Coming Together at Easter:
Commemorating the 1916 Rising in Ireland, 1916-1966

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ABSTRACT

Coming together at Easter: Commemorating the 1916 Rising in Ireland, 1916-1966

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This dissertation explores how the Easter Rising was commemorated between 1916 and 1966 in the 26 southern counties which were granted independence following the 1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty. What follows surveys the various impacts that collective memories of Easter Week had on the modern development of Ireland, discussed through six chapters. The unfolding narrative reviews the acts of commemorative defiance devised during the final years of the British Empire, leads us to the various uses of public space through processions, parades, gatherings and erections of memorials in the first decades of independence, and examines commemorations in provincial Ireland and within Irish-speaking communities in a post-Second World War Ireland. The concluding chapter assesses how these dynamics re-emerged in one way or another during the expansive 1966 golden jubilee. Altogether, the ensuing story highlights the multivocal nature of 1916 commemorations which, for better or worse, persistently played a part in the formations and expressions of Irish identity up to 1966.

I dedicate this work to all those who helped me along the long long way with a special mention to the great duo of Kate Fitzpatrick and Niamh Long.

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6. The Children of Lir, Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin city 223

List of Abbreviations

Archives of the Houses of the Oireachtas (AHO)
Bureau of Military History (BOMH)
Dáil Éireann Debates (DED)
Department of the Taoiseach (DOT)
Dublin Council of Trade Unions (DCTU)
Ephemera Collection of the National Library of Ireland (EC)
Fianna Fáil (FF)
Fine Gael (FG)
General Post Office (GPO)
Kilmainhaim Jail Archives (KJA)
Irish Citizen Army (ICA)
Irish Volunteer Force (IVF)
Labour Movement Archives (LMA)
Librarian's Office at the National Library of Ireland (LOLB)
Main Reading Room of the National Library of Ireland (MRR)
Manuscript Collection of the National Library of Ireland (MS)
National Archives of Ireland (NAI)
National Graves Association (NGA)
National Library of Ireland (NLI)
Sinn Féin (SF)
Teachta Dála (Member of the Irish Parliament, TD)
Trinity College Dublin (TCD)
University College Cork (UCC)
University College Dublin (UCD)

Chapter 1 Coming Together at Easter, 1916-1966

«We in Ireland are all in a sense children of the revolution - more precisely, of the revolutionary decade of 1912 to 1922 - and for the past sixty years scholars and statesmen alike seem to have been mesmerized by the Easter Rising of 1916.»[1] - F. S. L. Lyons

«few events in Irish history have been so remembered, re-enacted, and re-imagined»[2] - Fearghal McGarry

In Ireland, few events indeed have held as much appeal within the national story as the 1916 Rising. This fascination with Easter Week has endured to this day as proven by the expansive interest aroused by the approaching centenary. Since 2006, an All Party Oireachtas (Senate and Parliament) Consultation Group on the Centenary, assisted by an advisory board of historians[3], has been planning the 2016 commemorations. Recent developments such as the election of Sinn Féin (SF, Ourselves) leader Gerry Adams alongside 13 colleagues in the Dáil (Parliament) in the 2011 general elections and the subsequent rise in the republican party's popular support have bolstered further the Rising's drawing power. That said, the current economic crisis and severe austerity measures, in stark contrast with the buoyant Celtic Tiger mood that prevailed when the plans were originally made, might well impose much more frugal official gestures.

Whether or not a «terrible beauty was born»[4] out of the Rising, as William Butler Yeats proclaimed in its wake, has remained a moot point ever since. One thing is certain: the violent gesture against the British Empire became one of the most consequential events in

1. F. S. L. Lyons, Culture and Anarchy in Ireland, 1890-1939 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982), 1.
2. Fearghal McGarry, The Rising, Ireland: Easter 1916 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 4.
3. «Written Answers, Commemorative Events», 21 April 2010, Archives of the Houses of the Oireachtas (AHO), Dáil Éireann Debates (DED) 707, no. 1; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/2010/04/21/00027.asp.
4. William Butler Yeats, «Easter, 1916», Yeats Poems (London: Everyman's Library, 1995), 128-131.

