continents, at first, created the first transcontinental national insurgent group in the western world.⁴¹

Another important factor to the success of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and Fenian Brotherhood was its divorce from the Catholic Church's influence on their lives. Despite many of the revolutionaries, with few exceptions, were devout Catholics, the church did not agree with the need for secrecy or the IRB and FB's influence on the poor strata.⁴² Additionally, the nationalists could find few priests that they could trust with knowledge of their membership. Nevertheless, the Fenians⁴³ were demonized by Victorian society as a "fanatical religious terrorist movement" with alleged links going to the Vatican.⁴⁴

Over one hundred thousand Irish Americans became Fenians after the Civil War and many went to Ireland in order to prepare for an uprising.⁴⁵ However, despite high anti-British feelings in the years following the Civil War, the British government was able to operate in a capacity that allowed it to stall any uprisings by arresting veterans when they came to Ireland, thanks to agents on both sides of the Atlantic.⁴⁶ In 1866, James Stephens was arrested but he fled to the United States following his escape.⁴⁷ Among the seven hundred arrested was James Devoy, one of the planners of the Easter Rising.⁴⁸ In early 1867, the planned uprising came and went, failing to even hold any of its gains and seeing many of

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² *The Easter Rising*, 52-53.

⁴³ A term used by both the IRB and the FB

⁴⁴ Fenians.org

⁴⁵ *The Easter Rising*, 53.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

its participants arrested, although none were killed; the British government didn't want to create martyrs for the Fenian cause.⁴⁹

However, in a separate incident known as the Manchester Outrages, where a large number of Fenians attacked a police convoy transporting Thomas Kelly and Timothy Deasey on September 18, 1867. The two men were leaders in the Irish Republican Brotherhood and they had been arrested in Manchester on charges of vagrancy.⁵⁰ While both men were freed and successfully eluded authorities, the attack resulted in the death of Police Sergeant Charles Brett and two others being wounded. In the following trials where forty-one men were charged in participating in the attack, three were sentenced to death for the slaying of Brett: William Allen, Michael Larkin, and Michael O'Brien.⁵¹ These three men would become the first martyrs of the Irish independence movement and whose deaths were absent from the British following the Easter Rising of 1916.

Despite the Fenian Uprising of 1867 failing and fifteen hundred participants arrested, the FB was able to conduct a number of raids into Canada in 1868, 1870, and 1871. All of these raids were repealed by the Canadian government.⁵² Unfortunately for the Fenian Brotherhood, the raids would be its undoing. The US government, along with the American Catholic Church, began to crack down on Fenian cells.⁵³ The IRB went further underground. James Stephens, who had a hard falling out with John O'Mahoney, suffered irreparable

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Manchester Family History Research, "The Prison Records of the Manchester Martyrs and Their Associates and Other Relative Matters," accessed March 1, 2016, http://www.manchester-family-history-research.co.uk/new_page_17.htm.

⁵¹ Irishtimes.com, "Breaking the Silence on the Manchester Martyrs," last updated November 23, 2014, accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.irishtimes.com/culture/books/breaking-the-silence-on-the-manchester-martyrs-1.2012001>.

⁵² *The Easter Rising*, 53-54.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 54.

damage with the failure of the March 1867 uprising and the leadership of the IRB ousted him.

On the official side, those in Irish politics who sought peaceful means to achieve independence found their man in Isaac Butt, a Protestant Irish MP.⁵⁴ A lawyer by training, Butt made a name for himself defending Fenians after the failed uprising of 1867 and this led to his election. Unlike O'Connell, who advocated for the repeal of the Act of Union, Butt argued for home rule. This move would allow for Ireland to have its own parliament that was subordinate to the London Parliament. Part of this came from Butt's belief that Ireland had been badly ruled by the powers in London.⁵⁵ The other came from his observations as a member of the Conservative party, where he saw the damage done to prosperity and stability in Ireland due to the absentee landlords.⁵⁶ Butt used the techniques of O'Connell and organized the Irish Home Government Association in May 1870.⁵⁷ Many of the disparate Irish groups were drawn to the organization despite the variety of contrasts between them all.

Despite Butt's original intention of the movement being a pressure group rather than a political party, it evolved into such a movement by the elections of 1874. Thanks in part to the Secret Ballot Act, which allowed voters to vote in secret and the failure of the Liberals to satisfy the Catholics,⁵⁸ the Irish Parliamentary Party had fifty-nine MPs elected in 1874.⁵⁹ However, Butt was not able to do much more for the movement that he had established. The Conservative majority in Parliament made any attempts at home rule hardly worth the

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 39.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*.

⁵⁷ Historyhome.co.uk, "Isaac Butt and the Home Rule Party," accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/ireland/butt.htm>.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*.

⁵⁹ *The Easter Rising*, 39

trouble. Additionally, Butt had to spend more time outside of Parliament than in it, due to the need to practice law in order to pay off his debts.⁶⁰ This absence, along with a radical faction that acted independent of Butt's leadership, led to the rise of Charles Stewart Parnell, a charismatic MP elected for Meath in 1875.

Parnell eventually took over leadership of the Home Rule Confederation of Great Britain in 1877 and eventually leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party in 1880. More importantly, Parnell transformed the party from a single issue movement to one that was linked with land reform in Ireland.⁶¹ Many Irish tenant farmers made little improvements to their homes and the land that they farmed due to the risk of increased rent due to the landlord owning any improvements.⁶² Furthermore, when Parliament failed to pass the Compensation for Disturbances Bill, which would have the government compensate tenants who were evicted from their homes through non-payment of rent, Parnell went of the offensive. He organized the Land League, an organization that he founded in 1879 to push for reforms on tenant farmer rights, to encourage tenants to refuse payment of rent, resisting evictions, and attacking land agents. Additionally, anything owned by English was to be destroyed, burned, killed in the case of livestock, or attack in the case of people.⁶³

To get the Irish to back down from their behavior, Gladstone's government pushed for the 1881 Land Act, which would meet most of Parnell's, and the Land League's, demands. The Land Act gave the "Three F's", which were:

⁶⁰ Historyhome.co.uk "Isaac Butt."

⁶¹ *The Easter Rising*, 40.

⁶² A similar issue happened in the Russian Empire following the emancipation of the serfs in 1863. Instead of increased rent though, the Russian peasants would lose farming land to his neighbor who had more children than him.

⁶³ Historyhome.co.uk "Gladstone and Ireland 1880-1886," accessed March 1, 2016, <http://www.historyhome.co.uk/peel/ireland/gladire2.htm>.

1. Fair Rents would be fixed by land courts for a period of 15 years.⁶⁴
2. Fixed tenancies gave rights of land to the tenant. They could only be evicted if they did not pay rent.⁶⁵
3. Free sale of his (the tenant's) lease would be permitted to a tenant who wished to give up farming.⁶⁶

However, the Land Act of 1881 failed to provide relief for thousands of Irish farmers in arrears on their rent. This was because Gladstone's government thought that tenants had to be solvent in order to receive fair treatment under the law. Despite decline in support of the Land League, Parnell and its leaders pushed for this added measure. After giving a rousing speech, Parnell was imprisoned in Kilmainham Prison.

The imprisonment of a leading Parliamentary figure caused problems for Gladstone and the government, since they had no obvious reason for the imprisonment. To work around this, Parnell suggested through an intermediary, Kitty O'Shea, that a settlement could be reached if it include the protection of tenants in arrears. Through a series of letters, the government agreed to Parnell's demands but on the condition that he uphold and observe law and order.⁶⁷ In other words, no more rabble rousing.

Parnell was released in 1882 following the signing of the so called Kilmainham Treaty and was seen as a national hero for the Irish. Parnell began to align the Irish Party with the Liberals under Gladstone and he reorganized the home rule movement and was able to make headways with the Catholic Church.⁶⁸ After the banning of the Land League in 1881, Parnell set up the National League in 1882 in order to encourage home rule for Ireland.⁶⁹ Following the ousting of Gladstone's government in 1885, Parnell and the Irish MPs held 86 seats and

⁶⁴ Historyhome.co.uk "Gladstone."

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ *The Easter Rising*, 42.

⁶⁹ Historyhome.co.uk "Gladstone."

became the effective arbiters of the House of Commons. Following rumors that Gladstone was in support of the cause, Parnell took the next step and introduced the first Home Rule Act in 1886. It failed partly because Gladstone's support was found wanting and Ulster rejected rule from the south. They thought of themselves as loyal Protestants and that their Catholic cousins, who had demonstrated their unruliness in the past few years, were not deserving of Home Rule. Unbeknownst to all involved, the seeds of Northern Ireland's separation were planted.

During this chaos, it became apparent that the Irish language and Irish culture were in danger of extinction.⁷⁰ As a result, the Gaelic Revival movement sprang into being. In 1884, the first organization born of this movement was the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), founded in the west of Ireland to promote traditional Irish sports and to discourage participation in imported English sports.⁷¹ Its influence was found predominantly in rural Ireland, but that did not stop it from reaching the cities.

The second, and perhaps the more important, movement was the Gaelic League in 1893. The difference between the Gaelic League and the GAA is that the Gaelic League appealed to the urban middle class which happened to be well educated. In addition to the study of the Irish language, Irish literature and music were studied by the branches of the Gaelic League. Two of the important figures in the later independence movements, Patrick Pearse and Eamon de Valera, had their introduction to Irish nationalism through this participation.

A third movement was an independent, Protestant led, Irish literary revival. What differentiates the Irish Literary Revival from the Gaelic League was its appeal to

⁷⁰ *Easter 1916*, 7.

⁷¹ *The Easter Rising*, 58.

international authors and playwrights, and the desire to create an indigenous literature that was written in English and derived from Irish sources.⁷² This earned the Revival the ire of the other two organizations as well as disdain from the Catholic Church. Despite this controversy and the hostility between the Gaelic organizations and the Irish Revival, the three movements contributed to the growing sense of national identity and the notion that Ireland was truly different than England.⁷³

On the other side of the Irish Sea, the English were seeing things differently. The prominence of Irish politicians, professionals, industry (in Belfast and Ulster), and writers showed that Ireland was finally assimilated into the United Kingdom like Scotland and Wales.⁷⁴ However, events proved to work against this notion. Parnell, who was the face of the Irish political class, was ousted from Parliament following the reveal of his affair with Kitty O'Shea, whose husband had blamed Parnell in the divorce paper.⁷⁵ Disgraced from his own party, Parnell would die a year after the scandal and the Irish bloc in parliament, after another failed attempt at a Home Rule bill, would fall into the political background and not see another like Parnell until the 20th century.

Additionally, the prospect of Dublin gaining a parliament sent the Protestant north into a frenzy of action. The northern Irish had successfully integrated themselves with the British system and had seen much industrial growth over the decades.⁷⁶ The rise of Orangeism or Unionism in Ulster was confirmed with the dramatic announcement by Lord Randolph

⁷² *Ibid*, 59.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 60.

⁷⁴ *Fifty Battles that Changed History*, 106.

⁷⁵ *The Easter Rising*, 44.

⁷⁶ To the detriment of the south.

Churchill⁷⁷: “Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right.”⁷⁸ Despite Gladstone’s insistence that the Dublin parliament would be subordinate to Westminster, the Unionists would have none of it. In the north, Unionism became synonymous with Conservatism.⁷⁹ The fears of the North Irish is ironic, considering how much they benefitted from legislation focused on Ireland.

Among those who were swept up and influenced by the Gaelic Revival was Patrick Pearse. The second child of a stone mason, James Pearse, Patrick developed a love of Irish history in grammar school.⁸⁰ When he was a teenager, he joined the Gaelic League and received a law degree. He never was one to practice his law training and took up writing poetry and involvement in the political side of the Gaelic League. After spending years studying what he called the “true Gaelic” of Connaught, Pearse founded a bilingual school in Dublin, called St. Edna’s which focused heavily on Irish language, history, culture, and games.⁸¹

Part of Pearse’s mission with St. Edna’s was his desire to see that future generations knew their nation’s true mother tongue as well as her history. He also believed that the English school system imposed on Ireland had crushed the national spirit.⁸² The revival of said spirit, as well as liberation, could only come from overthrowing first English education,

⁷⁷Sir Winston Churchill’s father

⁷⁸ Historyhome.co.uk, “Gladstone.”

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 83.