20th century Ireland. It rejuvenated the republican tradition and consolidated the Unionists' beliefs in a distinct identity demanding a distinct state. Easter Week became an iconic event through which further Irish political, cultural, social, economic and religious developments were persistently mediated. For decades, Rising veterans such as Éamon de Valera, William T. Cosgrave, Richard Mulcahy, Constance Markievicz, Sean Lemass and Sean T. O'Kelly, to mention the most obvious names, formed the new political elite of the Irish Free State.

While much has been written about Easter Week and its aftermath, and while many excellent narratives of Easter Week have been published by Max Caulfield, Charles Townshend, Michael Foy and Brian Barton among others[5], numerous aspects still warrant fresh scrutiny. Moving beyond the actual events, my dissertation will address a gap in the narrative by exploring the ways in which citizens of the Southern Irish State[6] came together at Easter to commemorate the Rising between 1916 and 1966.

Always a central episode in the national story, the tone of discussions surrounding Easter Week has greatly fluctuated through time. The predominant celebratory flavour of 1916 accounts over the first decades of independence were eventually increasingly challenged by commentators who insisted that the state had largely failed to live up to the 1916 promises and expectations. Disgruntled narratives of 1916 appeared from the late 1960s

5. See for example Max Caulfield, The Easter Rebellion (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), Charles Townshend, Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion (London: Allen Lane, 2005), and Michael Foy and Brian Barton, The Easter Rising (Stroud: Sutton, 2004 (1999)).
6. Ireland was known as the Irish Free State from 1922 to 1937, as Éire (or Ireland) up to 1949 when it was proclaimed a republic. The key notion is that my dissertation will be limited to the 26 counties of the Southern State.

and progressively dominated the views expressed for the duration of the 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland. By 1982, at the height of the civil violence north of the border, one of Ireland's foremost historians of his generation, F. S. L. Lyons blamed the Rising for its outright negative impact on the development of the two Irish states. Easter Week and its aftermath had destroyed the hopes for a non-sectarian nation to emerge and for a cultural fusion to operate between the various Irish factions. It had consecrated a narrow Catholic, Gaelic and puritan Irish Free State while enduring clashes prevented the emergence of normalized and prosperous societies within the Irish states.

Written in the context of the 'Troubles', Lyons's essays entitled Culture and Anarchy in Ireland invalidated the legitimacy of physical-force tradition on the island. Such condemnations of violence were not new. Already in the 1920s, former home ruler and constitutionalist J. L. Garvin could be heard condemning the Southern State which had arisen from the 1916-1921 revolutionary era:

> the Ireland of the new Gaelic extremists was a pure myth. It could not be. Even the dream of it has brought to the country division, turmoil and tyranny. [The Redmonds] believed in Irish self-government (...) They died serving a bigger, broader and bolder ideal than that of the exclusionist Gaelic anachronism, (...) looking forward and not back to the golden age.[7]

The perpetuation of violence in Northern Ireland over nearly three decades encouraged the vilification of a southern nationalism declared guilty of the sins of fanaticism. The increasingly peaceful Northern society arising from the 1998 Good Friday Agreement has recently encouraged observers to reassess the repercussions Easter Week had in the development of a modern Ireland. In 2010, Fearghal McGarry notably downplayed the

7. J. L. Garvin, «The Redmonds' Ireland», Observer, 18 March 1927, in «Moderate Nationalism and the Irish Revolution, 1916-1923», Paul Bew, The Historical Journal 42, no. 3 (September 1999): 730.

adverse consequences of the Rising and made sure to distinguish the context prevailing in 1916 from the one prevalent in the late 1960s onwards. This effectively refuted the historical continuity stressed by republican paramilitary organizations operating in Northern Ireland during the 'Troubles' which attempted to intrinsically link the republican cause to the 1916 martyrs. The story of the Rising unsurprisingly changed through time, shaped and reshaped to meet evolving needs and views. As Michael Pierse puts it, «history's refashioning of past events (...) muddies the waters of rational record. As 1916 became more profoundly potent in Irish culture, it also became less real.»[8]

What follows is greatly indebted to the work of recent authors like McGarry, Guy Beiner[9], Mary E. Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan[10], Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh[11], Clair Wills[12], Ian McBride[13] and Anne Dolan[14] who all stress the diversified and often positive impacts commemorations have had in Ireland. Such reflections on the ways in which the past plays vibrant roles in contemporary society have obviously not been limited to the Irish context, and our understanding of the field has benefited from the rich theoretical observations offered by Maurice Agulhon[15], Jay Winter[16], Eric Hobsbawm[17] and Pierre Nora[18].