⁸⁰ Historylearningsite.co.uk, “Patrick Pearse,” Last modified March 25, 2015, accessed March 2, 2016, <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/ireland-1845-to-1922/patrick-pearse/>.

⁸¹ The *Easter Rising*, 61.

⁸² *Ibid*.

then English imperialism from Ireland.⁸³ In the prospectus of St. Edna's, Pearse stressed that his school would

“Instruct pupils in a love of the Irish language

Educate pupils in a love of chivalry and self-sacrifice

Teach pupils to have ‘charity towards all’; a ‘sense of civic social duty.’⁸⁴

However, this was to appear in the English version. The Irish version proclaims that youths “should spend their lives working hard and zealously for their fatherland and, if it should ever be necessary, to die for it.”⁸⁵

Patrick Pearse's language in the Irish version of the prospectus is evidence of Pearse's fascination with the heroes and martyrs of Irish history and mythology. Specifically Cu Chulainn, Theobald Wolfe Tone, and Robert Emmet drew Pearse's interest. All of these men died for their causes: the freedom of Ireland from oppression. This fascination with dead men suggests that Pearse saw that only spilt blood would see Ireland free. As such, he found himself among many who felt the same; the remnants of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, its sister organization Clan na Gael in America, and Sinn Fein⁸⁶, a political organization and party in Ireland. Around the 1910s, Patrick Pearse became a member of the IRB and he was appointed as a member of the Supreme Council by Thomas Clarke, a longtime member of the Brotherhood who saw the value in coopting younger Irishmen into the cause of the IRB.

Patrick Pearse was not the first of the cultural revivalists to be recruited by the nationalists. Many more were drawn in by the speeches of Sean Mac Diarmada, a younger

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Irish for “Ourselves Alone.”

member who was recruited by the Brotherhood to revive it in those modern times.⁸⁷ Mac Diramada was recruited through the Dungannon Clubs, societies in Ulster who were pro-independence, and Mac Diramada was able to bring in new blood for the Brotherhood. He was Treasurer of the Supreme Council when Pearse was brought in, and Mac Diramada and Clarke struck up a deep friendship.⁸⁸ This was due to Mac Diramada being able to attract the type of person that Clarke and the IRB needed in order to survive and see Ireland's independence.

As these events developed for the IRB, the Protestants of Ulster did not ignore the rising calls for Home Rule. Forming the Ulster Unionist Council in 1885 in order to protect their economic interests under the guise of religious concern, Ulster became a hotbed for anti-Home Rule sentiment.⁸⁹ Many believed that if Ireland were granted its own parliament, the Protestants would become a religious minority and therefore be open to persecution. This fear can be based on the mistreatment of Catholics in Ireland by the Protestants of England and Scotland. With the cry of "Home rule means Rome rule!", a Dublin lawyer named Sir Edward Carson organized a militia known as the Ulster Volunteers.⁹⁰ Carson's volunteers threatened civil war if the Home Rule Bill being debated in parliament went through. Additionally, in 1912, Carson and other prominent people of Ulster signed the Ulster Covenant, pledging to resist Home Rule if it came to pass.⁹¹

⁸⁷ *The Easter Uprising: A Guide to Dublin in 1916*, 22-23.

⁸⁸ *Ibid*, 23.

⁸⁹ *The Easter Uprising: Dublin in 1916*, 19-20.

⁹⁰ *Fifty Battles*, 104.

⁹¹ See Figure 5.1

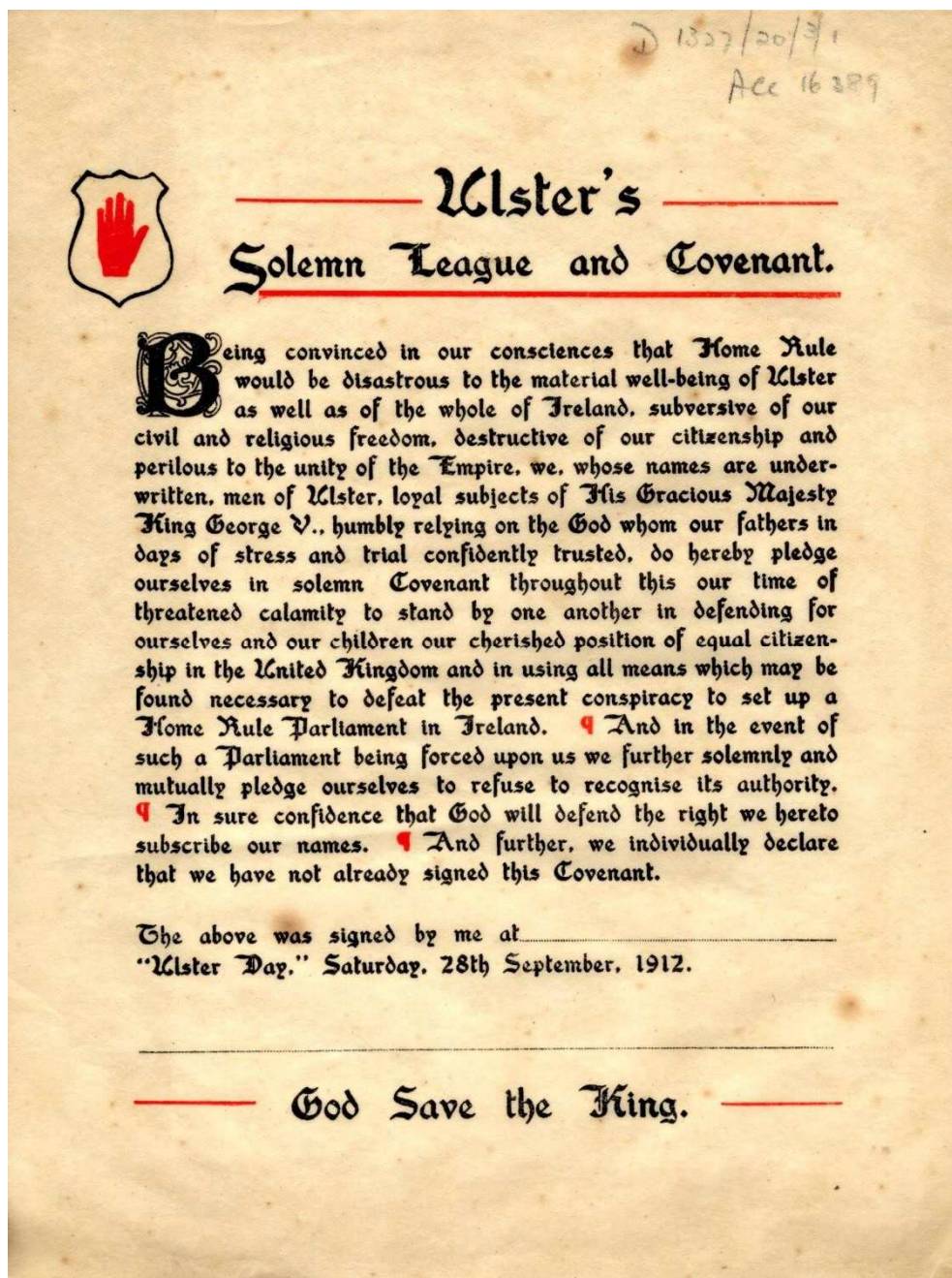


Figure 2.1: The Ulster Covenant

Not to be outdone by the fearmongering Ulstermen, the Irish nationalists formed their own militia called the Irish Volunteers. A cabal of nationalists—Mary Spring Rice, Sir Roger Casement, Conor O’Brien, Alice Stopford Green, and Michael O’Rahilly—set about purchasing rifles and ammunition from the Germans, buying obsolete Mauser rifles that were

smuggled into the country. The Irish Volunteers were not the only citizen militia arming and training. The Irish Citizens Army was formed in 1912-1913 by James Connolly in order to protect striking workers. Their most prominent action until that point was defending transport workers on strike during the Dublin Lockout of 1913. The strike was led by James “Big Jim” Larkin, an Anglo-Irish labor activist. Larkin’s prominence in the British labour movement began in 1905 when he was a leader of the Liverpool dock workers strike.⁹² The 1913 strike was a united effort by Catholic and Protestant workers in the Dublin area to demand better wages.⁹³ When the police showed up with their billy clubs, Connolly’s Irish Citizens Army was there.

James Connolly was similar to a number of the leaders at the time. He was not a native Irishman, but he nevertheless became caught up in politics. Connolly was swayed to the cause of revolutionary socialism and had gone to Ireland in 1896 to found the Irish Socialist Republican Party.⁹⁴ Despite leaving for the United States in 1903 due to frustration with the progress of socialism in Ireland, Connolly returned in 1910 and became a prominent figure in the Great Lockout of 1913. The Lockout was an attempt by Irish socialists and workers to break the anti-union stance of the Dublin United Tramway Company.⁹⁵ Even though it failed, Connolly had the Citizen Army, and he ordered it to “drill and train as they

⁹² Jack O’Connor, *The Irish Examiner*, “The definitive biography of Big Jim Larkin,” December 19, 2015, accessed April 20, 2016, <http://www.irishexaminer.com/lifestyle/artsfilmtv/books/the-definitive-biography-of-big-jim-larkin-372254.html>.

⁹³ See Figure 2.2.

⁹⁴ Marxists.org, “James Connolly,” accessed March 2, 2016, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/connolly/>.

⁹⁵ Bbc.co.uk, “Dublin Lockout 1913,” accessed March 2, 2016, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/easterrising/prelude/pr05.shtml>.

were doing in Ulster.”⁹⁶ By mid-1914, the Irish Citizen Army became a force designed to protect laborers from the brutality of the police.



Figure 2.2: Jim Larkin at the Dublin Lockout

Although he was not a member of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, Connolly was a militant republican, even more so than many within the IRB.⁹⁷ However, many Irish were hopefully of the Home Rule Bill passing in 1914. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Party, was confident in the vote since the House of Lords could not veto it for a third time. However, Carson’s threat stalled negotiations. Then, on June 28, a 19-year-old Serbian nationalist named Gavrilo Princip shot and kill Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, while they were in Sarajevo to observe military maneuvers of the Austrian army.⁹⁸ Within two months, Europe was at war.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Fifty Battles*, 106.

⁹⁸ YouTube.com, “Extra History World War I: The Seminal Tragedy-II: One Fateful Day in June,” accessed March 3, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyCmh9G1fpo>.

With perhaps relief, the British government under Herbert Asquith told the Irish MPs that Home Rule will be granted following the end of the war.⁹⁹ Redmond and the other MPs encourage Irishmen to sign up and fight for the British, on the hope that Ireland's loyalty would be rewarded. However, many of the nationalists were angered by the Irish Party kowtowing to the British. They resolved that Britain's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity.¹⁰⁰

They were not the only ones to think this during the war. Across the Channel and the Rhine River, the Germans were seeing the need to disrupt the British Empire in order to prevent colonial troops from being called to the Western Front. The German Foreign Affairs office had been making contact with Irish and Indian nationalists who were keen on rebelling against the British during the war. Despite evidence that showed that the British had a favorable position in India, Arthur Zimmerman the Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs, allotted funds and formed the Berlin India Committee with Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, a Bengali Indian revolutionary Marxist who had been active in the Indian communities abroad. Around this time, Sir Roger Casement began making overtures to the German Foreign Affairs office in order to garner interest in a German funded plot to remove British rule from Ireland.

Casement is another interesting case in the whole of the Irish independence movement. He was born in Ireland and served many years in faithful duty to the British Empire within its colonial office. He gain fame for his investigative work into the abuses of workers in King Leopold II's Congo colony in 1904, which led to Belgium taking over administration in 1908. Additionally, Casement did investigative work in the Peruvian and

⁹⁹ *Fifty Battles*, 106.

¹⁰⁰ Conor Kostick and Lorcan Collins, *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin in 1916*, (Dublin: The O'Brien Press, 200), 21.

Brazilian rubber plantations that revealed more abuses by those governments. This led to his knighthood in 1911, which he found to be an embarrassment.¹⁰¹ The reasoning behind this feeling was that between work in the Congo and the Amazon, Casement had returned to Ireland and became swayed by the cause of Irish republicanism, especially the revival of the Irish language.¹⁰² As such, Casement became dissatisfied with his work in the Foreign Office and the British Empire as a whole. Following his knighthood, Casement became convinced that with German assistance, Ireland could become free.¹⁰³

When Casement retired from the Foreign Service in 1913, he became wholeheartedly committed to the Irish republican cause. Following failure to sway Ulster Protestants to Irish nationalism, Casement became involved with the Irish Volunteers and had arranged for their first arms shipment in 1914. However, Casement knew that they would need modern arms in order to combat the Ulster Volunteers, who were able to obtain modern arms in the open and even with support from sympathetic British officers and officials.¹⁰⁴ Casement had gone to America to meet with Irish-American leaders in league with the IRB's goals. He then went on a boat to Germany and met with representatives of the foreign office in November 1914.¹⁰⁵

Casement's meeting with the German government was met with dismissal by the British, who claimed that Casement was insane and suffering from ill health.¹⁰⁶ In the minds of Redmond, the Irish MPs, and the British government, it was impossible to believe that a

¹⁰¹ Rte.ie "Casement, Sir Roger David by Michael Laffan," accessed March 2, 2016, http://www.rte.ie/centuryireland/images/uploads/further-reading/DIB_Sir_Roger_David_Casement_by_Michael_Laffan.pdf.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Fifty Battles*, 105.

¹⁰⁵ James K. McGuire, *The King, the Kaiser, and Irish Freedom*, (New York: Wolfe Tone Company, 1915), 15.

¹⁰⁶ McGuire, *The King, the Kaiser, and Irish Freedom*, 18.

loyal servant of the empire, who even had a knighthood, would ever consort with the enemy.¹⁰⁷ But consorted he did. James McGuire, the author of the book *The King, the Kaiser, and Irish Freedom*, noted that in his research into Casement, he had never found “an Irishman of the purest patriotic gold,”¹⁰⁸ and goes on to denounce the Irish who fought for the British Empire in the previous centuries. Going further, he cites a letter that Casement sent to Irish newspapers that November:

“Let Irishmen and boys stay in Ireland. Their duty is clear-before God and before man. We, as a people, have no quarrel with the German people. Germany has never wronged Ireland, and we owe her more than one debt of gratitude. It was not a German steamship company that, last summer, with the assent of the government making the contract, broke public faith with the Irish people and abandoned its pledged service with the port of Cork. But it was a German steamship company that tried to make good the breach of public trust and the injury to Irish trade that the Cunard Company had committed, and the British Postmaster-General, Admiralty, and Board of Trade had connived at. And it was another British Department that made representation at Berlin, in behalf of English trade jealously, and caused the German Emperor to intervene to induce the Hamburg-American line to substitute Southampton for Queenstown-a British port in India. The hated German was welcome when he came to an English port-his help and enterprise were out of place when directed to assisting Irishmen to better means of intercourse with the outside world.”¹⁰⁹

McGuire also notes of a plot to kidnap or kill Casement when he left for Norway in 1915, when Adler A. Christenson, a Norwegian servant employed by Casement, was almost bribed with \$25,000 by the British minister to Norway. However, Christenson was incorruptible and Casement was informed of the plot. He alerted Berlin and extended his stay there for the following two years.

Aside from attempts at seeking funds from the Germans, Casement also went to prisoner-of-war camps that held Irishmen who were fighting for the British. When war was

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 20.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

declared, Great Britain's armed forces were supplied by volunteers. The Irish MPs, seeing that Irish enlistment would lead to Home Rule, ran a poster campaign like the famous Kitchener posters¹¹⁰ of "Your Country Needs You," with caricatures of Redmond instead of Kitchener.¹¹¹¹¹² While a number of men who enlisted were members of the Irish Volunteers, Casement failed to enlist enough men to fight for German as an "Irish Legion" and settled on acquiring arms for a future uprising. By 1916, Casement arranged for 20,000 Russian rifles, ten machine guns, and a million rounds of ammunition to be delivered to Irish Volunteers off the coast of Kerry.¹¹³



Figure 2.3 and 2.4: Kitchener Recruitment Poster (Left), Redmond Recruitment Poster (Right)

¹¹⁰ See Figure 2.3.

¹¹¹ *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin in 1916*, 20-21.

¹¹² See Figure 2.4

¹¹³ *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin in 1916*, 32.

Chapter Three: The Easter Rising

As 1915 rolled on and the Great War continued with earnest, the Irish revolutionaries began to grown restless. Despite the insistence of leaders like Thomas Clarke to strike at the British while they were distracted, there was no real plan to put this into motion.¹¹⁴ The only word was at the opportune moment, the IRB would strike. In 1915, the death of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa provided a propaganda staging for the IRB and the Volunteers. Patrick Pearse was chosen to speak his eulogy at the funeral service in Dublin. The eulogy, which has become one of the most famous piece of Irish oratory, closed with Pearse saying to the mourners:

“The Defenders of this Realm have worked well in secret and in the open. They think that they have purchased half of us and intimidated the other half. They think they have foreseen everything, think that they have provided against everything; but the fools, the fools, the fools! – they have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.”¹¹⁵

With the grace of his skilled speech, Pearse placed himself in a position to become a power leader of the IRB and the Irish Volunteers. While he served as the director of military organization, Pearse plotted with two other leaders of the Volunteers-Thomas MacDonagh, director of military training, and Joseph Plunkett, directory of military operations-against Eoin MacNeill, the commander of the Irish Volunteers who was afraid to fight the British Army.¹¹⁶ Their plot was to raise the Irish Volunteers against the British. The other leaders

¹¹⁴ YouTube.com, “Easter Rising in 8 Minutes”, accessed March 5, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rT8uF1bNrHw>.

¹¹⁵ Easter1916.net, “Patrick Pearse’s Graveside Panegyric for O’Donovan Rossa on 1 August 1915 at Glasnevin Cemetery in Dublin,” accessed March 5, 2016, <http://www.easter1916.net/oration.htm>.

¹¹⁶ *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism*, 99.

of the Irish Volunteers-Blumer Hudson, the quartermaster or The O’Rahilly, the director of arms-knew of the IRB plot.

In late 1915, the IRB organized its Military Council in order to weld the IRB, the Irish Volunteers, and Sinn Fein into a revolutionary instrument of Irish independence.¹¹⁷ The Irish Citizens Army was brought in in January 1916 after Connolly claimed that the IRB didn’t care for the working class of Ireland and that the IRB leadership made no commitments to a workers republic.¹¹⁸ However, more likely, the IRB leadership saw an opportunity to gain workers support for their cause, as conscription had passed Parliament that same month and was underway in Britain.¹¹⁹ It was feared that Ireland would see conscription before too long and as James Connolly wrote:

“Free speech and a free press no longer exists. The Rights of Labour have been suppressed; to strike is an offence against the law whenever the authorities choose to declare it so; and all of these countries bands of soldiers and sailors are being encouraged to invade and break up meeting of civilians.

“Gradually the authorities have been making successful war upon every public right, gradually the mind of the unthinking has been accustomed to see without alarm the outraging of every constitutional liberty. That arbitrary exercise of power which two years ago would have evoked a storm of protest is now accepted with equanimity and even with approval.”¹²⁰

With such concerns now present, the IRB Military Council decided to have the Volunteers and the Citizens Army rise up in 1916. Additionally, and unique for the time period, the IRB brought in Cumann na mBan, an Irish women suffragette movement that was tied to the Irish Volunteers and advocated for women to use the force of arms in the fight for

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, 101.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid*.

¹¹⁹ James Heartfield and Kevin Rooney, *Who’s Afraid of the Easter Rising? 1916-2016*, (Washington, D.C.: Zero Books, 2015), 77-78.

¹²⁰ Heartfield, *Who’s Afraid?*, 78.

independence if necessary.¹²¹ The plan was for Irish Volunteers to march in a nationwide training session on Easter Sunday, April 24, 1916. Since the training exercises were already common enough for many people to not take notice, and to hopefully throw off the British, the volunteers would rise up all over Ireland, seizing important buildings and strategic points throughout Ireland. This uprising would force the British hand into granting Irish independence. MacNeill approved of the training, still unaware of the plans of the IRB Military Council.

As Easter Sunday approached, Casement's shipment of captured arms was sent to Ireland, with plans for them to be picked up by Volunteers on April 20th. However, there was a miscommunication afoot; partially at fault with Clan na Gael and Berlin. The rebels had requested that the German ship, disguised as a Norwegian ship called the *Aud*, land on the night of the 23rd instead of the 20th.¹²² However, there was no radio aboard, so no one was able to inform the captain, who waited twelve hours for Volunteers who never showed. The *Aud* was then intercepted by a British ship and while being taken to port, the captain had the *Aud* scuttled to prevent the British from learning of the arms.

On the same day of the scuttling-April 22-Casement was dropped off on the coast of Ireland by a German submarine. Mere hours after arriving, he was arrested by British constables. Casement's reasons for coming to Ireland by secret was that he was convinced of the failure of any rising and was determined to use whatever influence he could to stop it.¹²³ Regardless, his arrest put an end to Casement's actions for the remainder of the rebellion.

¹²¹ Richmondbarracks.ie, "Women and 1916: Cumann na mBan and the 1916 Easter Rising," accessed March 5, 2016, <http://www.richmondbarracks.ie/women-1916/cumann-na-mban/>.

¹²² *The Easter Rising: Revolution and Irish Nationalism*, 102.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

The British authorities knew that he had committed treason and were determined to put Casement on trial for it.

On the night of Casement's arrival, Hobson learned of the IRB plot for Easter Sunday and informed MacNeill. Shortly thereafter, Hobson was kidnapped by the IRB, but The O'Rahilly gave MacNeill information about the failed arms shipment and Casement's arrest.¹²⁴ MacNeill confronted Pearse and the other about this, and after pressuring, the conspirators informed MacNeill that they were going through with the uprising. MacNeill issued a countermand to the original training exercise as an advertisement in the newspapers as well as an order to the Volunteers. It read: "Volunteers completely deceived. All orders for special action are hereby cancelled, and on no account will action be taken."¹²⁵

Those in favor of the Rising met at Liberty Hall Easter Sunday in Dublin.¹²⁶ Here they debated how to go about such an undertaking. While Clarke argued for countermanding the countermand, the other leaders said that the current level of confusion will only grow worse if the IRB Military Council issued such an order.¹²⁷ James Connolly made it known that the Citizens Army would march in Dublin, with or without the Irish Volunteers. This was met with agreement from Eamon de Valera, a mathematics professor from America. De Valera was certain that the British now knew that there was going to be an uprising and the subsequent crackdown on the Volunteers left them no choice but to fight.¹²⁸ Pearse, Plunkett, and MacDonagh were determined to go through with the rebellion and their 'blood sacrifice' would inspire others to rebel. Despite the showing of Irish history that this was not

¹²⁴ *Fifty Battles*, 107.

¹²⁵ *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin, 1916*, 35.

¹²⁶ See Figure 3.1

¹²⁷ *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin, 1916*, 35.

¹²⁸ *Fifty Battles*, 107.

the case, the leaders concluded that they would begin the rebellion tomorrow. On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, the rebels met at Liberty Hall and proclaimed that an Irish republic was born. Patrick Pearse was elected as president, and the Irish Volunteers and Citizens Army militias present were now part of the Irish Republican Army, or IRA.¹²⁹



Figure 3.1: Liberty Hall

The column of rebels marched in the direction of the General Post Office (GPO), with the goal of seizing the building in order to cut off British communications. As they headed off in that direction, they were joined by an unlikely ally: The O’Rahilly, who arrived in an automobile carrying rifles. Even though The O’Rahilly was part of the Volunteers faction

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

opposed to rebellion, he was determined to see through to his organization's fate. As he later said, "(Well) I've helped to wind up the clock, so I might as well hear it strike."¹³⁰

Even though rebellion was underway in Dublin, few members of the civilian population were aware of it. Those enjoying the bank holiday noted the column of men and women clad in green marching down Sackville Street, but they paid little attention. To them, the Irish Volunteers were a joke and would never be taken seriously. James Stephens, an Irish poet and author who was involved in Irish nationalist politics and was friends with Pearse and MacDonagh, noted in his first hand account of the Easter Rising:

"On the morning following, I awoke into full insurrection and bloody war, but I did not know anything about it. ... I addressed one of these silent gazers.

"Has there been an accident?" said I.

I indicated the people standing about.

"What's all this for?"

He was a sleepy, rough-looking man about 40 years of age, with a blunt red moustache, and the distant eyes which one sees in sailors. He looked at me, stared at me as at a person from a different country. He grew wakeful and vivid.

"Don't you know," said he.