8. Michael Pierse, «Inventing 1916: Words, Deeds and Unfinished Business», History Ireland 19, no. 5 (September/October 2011): 34.
9. Guy Beiner, Remembering the Year of the French (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).
10. Mary E. Daly, and Margaret O'Callaghan, eds., 1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2007).
11. Gabriel Doherty and Dermot Keogh, eds., 1916: The Long Revolution (Cork: Mercier Press, 2007).
12. Clair Wills, Dublin 1916: The Siege of the GPO (London: Profile Books, 2010 (2009)).
13. Ian McBride, ed., History and Memory (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
14. Anne Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
15. Maurice Agulhon, Les Métamorphoses de Marianne: L'imagerie et la symbolique républicaines de 1914 à nos jours (Paris: Flammarion, 2001).
16. Jay Winter, Remembering War (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006).
17. Eric Hobsbawm, «Introduction: Inventing Traditions», in The Invention of Tradition, eds. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003 (1983)).

By examining the impacts, positive and negative, the Rising had in Ireland between 1916 and 1966, I will demonstrate that the ways in which societies interact with the past are never monolithic or static. The interactions between people and the past are rather of an ever-changing and lively essence. We should therefore guard ourselves from blaming the past itself for any exaction committed in its name and rather attempt to understand better how people viewed, used and, at times, abused the past.

By their very nature, commemorative initiatives, through an occupation of public space, draw attention to the aspirations and concerns of their participants. Taking various forms, these public manifestations help represent the participants themselves: their identities, claims, and aspirations. They assist in mobilizing like-minded individuals and in opposing competing factions. Commemorative gestures can unite, promote collaboration and empower participants by giving them a voice, but they also have the potential to entertain divisions, exacerbate grievances and become potent displays of social, political, cultural and/or religious struggles.

In this examination of 20th-century Ireland, my contention is that the Rising did not constitute an embittered legacy which, after decades of fuelling and proliferating resentment, inescapably lead to the grim realities of the Northern 'Troubles'. Instead, I argue that the rich national, provincial, regional and communal conversations which arose over 1916 south of the border have always been more diverse, dynamic and, at

18. Pierre Nora, «Entre mémoire et histoire, la problématique des lieux», in Les lieux de mémoire, ed. Pierre Nora (Paris: Gallimard, 1997), 23-43.

times, positive than what authors such as F. S. L. Lyons, Roy Foster[19], Michael Laffan[20], Conor Cruise O'Brien[21] or Francis Shaw[22] have acknowledged. The remaining sections of this introduction, by providing further contextual, historiographical, theoretical and structural notes, will help situate where I stand within the field and how I hope to contribute to it.

The Advent of Easter Week and its Immediate Aftermath

On Easter Monday 1916, some thousand men and women rose in an attempt to enshrine the Republic declared by Thomas J. Clarke, Sean Mac Diarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, P. H. Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly and Joseph Plunkett[23]. Echoing prior revolutionary periods such as the American and French revolutions, the 1916 Proclamation asserted the Irish right to self-determination, a prerogative which was central to the Allies' rhetoric in the ongoing First World War. Led by the secret organization of the Irish Republican Brotherhood, members of the Irish Volunteer Forces (IVF), their feminine counterparts of Cumann na mBan, the socialist Irish Citizen Army (ICA), the youth movement of Fianna Éireann and the small Hibernian Rifles acted on the old adage that «England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity». Yet, as in previous uprisings, rebels who came out to fight against the Empire represented at best a minority within a minority.

19. Roy Foster, «History and the Irish Question», in Interpreting Irish History: The Debate on Historical Revisionism, 1938-1994, ed. Ciarán Brady (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1994), 122-145.
20. Michael Laffan, «The Sacred Memory: Religion, Revisionists and the Easter Rising», in Religion and Rebellion, eds. Judith Devlin and Ronan Fanning (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1997), 174-191.
21. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
22. Francis Shaw «The Canon of Irish History: A Challenge,» Studies 61, no. 242 (Summer 1972): 113-153.
23. Listed in their order of appearance and as spelled on the Proclamation.