And then he saw that I did not know.

"The Sinn Feiners have seized the City this morning."

"Oh!" said I.

He continued with the savage earnestness of one who has amazement in his mouth:

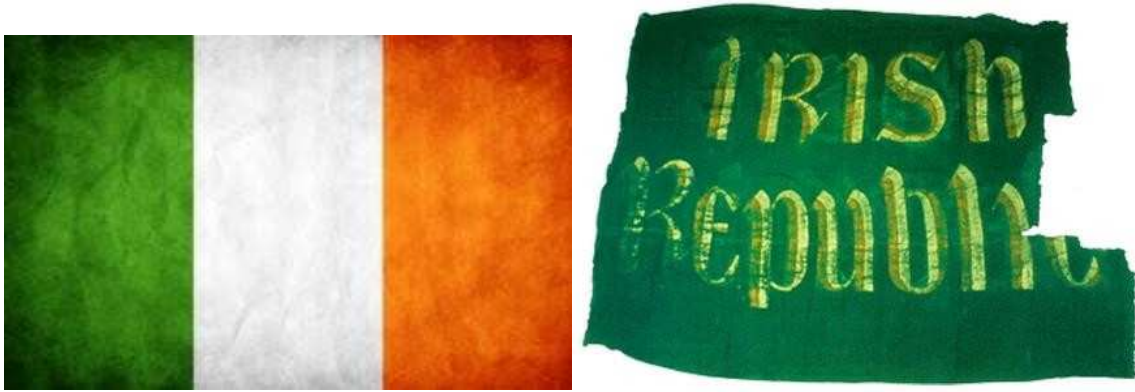
"They seized the City at eleven o'clock this morning. The Green there is full of them. They have captured the Castle. They have taken the Post Office."

"My God!" said I, staring at him, and instantly I turned and went running towards the Green."¹³¹

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 108.

¹³¹ James Stephens, *The Insurrection in Dublin*, (Buckinghamshire, UK: Colin Smythe Ltd., 1978), 5, 6-7.

Unbeknownst to Stephens and the person that he asked about the Citizens Army, the IRA had taken the GPO first and raised two flags over it: the Irish tricolor inspired by the French, and a green flag with the gold letters of ‘IRISH REPUBLIC’ emblazoned upon it.¹³²



Figures 3.2 and 3.3: Irish Tricolor (Left), IRISH REPUBLIC Flag (Right)

That afternoon, Patrick Pearse stepped out in front of the GPO and read the Proclamation, informing the crowd of onlookers that a provisional government was now in effect. The Proclamation was itself a wondrous document to behold. Its opening paragraph said:

“IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN. In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nation hood, Ireland, through us summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.”¹³³

. Among the tenants of the Proclamation were proclaimed “the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland,” and

“guarantees religious and civil liberties, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an

¹³² See Figures 7.1 and 7.2
¹³³ See Figure 3.4

alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.¹³⁴

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN : In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God, Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,

THOMAS J. CLARKE,
 SEAN Mac DIARMADA, THOMAS MacDONAGH,
 P. H. PEARSE, EAMONN CEANNT,
 JAMES CONNOLLY. JOSEPH PLUNKETT.

The Easter Proclamation, 1916

Figure 3.4: The Proclamation of 1916

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, this last bit about the division refers to Ulster and hints that the Provisional Government wanted to bring the Protestants into the fold as equals, not an oppressed minority.

The Proclamation was signed by seven members of the IRB leadership, who proclaimed themselves the leaders of the Provisional Government.¹³⁵ However, many in the crowd had no idea what he was going on about, and they eventually dispersed.¹³⁶

As the leaders of the Provisional Government seized the GPO, other members of the IRA seized other positions. Edward Daly's group, First Battalion, occupied the Four Courts of Justice on the north bank of the River Liffey. MacDonagh's Second Battalion seized Jacob's Biscuit Factory while De Valera's Third Battalion seized Boland's Bakery and buildings close to the Beggar's Barracks. A section of the Citizens Army, led by Michael Mallin and Countess Constance Markievicz, took St. Stephens Green, the very spot that James Stephens walked by that very morning.¹³⁷ These units as well as those at the GPO began to fortify their positions and awaited the British counterattack.

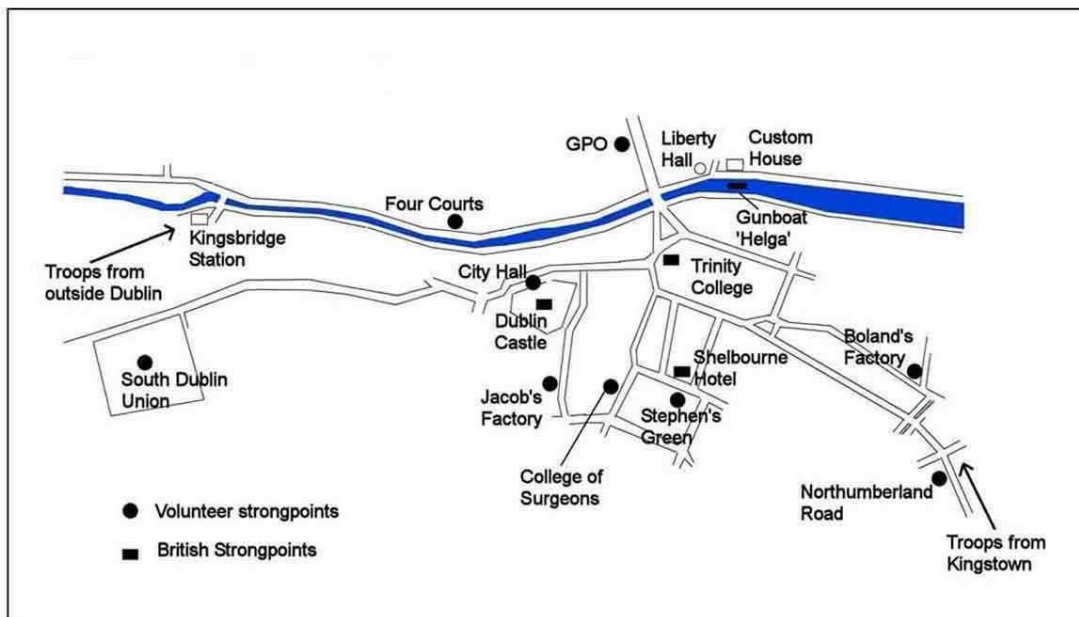


Figure 3.5: Map of Key Locations in Dublin during the Easter Rising

¹³⁵ See Figure 3.4

¹³⁶ *Easter 1916*, 160-161.

¹³⁷ *Fifty Battles*, 108.

Almost instantly, the Rising ran into problems. Sean Connolly (no relation to James Connolly) led a small force of Citizens Army troops to take Dublin Castle, the seat of the British government, where the first casualty of the Easter Rising was killed: James O'Brien, a forty-five year old unarmed constable who was merely doing his job.¹³⁸ At this time, the Citizens Army's attack on Dublin Castle led into a retreat from the building. They feared that British reinforcements were on their way and they would be outnumbered. However, there were only twenty-five British troops at the Castle and if the rebels had taken the castle, they would have taken the entire British government of Ireland hostage.¹³⁹ The remaining Irish rebels retreated to Dublin City Hall and held their position before being driven off by the British on Tuesday.

The IRA had planned on a "ring of steel" that encircled the centers of government in Dublin, but their choices would prove to work against them in the coming days.¹⁴⁰ These choices were reflective of what the rebels thought the British response would be: quick and overwhelming. However, there were only about 400 troops in combat readiness on Easter Monday, out of one 120 officers and 2,265 soldiers.¹⁴¹ Despite this, the deputy of Major General Friend, one Colonel H.V. Cowan, assured him that the meager staff available would be adequate to suppress the rebels. He called for all available troops to converge on Dublin Castle. Only one group, the Royal Irish Regiment, saw action against the IRA. They passed the South Dublin Union, held by the Fourth Battalion led by Eamonn Ceant. Under fire from the British rifles and machine guns, Ceant's men retreated further into the Union building.¹⁴²

¹³⁸ *Easter 1916*, 162-164.

¹³⁹ *Fifty Battles*, 108.

¹⁴⁰ See Figure 3.5

¹⁴¹ *Easter 1916*, 181.

¹⁴² *Fifty Battles*, 109.

The most action on Monday by other units were two separate incidents involving lancers: one near the Four Courts and another on Sackville Street. The first group of lancers were armed with rifles, but had only five bullets each. They were escorting a convoy of munitions when the Four Courts Volunteers opened fire on them. These lancers would be pinned down for three days following the ambush.¹⁴³ The second group of lancers was sent to investigate the area around the GPO, following rumors of rioting. Once they neared Nelson's Pillar, the Republican forces fired up on them and forced a retreat. Three men were killed, another would die of his wounds later, and a dead horse remained where it fell for the rest of the week. To everyone involved, the firing on the lancers showed that Britain's Irish policy had failed.¹⁴⁴

The main failing of the Provisional Government was that they never followed up their early victories. Additionally, they weren't willing or able to hold onto key positions. One of these was Trinity College, which was held by the OTC student garrison and their officers, led by Major Tate.¹⁴⁵ During Monday night, the British military forces re consolidated their positions and began to arrive in force. The IRA had failed to take any of the train stations or block off the River Liffey, and reinforcements began to arrive. The eventually British commander arrived at 3:45 am: Brigadier General W.H.M. Lowe.¹⁴⁶ MacNeill's fears were realized.

The civilian authority had been thrown into disarray following the early actions of the Rising. Many of those in power of the Irish government were not present and those that were didn't know how to respond to the rebellion. Although they pulled the constabulary from the

¹⁴³ *Easter, 1916*, 170-171.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 184.

¹⁴⁵ *Easter 1916*, 185.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 186.

streets following the early deaths and had declared martial law within Dublin, the civil government was overridden by the Cabinet in London and martial law was extended throughout all of Ireland. This went against the ideals of English liberal thinking but 1916 was a very different year. Additionally, Lowe issued a number of orders to British troops moving in to suppress the rebels, most damning of which was to consider any male civilians, law abiding or otherwise, as a possible rebel.¹⁴⁷ The move towards martial law and Lowe's orders would have unintended consequences further down the road.

By Tuesday evening, Lowe had four eighteen-pound field guns brought into Dublin for the purpose of supporting the main military advance. However, only two were in place on Wednesday morning and despite the best efforts of the British, they could not dig into the cobblestone road for emplacements. Meanwhile, part of Dublin's slum population, who lived in some of the worst conditions in Europe, began looting the stores of Dublin. Frank Sheehy-Skeffington, a vegetarian, advocate of women's suffrage, nationalist, and pacifist, attempted to organize a makeshift police force to dissuade the looting. However, he was arrested by Captain J.C. Bowen-Colthurst, a bloodthirsty soldier who ordered his men to shoot at two children fleeing their advance and bombed a pub. He arrested the four survivors, and had them and Skeffington executed by firing squad.¹⁴⁸

Lowe's plan was to split the rebel forces and take the south bank of the Liffey, using his artillery and the aid of a British gunboat, the H.M.S *Helga* to bombard rebel positions. On Tuesday morning, as James Connolly dictated orders to his secretary, Winifred Carney, he and the others at the GPO heard a deafening sound. To the devout Marxist Connolly, it

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 189.

¹⁴⁸ *Fifty Battles*, 110.

was the shattering of a cherished illusion: the capitalists would never destroy private property.¹⁴⁹ The bombardment was directed at the barricades in northern Dublin and De Valera's position at Boland's Bakery. De Valera reported shouted "Hurrah! Rotten shot!" when the first shots missed his position.¹⁵⁰ He devised a clever ploy to divert the fire of the bombardment from Boland's to a nearby distillery by having a man hang an Irish tricolor from its tower. The fire shifted and De Valera's position held.¹⁵¹

On Wednesday morning, a shipload of green British troops arrived at Kingstown Harbor and began marching towards downtown Ireland. Having no idea about their surroundings, they passed by cheering, loyalist Irish civilians¹⁵² and called out to local girls with "Bonjour mademoiselle."¹⁵³ However, when they approached the Mount Street Bridge, a section of De Valera's battalion, led by Lieutenant Michael Malone, fired upon them from 25 Northumberland Street.¹⁵⁴ Seventeen IRA soldiers, led by Malone and Section Commander James Grace, held up two regular infantry battalions for eight hours.¹⁵⁵ It was only when the two battalions were reinforced with grenades, machineguns, and explosives that the British were able to advance. However, the IRA had run out of ammunition and eight of them, including Malone, were killed. The British suffered 230 casualties.¹⁵⁶ The survivors retreated with James Grace.