Prior developments on the island and on the European continent explain why no more than 1500 men and women eventually turned out during Easter Week. When the First World War was declared in August 1914, a split occurred within the ranks of the IVF, the military organization founded by nationalists in 1913 as a response to the creation of the Ulster Volunteers by Unionists in the previous year. The leader of the dominant constitutionalist Irish Parliamentary Party, John Redmond, immediately pledged the loyalty of the movement to the Allies and 175 000 Volunteers followed his lead to form the new organization of the National Volunteers[24]. Tens of thousands of them went on to serve in the British Army and activities of the organization quickly subsided. Meanwhile, the IVF, under the lead of Eoin MacNeill, kept the allegiance of some 13 000 members. While the split greatly reduced their numerical strength, it also clarified the ideological vagueness which had prevailed since the inception of the organization.

Much to Redmond's detriment and chagrin, the prospects of a short war went unfulfilled and the increasing Irish losses suffered on the Western front greatly undermined his stronghold on power. Promises made for a devolution of authority at the war's end through a political scheme named «Home Rule»[25] remained ill-defined. Many critics persistently voiced their doubts over the scheme's capacity to solve Irish problems. Mistrust ran deep as many nationalists suspected that British officials would once again

24. «Movements for Political & Social Reform, 1870-1914: John Redmond», Multitext Project in Irish History, University College Cork (UCC), Ireland; http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/John_Redmond
25. For a brief history of the diverse phases of development relating to the Home Rule, an overview is available online at «Movements for Political & Social Reform, 1870-1914: Home Rule», Multitext Project in Irish History, UCC; http://multitext.ucc.ie/d/Home_Rule. I also recommend Alvin Jackson, Ireland 1798-1998 (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999).

repudiate their pre-War commitments. Existing as mere doubts and worries among moderates, such misgivings turned to outright warmongering within the more radical separatist sections. For the followers of the 19th century Fenian tradition, «a wartime insurrection, even one likely to fail, was not only rational but a moral and historical imperative if Fenianism was to retain any credibility or future.»[26]

Thus, the possibility of an insurrection gathered momentum in the War context, but fissures also appeared within the leadership of the IVF itself. Chief of staff MacNeill viewed the role of the organization as purely defensive, a position supported by influential members such as director of arms Michael (The) O'Rahilly and quartermaster Bulmer Hobson. However, the secret council of the Brotherhood was unwilling to let the war end without acting. From 1914, ICA leader James Connolly repeatedly threatened to steer his members into a rising of their own if the IVF continued to lack the urgency to fight. After repeated and tense negotiations, the Brotherhood successfully co-opted Connolly to follow its timeline and Easter Sunday 1916 was chosen as the date for action. Alerted of the imminence of a rising, a deceived MacNeill issued countermanding orders on its eve, orders which understandably caused chaos and confusion. But the secret council refused to back down, convinced that they were already too exposed. Despite the serious set-backs suffered in previous days, the seven council leaders led out their depleted forces on Easter Monday. Less than a tenth of the available forces ultimately deployed, and, after a brave fight lasting for nearly a week, the rebels surrendered to the overwhelming military power of the British forces.

26. McGarry, The Rising, 98.

Across the island, the Rising provoked shock, confusion and widespread anger. A dominant Unionist population in the North-East Counties unreservedly condemned the treasonable nature of these actions and restated their determination to resist separation from Great Britain. In the south, politicians, businessmen, farmers, newspaper editors, dependants of soldiers, Church representatives and other public figures also condemned the aspirations of the rebels and the violent means chosen to achieve them. Forty years after the events, IVF member Michael McAllister recollected how «the country, as a whole, had condemned the Rebellion»[27]. The same went for leaders in Westminster and on the Allied Front.

Mostly confined to the heart of the capital, the fighting destroyed 179 buildings and damages were estimated at two and a half million pounds. Over 100 000 people, approximately a third of Dublin's population at the time, were put on public assistance[28]. More than 450 people were killed and a thousand were severely wounded[29]. Sixteen leading insurgents[30] were executed while martial law was implemented over the whole island. As Clair Wills notes, the «response among eyewitnesses was an ever more direct comparison with the Continent. It is hard to find any single account of the Rising that does not set Dublin beside Ypres and Louvain - whether to prove the brutality of the