The events at Boland's Bakery and 25 Northumberland Street were not unusual for the rising. Lowe's reliance on artillery denied the rebels targets, as they had anticipated

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Easter 1916*, 191.

¹⁵¹ *Fifty Battles*, 110.

¹⁵² YouTube.com, "Easter Rising in 8 Minutes."

¹⁵³ *Fifty Battles*, 110.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

bayonet charges instead. The *Helga* exacerbated the direness of the situation. On Wednesday, the ship sailed up the Liffey and fired upon Liberty Hall, Joined by the eighteen pounders, the meeting place for the Easter Rising was reduced to rubble, and its symbolic destruction was praised by the *Irish Times*.¹⁵⁷

However, the British press did not know how to respond to the Rising. The Wednesday issue of *The Times* for April 26, 1916 has the first mention of the Easter Rising itself in mainstream British newspapers. *The Times* incorrectly calls the rebels Sinn Feiners and noted only two of the positions held by the Provisional Government: Stephens Green and the GPO.¹⁵⁸ The initial column is just beyond half the page length and shares its billing with the details about Roger Casement's arrest and detainment. However, an editorial is written on page 9 that goes into further details about the "Irish Disturbance." They make the same claims as in the column but with an anti-German spin on it.

Thursday rolled in and the rebels' positions were becoming compromised and they were slowly encircled by the British, despite hardly seeing a khaki uniform. On that day, improvised armored cars moved troops around positions and drew the fire of those held up at the GPO. One was put out of commission by a lucky shot from a Volunteer who shot through a slit where he thought that the driver was located.¹⁵⁹ Even so, communications, conducted by boys and women riding bicycles,¹⁶⁰ between the GPO and the outposts became incredibly difficult to maintain. That afternoon, as he was inspecting an outlying position, James Connelly was shot in the ankle by a stray bullet. His foot was nearly severed and he

¹⁵⁷ *Easter 1916*, 191.

¹⁵⁸ "Oubreak in Dublin. Post Office Seized. "Situation Well in Hand." The Death Toll." *The Times*, April 26, 1916, 7.

¹⁵⁹ *Fifty Battles*, 110.

¹⁶⁰ "Easter Rising in 8 Minutes."

wouldn't walk for the remainder of the rebellion.¹⁶¹ Sackville Street was ablaze by the evening and much of the city was in ruin, from artillery bombardment to British troops digging tunnels between houses.¹⁶² Because of the martial law, looters and civilians who attempted to surrender to the British were executed.



Figure 3.6: Sackville Street in Flames, taken the night of April 28, 1916. This photo was taken by an employee of The *Daily Sketch*, an Irish tabloid similar to the *Daily Mail*.

Continuing with its minute reporting on the Rising, *The Times* noted on Thursday that Asquith read a telegram sent from Dublin about the implementation of martial law and that “dramatic action to suppress the Rising and to arrest the culprits was being taken.”¹⁶³ Furthermore, *The Times* is once again focused on the capture and impending trial of Roger Casement for his actions against the crown.

¹⁶¹ *Fifty Battles*, 110.

¹⁶² See Figure 3.6

¹⁶³ “Martial Law in Dublin. Deetails of Rising, Cordon of Troops in the City. Liberty Hall Destroyed.”, *The Times*, April 27, 1916, 7.

By Friday, the British command was taken over by General John Maxwell, and a total of 16,000 troops were in Dublin. They outnumbered the rebels ten to one, and Maxwell wanted only unconditional surrender from the rebels.¹⁶⁴ The fires had spread to the GPO and, despite orders for the women of Cumann na mBan to leave, Pearse led the survivors out and towards the Williams and Woods Factory.¹⁶⁵ The O’Rahilly, who was suspicious of the IRB leadership throughout the rebellion and the moving spirit of the Volunteers, led a vain charge against a British barricade. Mortally wounded, he wrote a last letter to his wife on the back of a note from his son, and died.¹⁶⁶ The O’Rahilly was the only leader killed during the Rising.

The GPO forces were unable to reach the factory and were held up in the ruins of Moore Street. The other positions were encircled or had seen fighting ease. Mallins and Markievicz led the survivors of St. Stephens Green to the Royal College of Surgeons and held. De Valera still held onto Boland’s Bakery. Pearse discussed with Connelly for the possibility of a breakout on Saturday. Fate stood in the way of his plans.

There are two accounts of what transpired that led to Pearse’s order to surrender. The book *Fifty Battles that Changed History* tells this:

“On Saturday morning, as Pearse was discussing how to leave the city, he saw a family of civilians. The man, Robert Dillon, owned a bar that, with his house, had been burned down. He waved a white sheet on a poole as he and his wife and daughter approached the British barricade. The soldiers shot them all down.

“Will the retreat not involve the loss of civilian life?” Pearse asked the other officers. “Won’t it be bound to lead through populous districts, whichever route we take?” The other agreed that it would.

¹⁶⁴ *Easter 1916*, 208.

¹⁶⁵ *Easter Rising in 8 Minutes*.

¹⁶⁶ *Fifty Battles*, 110-111.

“In that case, will you issue cease fire orders to last for the next hour,” he ordered.”¹⁶⁷

Easter, 1916 counts a different version, recalled from the account of Dr. James Ryan, was treating Connolly’s wounds:

“While he (Ryan) was changing Connolly’s dressing about midday on Saturday, Connolly told him that Pearse had gone to arrange surrender terms. Looking out the window, Ryan ‘saw a sight I shall never forget. Lying dead on the opposite foothpath of Moore Street with white flags in their hands were three elderly men.’ They had left their houses as the fires approached, and had been cut down by machine-gun fire. ‘Sean MacDermott came over to the window and pointed to the three dead men and said something like, ‘When Pearse saw that, we decided we must surrender to save the lives of the citizens.’”¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ *Fifty Battles*, 111.

¹⁶⁸ *Easter, 1916*, 245.

Chapter Four: Surrender and the Aftermath

Both Pearse and Connolly believed that if the leadership gave themselves up, the rank and file would go free or be given lighter punishment.¹⁶⁹ They sent the Cumann na mBan nurse, Elizabeth O'Farrell, with a white flag to arrange for the surrender. She and Pearse were escorted to Maxwell, who informed them that only unconditional surrender would be accepted and that the rebels “must ‘throw themselves on our mercy.’” Disheartened, Pearse agreed to Maxwell's terms.¹⁷⁰



Figure 7.5: Patrick Pearse and Elizabeth O'Farrell surrendering to General Lowe and his son

The British commander did indicate the chance for clemency for the rank and file of the IRA, but only if the general surrender went off without a hitch.¹⁷¹ When it came to surrender, Connolly was concerned that his Citizens Army wouldn't follow Pearse's order.

¹⁶⁹ *Easter, 1916*, 245.

¹⁷⁰ The surrender of Pearse was captured in a photograph, see Figure 4.1

¹⁷¹ *Easter, 1916*, 246.

He countersigned the surrender order that Pearse issued to the remaining outposts,¹⁷² as well as retracting his position as commander.¹⁷³

In order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens, and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, the members of the Provisional Government present at Headquarters have agreed to an unconditional surrender, and the Commandants of the various districts in the City and Country will order their commands to lay down arms.

P. H. Pearse
29th April 1916
3.45 p.m.

I agree to these conditions for the men under my own command in the Moore Street District and for the men in the Stephen's Green Command.

James Connolly
April 29/16

Figure 4.2: The Surrender Order

¹⁷² See Figure 7.6

¹⁷³ *Easter, 1916*, 246.

As O'Farrell made her way to the IRA outposts, there was an overhanging mood of sorrow and a feeling that their fight was all for naught. Clarke's command, assisted by Ned Daly and a young Michael Collin, were marched with those from 1st Battalion to the Richmond Barracks on Sunday morning. De Valera refused to believe that such an order had been given and had O'Farrell get confirmation from MacDonagh.¹⁷⁴ However, soldiers under his command confirmed who O'Farrell was and he led his men to the Royal Dublin Society building, manned by the same British forces who had suffered heavy losses at the hands of De Valera's troops.¹⁷⁵ De Valera agreed to the terms and led his troops to the barracks where they would be held.¹⁷⁶ MacDonagh was not convinced of the authenticity of the surrender and met with General Lowe to confirm it.

The surrender of the Citizens Army at the Royal College of Surgeons was the most dramatic of the events of that weekend. With the rumor of surrender floating about, Mallin considered a breakout in order to continue the fight in the manner of guerrilla warfare. Many changed out of their uniforms and into civilian clothes, but in the atmosphere of gloom over the whole place, Mallin decided to surrender. He lowered the Irish tricolor and replaced it with a white flag.¹⁷⁷ Many cried, and when the British showed up to collect them, Constance Markievicz lost her composure for a moment. According to Alfred Bucknill, Markievicz said:

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 248.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 249.

¹⁷⁶ See Figure 4.3

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 251.



Figure 4.3: Eamon De Valera leading his men after surrendering. De Valera is marked by the X

“‘We dreamed of an Irish Republic, and thought we had a fighting chance.’ Then ‘for a few moments she broke down and sobbed.’ She kissed her automatic pistol before handing it over, a theoretical gesture that may have betokened defiance or distress.”¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

The women who participated in the uprising were not initially arrested by the British. At the insistence of Dr. Katherine Lynn and other leaders of Cumann na mBan, they join the men at the Richmond Barracks.¹⁷⁹ However, despite the depressing atmosphere among the rebels, there was little sympathy from the public. The population of Dublin had been burned out of their homes and were unable to buy food and other necessities. The center of the city was a ruin,¹⁸⁰ and Dublin had the honor of being the first major European city since the Napoleonic Wars to have suffered such devastation.¹⁸¹ Many of the rebels were pelted with garbage or had verbal insults slung at them. The mood of the British command was no different.



Figure 4.4: the destroyed Liberty Hall. Just one example of the destruction caused during the Rising.

¹⁷⁹ “Easter Rising in 8 Minutes.”

¹⁸⁰ See Figure 4.4

¹⁸¹ *Ibid; Easter, 1916, 279.*

Maxwell was determined to make examples of the rebels. Mass arrests had led to 3,500 people being held under suspicion of being members of Sinn Fein. Court martials and military trials were conducted by General Charles Blackadder in the early days of May. Fifteen of the leaders were found guilty of treason and executed by firing squad at Kilmainhaim Gaol.¹⁸² These leaders were, in order of execution:¹⁸³

- Patrick Pearse, executed May 3, X
- Thomas MacDonagh, executed May 3, X
- Thomas Clarke, executed May 3, X
- Joseph Plunkett, executed May 4, X
- Edward Daly, executed May 4
- Michael O’Hanrahan, executed May 4
- William Pearse (brother of Patrick Pearse), executed May 4
- John MacBride, executed May 5
- Con Colbert, executed May 8
- Eamonn Ceannt, executed May 8, X
- Michael Mallin, executed May 8
- Sean Hueston, executed May 8
- Sean MacDermott, executed May 12
- James Connolly, executed May 12, X

Eamon De Valera and Constance Markievicz were also sentenced to death, but had their sentences commuted. De Valera was an American and was given imprisonment, in order to not lose support of the United States. Markievicz was a woman and therefore was given a prison sentence instead. This choice infuriated Markievicz, as she saw herself as an equal to her fellow men who rebelled. Additionally, Thomas Kent, one of the Volunteer commandants who stayed at home, was arrested after a shootout with the constabulary and

¹⁸² Stephen-stratford.com, “Easter Rising,” accessed March 8, 2016, <http://www.stephen-stratford.co.uk/easter.htm>.

¹⁸³ ‘X’ indicates a signer of the Proclamation.

sentenced to death. He died on May 9, 1916. Roger Casement, having been held in the Tower of London following his arrest, was tried for treason in London during the month of June. While he initially had public support due to his humanitarian work and the death sentence wasn't considered due to his knighthood, Casement had his knighthood revoked and was sentenced to death on the 29th of June. Petitions circulated calling for his release, but a counter campaign published entries of Casement's diary that alluded to homosexual activities. Casement lost all remaining support and went to the gallows on August 3, 1916.¹⁸⁴

The executions themselves had some flair of drama about them. Patrick Pearse supposedly whistled on the way to his death. Joseph Plunkett, dying of illness, was married right before he was shot.¹⁸⁵ Michael Mallin passed his home on the way to the Gaol. He hoped to see his wife or his four children, but "The only one of my household that I could cast my longing eyes on was poor Prinnie the dog; she looked so faithful there at the door."¹⁸⁶ James Connolly, dying of gangrene from his ankle wound, had to be tied to a chair in order to face his firing squad.¹⁸⁷ Before his death, Connolly told his daughter that "he was concerned that his fellow socialists wouldn't understand why he took part in the nationalist uprising. "They will all forget that I am an Irishman," he said."¹⁸⁸

The Irish who observed the executions and the mass arrests did remember that they were Irish. Maxwell's actions and the revelation that Bowen-Colthurst had executed civilians permanently damaged the reputation of the British government in London. The Prime Minister H.H. Asquith ordered Maxwell to stop executing people, as he was making

¹⁸⁴ Stephen-stratford.com "Roger Casement"

¹⁸⁵ *Fifty Battles*, 111.

¹⁸⁶ The Irish Times, "Easter Rising 1916 – the aftermath: arrests and executions."

¹⁸⁷ *Fifty Battles*, 111.

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

martyrs of the leaders.¹⁸⁹ The executed, now known as the '16 Martyrs', were seen to have died for something to common Irish citizen.¹⁹⁰



Figure 4.6: The 16 Martyrs of the Easter Rising

Additionally, the conditions that Dubliners and the Irish found themselves in after the Rising drew in supporters for the separatist movement. Warren B. Well, a Unionist journalist, wrote a letter addressed to the people of Britain in order to explain the grave error of Maxwell's actions:

¹⁸⁹ *The Easter Rising in Eight Minutes.*

¹⁹⁰ See Figure 8.1

“I am not asking you to regard the executions of the rebel leaders, the sentences of penal servitude, the deportations, announced badly day after day without publication of the evidence which justified the infliction of the capital penalty, from behind the closed doors of Field Court-Martial, from the point of view of their justice, or even of their expediency. I am simply inviting you to endeavor to understand their effect on that Irish public which read of them ‘with something of the feeling of helpless rage with which one would watch a stream of blood dripping from under a closed door.’”¹⁹¹

James Stephens, the writer and witness to the Rising, had a simpler phrase for the true effect of the Easter Rising: “from this day, the great adventure opens for Ireland. The Volunteers are dead and the call is now for volunteers.”¹⁹² Furthermore, as theories of blame for the cause of the rising became to perpetuate among the populace, Stephens put forth that John Redmond’s recruitment drive for the British was to blame, stating:

“It happened because the leader of the Irish Part misrepresented his people in the English House of Parliament. On the day of the declaration of war between England and Germany he took the Irish case, weighty with eight centuries of history and tradition, and he threw it out of the window. He pledged Ireland to a particular course of action, and he had no authority to give this pledge and he had no guarantee that it would be met.

The ramshackle intelligence of his party and his own emotional nature betrayed him and us and England. He swore Ireland to loyalty as if he had Ireland in his pocket, and could answer for her. Ireland has never been disloyal to England, not even at this epoch, because she has never been loyal to England.

Mr. Redmond told the lie and he is answerable to England for the Violence she had to be guilty of, and to Ireland for the desolation to which we have to submit.”¹⁹³

Maxwell’s handling of Ireland after the executions had ceased did not alleviate the situation. Before the Rising, many in Ireland considered themselves loyal subjects, but when martial law was put into effect, indefinitely by order of Parliament, they were effectively divided into “loyal” and “disaffected” camps. Many Irish began to wear Sinn Fein badges

¹⁹¹ Easter1916.ie, “Aftermath,” accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.easter1916.ie/index.php/rising/aftermath/>.

¹⁹² Stephens, *The Insurrection in Dublin*, 111.

¹⁹³ Easter1916.ie “Aftermath”

openly and in contempt of law enforcement. A mass demonstration by several Catholic churches on both sides of the Liffey sent chills down the spines of the military presence. These congregations had held requiem mass for the executed, and as they passed Trinity College and Dublin Castle, the crowd hissed and booed the soldiers as they passed.¹⁹⁴

In mid-May, Maxwell confronted Bishop O'Dwyer about the antagonistic behavior of two priests under him; Fathers Michael Hayes of Newcastlewest and Thomas Wall of Dromcollogher. While they were reviewed in an inquiry by O'Dwyer, the bishop turned the investigation into a damnation of Maxwell, whom the bishop described as "a military dictator, whose proceedings were wantonly cruel and oppressive."¹⁹⁵ O'Dwyer even condemned Maxwell for his responsibility in the deaths of the leaders in cold blood, as well as the unjust deportation of thousands without trial, and pronounced Maxwell's rule as "one of the worst and blackest chapters in the history of our country."¹⁹⁶

Bishop O'Dwery's lashing of Maxwell was par for the course among the clergy, who had joined themselves with the nationalists following the revelation of the rebels' fates. As the summer wore on, the 16 Martyrs became celebrities among the population. Arthur Griffith, the leader of Sinn Fein, was arrested and public support for himself and his party only grew as 1916 went on. Placating the issue was the two faced nature of the British government. David Lloyd George, following his ousting of Asquith, attempted to make two deals with the Irish MPs in regards to Home Rule and the Easter Rising. At the same time,

¹⁹⁴ *Easter 1916*, 302.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 305.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

Lloyd George was making promises to Ulster that they would be “excluded” temporarily from Home Rule. This was changed to permanent exclusion in the second attempted deal.¹⁹⁷

Michael Collins, Eamon De Valera, and Constance Markievicz became active within Sinn Fein and Irish politics. Collins, twenty-six and on the rise as a revolutionary hero, called on Asquith to end martial law and recall Maxwell, stating that “England, fighting for the small nationalities of Europe, is maintaining by martial law a State Unionist Government against the will of the people”, and “the system of government in Ireland is inconsistent with the principles for which the Allies are fighting in Europe.”¹⁹⁸

Far and away, the biggest issue going forward for the Irish, now becoming united under the banner of nationalism, was conscription. At the start of the Great War, the British Empire was the only belligerent to not have compulsory conscription. Instead, it relied heavily on volunteers. The manpower crisis first appeared in 1916, when mounting casualties were outpacing volunteers. To placate this, Parliament introduced the Military Service Act, which drafted all single men between 18 and 41 into the military.¹⁹⁹ There were exemptions made for those seen as unfit for duty, clergy, educators, and workers in industries vital to the war effort. An expansion was added in May 1916 to encompass married men.²⁰⁰ Even with this expansion, the meat grinder of the Western Front was not satisfied with the minute numbers that the Military Service Act was able to fish out of the British population.

¹⁹⁷ Richard B. Finnegan, *Ireland: The Challenge of Conflict and Change*, (Boulder, CO-Westview Press, 1983), 35.

¹⁹⁸ *Easter 1916*, 323.

¹⁹⁹ Parliament.uk, “Conscription: the First World War,” accessed May 1, 2016, <http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/transformingsociety/private-lives/yourcountry/overview/conscription/>.

²⁰⁰ Parliament.uk

One notable exemption from the Act was that Irish men were not part of the draft pool. This was mainly due to the Easter Rising placing a distrust of the Irish amongst the government and the military. Still, this didn't stop Irish volunteers from enlisting. However, going into 1917 and 1918, more and more Irish feared that they would be eventually drafted and forced to fight for an empire that had shown them that they not only distrusted them (the Irish), but were treating them as second class citizens due to the martial law and military government. As a result, throughout 1917, Sinn Fein, once an outlier party in Irish politics, began to pick up seats not only in local governments, but in Parliament as well. The snowball began in early 1917, when Count Plunkett, the father of the martyr Joseph Plunkett, won against an Irish Party candidate with Sinn Fein support.²⁰¹ He and three other were elected and they refused to sit in London. The trend of jailed candidates winning also began with Plunkett's election, as the Sinn Fein candidate (one of the other three) was still in jail when he won his seat.²⁰²

Both Collins and Markievicz were ever prominent in the political sphere in Ireland.²⁰³ Along with a resurged Irish Volunteers, they and the IRB began to work its way into Sinn Fein itself. While Arthur Griffith was still the president of the party for the time being, the focus of campaigns and platforms shifted. The biggest impact came in June of 1917, when Eamon De Valera won a MP seat for County Clare by a two-to-one margin.²⁰⁴ Along with his fame for participating in the Rising as well as being a survivor of the executions, De Valera also became the heads of Sinn Fein and the Irish Volunteers towards the end of

²⁰¹ Finnegan, *Ireland*, 35.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

²⁰³ See Figure 4.7.

²⁰⁴ Finnegan, 36.

1917.²⁰⁵ Griffith's replacement was not out of ousting the old leadership, but instead of Griffith stepping aside so De Valera could actively lead the party.²⁰⁶



Figure 4.7: Michael Collins (top) and Constance Markievicz (bottom) campaigning for Sinn Féin

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁶ Casey Egan, Irishcentral.com, "Remembering Arthur Griffith, founder of Sinn Féin, on his birthday," March 31, 2016, accessed May 1, 2016, <http://www.irishcentral.com/roots/history/Arthur-Griffith-founder-of-Sinn-Fein-died-93-years-ago-today.html>

In 1918, the *casus belli* for Sinn Fein's rise came through. Parliament proposed expanding the Military Service Act to all of Ireland. Sinn Fein supporters campaigned hard against conscription by any legal means which they could. Bishops across the island issued a statement against conscription which said "To enforce conscription here without the consent of the people would be perfectly unwarrantable and would soon and inevitable end in defeating its own purposes."²⁰⁷ Additionally, Irish nationalists and sympathizers presented an anti-conscription pledge that was encouraged to be taken at churches (the Catholic Church of Ireland supported the movement against conscription).²⁰⁸ While the House of Commons did pass the expansion of the Military Service Act and the Irish Parliamentary Party performed a symbolic walkout, conscription never did kick off in Ireland thanks to the efforts of the nationalists.²⁰⁹

This defiance from the home front was the beginning of the end for the Irish Parliamentary Party. Lacking any sense of unity or an improved image following the aftermath of 1916, Redmond and Irish Parliamentary MPs couldn't improve the situation in their favor. Credibility for Sinn Fein only escalated when several leaders, including De Valera, Griffith and Markievicz, were arrested between May 16th and 17th on grounds of a German plot to undermine British authority. This move was seen by the Irish as a "black propaganda project" to discredit Sinn Fein and only increased support for the nationalists.²¹⁰ Matters weren't helped by the fact that Sir Edward Carson, the agitator of the 1912 Ulster

²⁰⁷ Catholic Ireland, "The Scourge of Conscription," November 30, 1999, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://www.catholicireland.net/the-scourge-of-conscription/>

²⁰⁸ Ireland in History Day by Day, "Anti Conscription Pledge Taken," April 21, 2013, accessed May 5, 2016, <http://irelandinhistory.blogspot.com/2013/04/21-april-1918-anti-conscription-pledge.html>

²⁰⁹ See Figure 4.8

²¹⁰ Tim Pat Coogan, *The IRA*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 23.

crisis was a member of Lloyd George's Cabinet.²¹¹ During the December 1918 elections, with the war over and the threat of conscription now passed, Lloyd George, Carson, and other members of the British government were probably sitting easy, assured in the knowledge that they would continue to hold sway in Parliament.

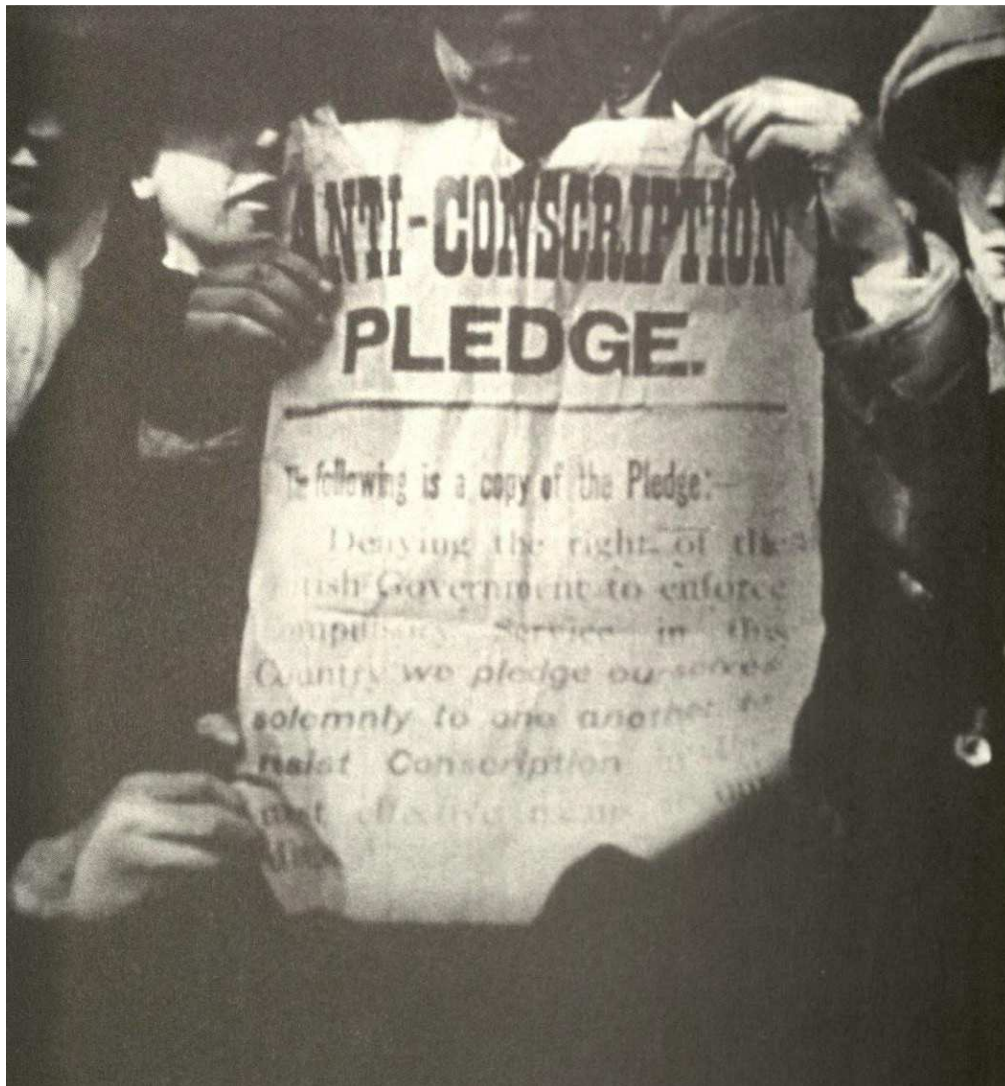


Figure 4.8: A printed copy of the Anti-Conscription Pledge

²¹¹ 1914-1918 International Encyclopedia of the 1st World War, "Governments, Parliaments, and Parties (Great Britain and Ireland), accessed May 5, 2016, http://encyclopedia.1914-1918-online.net/article/governments_parliaments_and_parties_great_britain_and_ireland.

But it was not to be. Sinn Féin won overwhelmingly in the Irish elections-seventy-three seats out of one hundred eight.²¹² The old Irish Parliamentary Party was effectively obliterated, and Redmond, having died earlier in the year, never got to see his party swept out of power in Ireland. . The MPs refused to go to London and set up their own government in Dublin, at the Dail Eireann building.²¹³ On January 22, 1919, the Dail Eireann proclaimed the birth of an Irish Republic on the ideals of those spoken by Pearse in front of the GPO three years before. An independent Ireland was born.

IRISH (UK) GENERAL ELECTION 1918

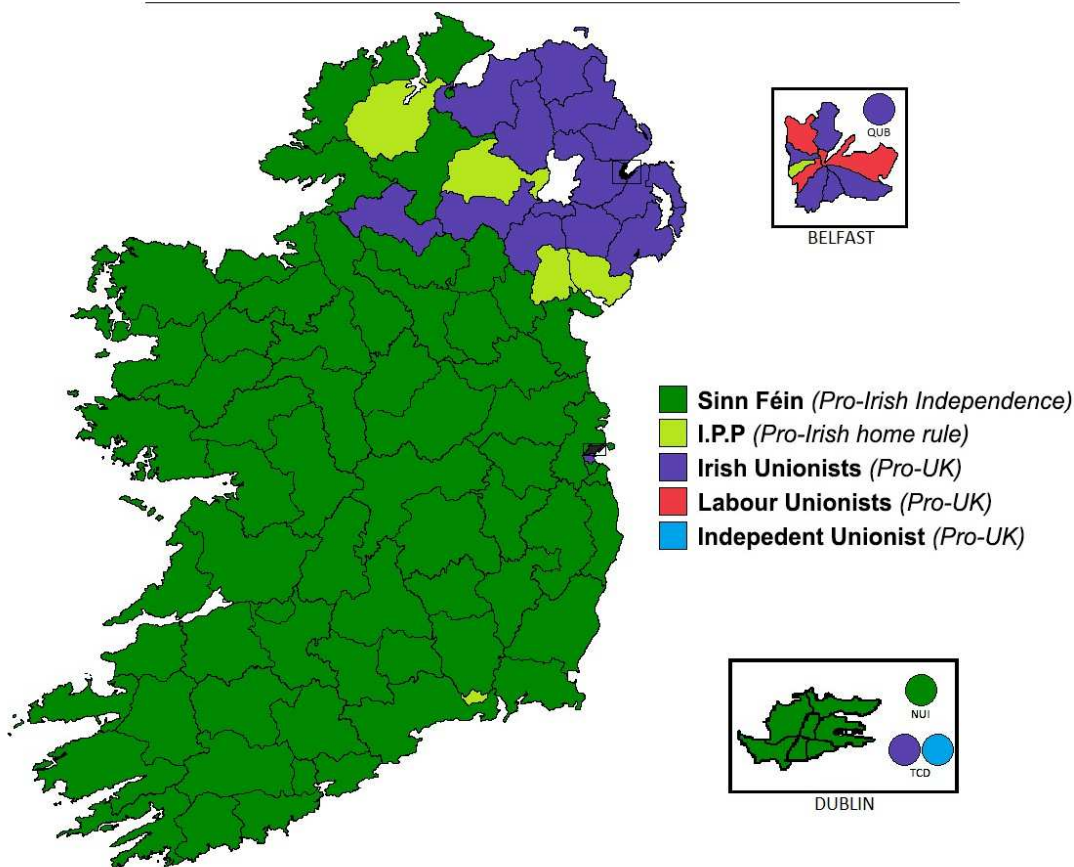


Figure 4.9: 1918 Parliamentary Election Results for Ireland.

²¹² See Figure 4.9.

²¹³ *Fifty Battles*, 111.

Chapter Five: A Questionable Legacy

The Easter Rising generated interest abroad, something that was completely lacking within Great Britain, where the event was treated like a street riot. The most prominent observers of the Rising were the Bolsheviks. Lenin and Trotsky wrote responses to the events. Lenin was in the middle of writing his treatise on social revolution when the Rising broke out. It was the perfect case study on “his belief that imperialism and the imperialist war (the Great War) would call forth movements for national liberation.”²¹⁴ Trotsky wrote a letter to Nora Connolly, James’ daughter, twenty years after the event, where he recalled: “The tragic fate of your courageous father met me in Paris during the war. I bear him faithfully in my remembrance.”²¹⁵ Lenin’s key remark on the Easter Rising in following years was “The tragedy of the Irish was that they rose too soon.”²¹⁶ Lenin also felt that because conditions hadn’t ripened before the Irish chose to revolt, they were therefore isolated and since they didn’t have the backing of the workers, they would ultimately fail. This was one year before the Bolshevik October Revolution. In a way, Lenin learned from the Easter Rising in that in order for a revolution to be successful, it needs popular support.

Another keen observer of the events in Dublin was a photographer’s assistant, a Vietnamese Nguyen Ai Quoc, later famous as Ho Chi Minh.²¹⁷ He was working as a cook and dishwasher in London during the Rising, and his biographer Pierre Brocheux noted that

²¹⁴ Workersliberty.org, “Was the 1916 Rising a “Putsch”? Lenin, Radek, Trotsky,” last modified 14 December 2009, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2009/12/14/was-1916-rising-putsch-lenin-radek-trotsky>.

²¹⁵ Opendemocracy.net, “The Easter Rising and the Soviet Union: an untold chapter in Ireland’s great rebellion,” last modified March 25, 2016, accessed March 26, 2016, <https://www.opendemocracy.net/uk/brendan-mcgeeever/easter-rising-and-soviet-union-untold-chapter-in-ireland-s-great-rebellion>.

²¹⁶ Workersliberty.org

²¹⁷ *Ibid*, 112.

“he saw how England, the largest colonial empire in the world, harshly suppressed Ireland’s quest for independence.”²¹⁸ He was also impressed on the timing of the Rising: the Irish chose to take up arms in the middle of the First World War. Ho Chi Minh also took lessons from the Easter Rising, notably three points:

- the need for popular support
- the need for committed aid from a foreign power that antagonistic to the colony holder
- the timing of the rising when the colony holder would be in a weak position

Returning to America, the public was split on how to feel about the Easter Rising. Pro-British Americans were aghast that the Irish would dare rise up. German-Americans and pro-German supporters had made their case public early on but these supporters would have a massive public backlash against them between 1916 and 1918. The Zimmerman telegraph and the sinking of the *Lusitania* by German submarines turned any support Germany had in the United States against them. Clan na Gael, the Irish successor organization to the Fenian Brotherhood, was against any rising and they were angry with the IRB for going ahead without consideration for them.

Nevertheless, some Americans not affiliated with any of the above groups sympathized with the Rising. *The New York Times* published an expose of Moira Regan, a survivor of the Rising and who served as a dispatcher for the leaders at the GPO. In the piece, Regan said:

“But the greatest result of the rising, the thing that will justify it even if it were the only good result, is the complete and amazing revival of Irish nationality. We have been asleep—we had been ready to acquiesce in thing as they were, to take jobs under the Castle Government and to acquiesce in the unnatural state

²¹⁸ Spiked-online.com, “A Shot That Rang Round the World: How the Easter Rising inspired radicals from India to America,” last modified March 26, 2016, accessed March 27, 2016, <http://www.spiked-online.com/newsite/article/a-shot-that-rang-round-the-world/18181#.VwAQSnPKV6J>.

of affairs. But now we have been awakened to the knowledge that there is a great difference between Ireland and England, that we are really a separate nation. Even the people who were not in sympathy with the rebels feel this now.

We have been living in a country that had no national life. And suddenly we were shown that we had a national life-that we were a nation, a persecuted and crushed nation, but nevertheless, a nation.”²¹⁹

The British element within the United States was not idle in observing pro-Irish sentiment among the American populace. Correspondences between USA Military Intelligence and MI1C (the precursor to MI6) were prominent. Additionally, the American side of military intelligence corresponded with the State Department on matters regarding Ireland. One organization on particular watch was the Irish Progressive League, a pro-Irish body of sympathizers who organized speeches and events to raise support and awareness of Ireland’s struggle. In 1918 meetings transcribed by stenographers in pay for US Military Intelligence, those agents noted the hisses at named politicians that were pro-British and applause for those Irish who were pushing for an independent Ireland. They also noted the excessive amount of positivity for the defeated members of the Central Powers-namely Germany and the Habsburg Empire-and how neither of those powers locked up representatives of their subject people who protested policy.²²⁰

One element that perhaps took American intelligence by surprise was the widespread distribution of publications in favor of Irish independence and sovereignty among the American people. A particular document of this nature was a pamphlet that contained Ireland’s “Declaration of Independence and other Official Documents.” Another surprise

²¹⁹ Query.newyorktimes.com “Moira Regan’s Story,” published August 20, 1916, accessed March 28, 2016, <http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archive-free/pdf?res=9E03EEDA1439E233A25753C2A96E9C946796D6CF>.

²²⁰ Office of M.I.D, 302 Broadway, New York to Director of Military Intelligence, “Sinn Fein Activities, Padraic Colum,” 25 November 1918, p3-5, File 9771-56, Records of the Military Intelligence Division (MID), Records Group 165, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

were the parallels drawn to America's founding mythology. Clippings from *Chicago Tribune* columns dated July 26th and 27th 1919 made this claim. The first column quotes an American Catholic official, one Rev. Augustine Hayden, as saying that the events of Easter 1916 were Ireland's Valley Forge. He continues with,

“It is too late for concession in Ireland, just as it was too late for England's tardy recognition of her fundamental mistake in colonial policy in the flaming years beginning in 1775. As exactly as the American republic and government functioned in those years without recognition and despite that hampering presence of British troops, so is the Irish republic functioning now under the weight of its English army of occupation.”²²¹

The appeal to American ideals of self-determination and self-governance fly directly in the face of the current American policy of alliance with Great Britain. This in of itself was a repeat of the internal conflict over seizing Cuba and making her a puppet state only twenty years earlier. In order to appease the British, Woodrow Wilson and the Democrat Party refused to recognize the new Irish republic.

Ireland's independence was the stepping stone for the majority of nations around the world becoming independent. German aid, despite its lack of impact on the success of the Easter Rising, provided a model for those seeking independence to achieve it with the aid of foreign powers. In the decades to follow, Bolshevik Russia would be the power that revolutionaries came to for assistance with the Communist International, or ComIntern. The vain attempts by the British and French to secure their empires only cemented the resolve of revolutionaries to gain independence for their nations. “Use of force” was the watch phrase for these men and women. The effect of Ireland's independence is best seen in Africa. At

²²¹ Major Thomas B. Crockett to Director of Military Intelligence, Washington, D.C. “Sinn Fein in Chicago”, July 28, 1919, p2, File 9771-56, Records of the Military Intelligence Division (MID), Records Group 165, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC.

the beginning of the 20th century, there were only two independent nations: Liberia and Ethiopia. Today, there are fifty-four nations in Africa.

In the century to follow, Ireland and her government saw the value of the Easter Rising and have celebrated 25th, 50th, and centennial celebrations of the Rising. Some have the view that the Rising introduced the gun into Irish politics. This viewpoint was adopted following 1969, which was the beginning of the Troubles. The Troubles was a twenty year unofficial war between the Provisional IRA, and two Ulster based paramilitary groups: the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Ulster Defense Association.²²² The Troubles led to the deaths of 3500 people, mostly non-combatants. The Troubles officially ended in 1998 with the Good Friday Agreement.²²³

One of the main points when reflecting upon the Easter Rising is how the Martyrs and those who followed them in the stride for independence are currently viewed. Over the past one hundred years, it has been a drastic change. Up until the 1960s, the Sixteen Martyrs were revered for their blood sacrifice for a free Ireland. Following the start of the Troubles, distance was placed between historians, politicians, and the Sixteen. *Who's Afraid of the Easter Rising 1916-2016* noted that two separate biographies, one on Patrick Pearse and the other on James Connolly, not only tarnish the reputation of these two men, but in the case of Pearse, Ruth Dudley Edwards, the biographer of *Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure*, accused Pearse of being a pedophile. This baseless accusation turned Pearse's love and

²²² Youtube. "A Brief History of the Conflicts in the North (Ireland.) Accessed March 27, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcH6sDWR-wA>.

²²³ *Ibid.*

desire for educating the youth of Ireland in her history and language into a sexual appeasement on par with the takedown of Charles Dodgson aka Lewis Carroll.²²⁴

Connolly didn't fare much better. Austen Morgan, a biographer during the 1980s, claimed in his book that Connolly was a Germanophile and an imperialist collaborator.²²⁵ This is in complete contradiction to the real man. While Connolly was indeed afraid that his socialist comrades in Ireland and Britain would never understand why he never took a commanding role in the Easter Rising, Connolly was a staunch socialist to the bitter end. His colleagues saw him as an internationalist concerned more with class than with nationalism.²²⁶ Plus, Morgan completely missed the point of the banner hanging on the front of Liberty Hall, which proudly proclaimed "WE SERVE NEITHER KING NOR KAISER. ONLY IRELAND." In an article by Europe Solidaire, the author Geoffrey Bell offers this insight into Connolly's decision.

“...Connolly (also) observed that “all bourgeois movements end in compromise” and “the bourgeois revolutionists of today become the conservatives of tomorrow”. By 1914, that had become only too apparent in Ireland. The Irish nationalist party under the leadership of John Redmond had signed up to support the British in the Great War and had urged Irish people to join the British Army. In return they were promised Irish “home rule” at the end of the conflict, basically what today could be compared to devolution, although a much milder version than what Scotland now has. Both for Connolly and the IRB, Redmond's compromise was a disgrace, and one bought with the sacrifice of thousands of Irish soldiers in Britain's war. As IRB Padraic²²⁷ Pearse wrote, “The men who have led Ireland have done evil things”, and one does not have to have sign up to this rather metaphysical framework to endorse its depth of emotion.”²²⁸

²²⁴ Heartfield, *Who's Afraid of the Easter Rising*, 112-114.

²²⁵ *Ibid*, 116.

²²⁶ Geoffrey Bell, Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières, “Ireland: The 1916 Easter Rising: Comrades of Ours – James Connolly and the Left at the Time”, February 28, 2016, accessed May 12, 2016, <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article37505>.

²²⁷ Patrick

²²⁸ Bell, “Ireland: The 1916 Easter Rising...”, <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article37505>.

Morgan makes the poor argument that Connolly was like most socialists of his day, that “their acceptance of colonial exploitation as the solution to metropolitan social problems and degeneration of Enlightenment values to Eurocentric racism.”²²⁹ On the contrary, Connolly was aware of the plight of exploited colonial populations because *Ireland was one such colony*. He was sharply critical of Irishmen who fight for their oppressors in an 1898 *Workers’ Republic* piece, claiming that “...wherever blood is to be spilt, there you will find Irishmen, eager and anxious for a fight, under any flag, in anybody’s quarrel, in any cause – except their own.”²³⁰ This condemning piece hints at Connolly’s feelings towards the Irish cause, but only just, and a generation before the fateful week in April 1916.

Then there is the view of Michael Collins. Even while he lived, the view on Collins changed for the worse. While he did participate in the Easter Rising and was widely influential in the birth of a free Ireland, he was immediately condemned by the “all or nothing” faction of the Irish Republican Army for even considering a compromise with the hated British. Collins and Griffith signing the treaty establishing the Irish Free State had the immediate repercussion of seeing Catholic Ireland falling into civil war. This war costed Collins’ life, when he was killed in an ambush in County Cork. At first, *The Times* denied the death of a man who compromised with the British. As the truth came out, millions came to mourn his passing. However, there is still a segment of Irish society, particularly those aligned with the Provisional Irish Republican Army (IRA), that see Collins as a traitor for seeing Ireland divided.

²²⁹ Heartfield, *Who’s Afraid of the Easter Rising?*, 117.

²³⁰ James Connolly, *The Workers’ Republic*, “The Fighting Race,” August 13, 1898, accessed May 13, 2016, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/connolly/1898/08/fightgrc.htm>.

It should be noted that even the poets and writers who had indirect roles in the Easter Rising through the Gaelic Revival questioned the Rising. The most significant of those was W.B. Yeats. While Yeats did write at least poems directly dealing with, and even in praise of, the Easter Rising – “Easter, 1916”, “Sixteen Dead Men”, and “The Rose Tree”²³¹ – there exists a play by Yeats that worried him after the events of Easter, independence, and the civil war. The play in question – *Cathleen ni Houlihan* – had a pretty national heroine whose name is the title, and Yeats is reported to have said on his deathbed, “Did that play of mine send out certain men the English shot?”²³² While there are some who proudly proclaim that without Yeats, there would be no independent Ireland,²³³ Yeats took little pride, if any, for his part. He had been pushed out from the movement by Griffith and took up residence in London, where his friends were no longer fellow poets, but politicians and prime ministers.²³⁴

However, Yeats did bear a weight on his alleged responsibility for the Rising. In two separate letters that he wrote, one to a Lady Gregory and another to a John Quinn, Yeats notes that following the executions and by writing a poem in memory of the dead, he kept going over in his head on whether he could have turned those men who took up arms in a different direction. William Thompson, the author, pondered on Yeats’ thoughts regarding his friend and muse, Maud Gonne and her passionate hatred of the British. Thompson notes that “Yeats could wonder “how many of these children will carry bomb and rifle when a little under or a little over thirty.””²³⁵

²³¹ W. B. Yeats, *The Collected Works of W. B. Yeats*, ed. Richard J. Finneran, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company), 180-183.

²³² Heartfield, *Who’s Afraid of the Easter Rising*, 32.

²³³ William Irwin Thompson, *The Imagination of an Insurrection: Dublin, Easter 1916: A Study of an Ideological Movement*, (New York: Oxford University Press), 143.

²³⁴ Thompson, *The Imagination of an Insurrection*, 145.

²³⁵ *Ibid*, 146.

Compounding Yeats' guilt was that he personally knew Pearse and the fact that the two of them had once shared the same stage at O'Donovan Rossa's funeral in 1914. Pearse's death and the subsequent hatred and mistreatment of Gonne and Markievicz heavily influenced a change in Yeats, which saw him abandoning London and returning to Ireland in a time of civil war. He was not just a poet and playwright; he was now a senator of the Dail. However, it seems that in his final days, Yeats came to peace with his guilt, despite it returning upon his deathbed. The poem "The Statues" addresses Yeats' concerns with its final stanza,

When Pearse summoned Cuchulain to his side,
 What stalked through the Post Office? What intellect,
 What calculation, number, measurement, replied?
 We Irish, born into that ancient sect
 But thrown upon this filthy modern tide
 and by its formless, spawning, fury wrecked,
 Climb to our proper dark, that we may trace
 The lineaments of a plummet-measured face.²³⁶

This "gun in politics" view is countered by those who see the value in the heritage of the 16 Martyrs, men who died for a free Ireland. This same view forgets that the Irish Volunteers responded not to British action, but to their fellow Irishmen in Ulster, who began arming themselves first. Additionally, the revisionist view was birthed during the Troubles following 1969. These critics of the Easter Rising are quick to point out the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising as the cause of strife.

Thankfully, there exists a publication of the commemoration of the Easter Rising which the University of Idaho is fortunate to possess a copy of the booklet. Flipping through it and reading the excerpts of the speeches and the descriptions of the photographs,

²³⁶ Finneran, *The Collected Works of W.B. Yeats*, 337.

documents, and proceedings, one does not just gain a sense of national pride (or Irish pride). Rather, one is also met with a somberness of the commencement itself. Eamon De Valera addresses not just the reader, but every crowd at every major event. He was there at every single event in remembrance of the sacrifices of those who died for Irish freedom.

It goes further than that. De Valera was perhaps the last major survivor of the leadership following the Rising, the War of Independence, the Civil War and the deaths of Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. It is difficult to imagine not only the overwhelming emotions of revisiting the places and actions of fifty years prior, but to also relive the possibility that you would be executed if captured by the British. One event that struck me as particularly painful was the unveiling of the Killmainham Jail Museum and the memorial held within its walls. I imagine that while De Valera was laying the wreath beneath the plague in the courtyard bearing the names of his executed comrades,²³⁷ he had to hold back tears and the overwhelming emotions one feels when visiting a grave. He knew most, if not all, fifteen men buried in quicklime at the Jail. Present were living relatives and descendants of the Martyrs. De Valera had to put on a brave face for those present.

The “gun in politics” view is also quick to forget that it was only after the Ulster government cracked down on the Catholic civil rights movement that there was a reaction by radical segments of Ireland. However, because of the link between the Provisional IRA and Irish history, particularly that of the birth of the IRA being that of the Easter Rising, the Rising and those who sacrificed themselves for the independent nation are trying to be

²³⁷ Department of External Affairs, Ireland, *Cuimhneachan 1916-1966 Commemoration*, (Dublin: Dollard Printinghouse), 29.

brushed aside in favor of a revised history that sees Easter week, 1916, as a random uprising by an unruly and violent segment of the populace that was compliant to Britain.

Those in favor of remembering the Rising positively are vocal in their support of the Rising's positive aspects. Some members of the government support this stance, especially those in foreign affairs, who directly saw how Ireland's independence influenced other countries. In either case, the Easter Rising is one of the pivotal moments in world history. Like the Great War that it was a part of, it was a watershed, and the world is different because of it.

*“The world hath conquered, the wind hath scattered like dust.
Alexander, Caesar, and all that shared their sway
Tara is grass, and behold how Troy lieth low-
And even the English, perchance their hour will come.*

-“Tara is Grass”, translated by Patrick Pearse.

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