27. Michael McAllister, 19 September 1956, Bureau of Military History (BOMH), Witness statement (WS) 1 494, 16, Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin.
28. Caulfield, «Epilogue», The Easter Rebellion, 359-375.
29. Ibid., 359.
30. The seven signatories were executed at Kilmainham Jail in Dublin with seven others: John MacBride, William Pearse, Michael O'Hanrahan, Cornelius Colbert, Seán Heuston, Michael Mallin and Edward Daly. Thomas Kent was executed in Cork Prison while Sir Roger Casement was hanged for treason in Pentonville Jail in England.

government forces, to bring home the horror of what the city had been through, or to suggest the chance for a miniature experience of the Western Front.»[31]

Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces, Sir John Maxwell was sent to pacify Ireland. His beliefs that political leniency was at the root of Irish problems meant that militant nationalism had to be crushed. However, as Max Caulfield concludes, «had General Sir John Maxwell, in the last analysis, been something more than an unimaginative soldier, he might have understood that from the Imperial point of view, the way to treat the insurrectionary leaders was to make them look ridiculous.»[32]

Instead, the executions, among other factors, brought a rapid popular shift in favour of the rebels. The secrecy behind the court martial trials and the ways in which the executions were carried out[33] caused a general revulsion. The arrests of over 3 000 individuals, a majority of whom had only a superficial or no connection with the Rising, spread the repercussions outside of the capital. Stories of British atrocities perpetrated on civilians furthered popular repugnance. The war showed no sign of abatement and talks of conscription gathered momentum. The latter threat galvanized support for the reenergized political party of SF. Its leaders presented themselves as the inheritors of the 1916 ideals and F. S. L. Lyons notes that:

> one of the strangest features of the rising of Easter week was that almost before it had ceased it was being described as a Sinn Féin rebellion. This curious misconception, which was shared by many Irish as well as by British observers, probably derived from the simple fact that whereas the secret springs of the

31. Wills, Dublin 1916, 86.
32. Caulfield, The Easter Rebellion, 359.
33. Brian Barton, From Behind a Closed Door: Secret Court Martial Records of the 1916 Easter Rising (Belfast: The Blackstaff Press, 2003).

> insurrection were known to hardly anyone, the name Sinn Féin as an open, separatist movement, had been familiar for at least a decade.[34]

Others like Fearghal McGarry have further attributed the brisk shift from support of constitutional methods to physical-force tactics after the Rising as a «generational moment». Building on Benedict Anderson's concept[35] of «imagined communities», McGarry argues that similar formative experiences conferred by social memory, education, expansion of print culture, family, religious and cultural influences led to the radicalization of nationalist aspirations in a post-Rising Ireland.

Building on Others...

Initial witness accounts provided by such authors as James Stephens[36], Maurice Joy[37] and John F. Boyle[38] largely supported the rebels' fight against the Empire. By consolidating rebel narratives and tying their aspirations to the ones promoted by the revered 1916 martyrs, SF disseminated Rising stories through affordable publications to legitimize the party's ambitions. Shortly after the events, SF published A Fragment of 1916 History in which John J. Reynolds declared that «when the English propagandists speak of German atrocities or Turkish atrocities their words fall on deaf ears in Ireland. We have known to our bitter cost the English methods for many centuries, and 1916 proves that the leopard does not change his spots.»[39] SF's publicity committee perpetuated the Rising's presence

34. F. S. L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (Glasgow: Fontana/Collins, 1975 (1971)).
35. Benedict Anderson, Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (New York: Verso, 1991 (1983)).
36. James Stephens, The Insurrection in Dublin (London: Colin Smythe, 1978 (1916)).
37. Maurice Joy, ed., The Irish Rebellion of 1916 and its Martyrs: Erin's Tragic Easter (New York: Devin-Adair Company, 1916).
38. John F. Boyle, The Irish Rebellion of 1916, A Brief History of the Revolt and Its Suppression (London: Constable and Company Limited, 1916), 27-67.
39. John J. Reynolds, A Fragment of 1916 History (Dublin: Sinn Féin Headquarters, 1916), inside cover.

in the public sphere[40] and Cumann na mBan acted in similar fashion[41]. Images of destruction were widely circulated in newspapers while publications such as The Sinn Fein Rebellion, 1916: picture souvenir[42] and other pictorial reviews became a popular format to immortalize the Rising story[43].

In the context of the 10th anniversary, SF Teachta Dála (TD, member of parliament) and 1916 participant Brian O'Higgins wholeheartedly appraised the «mystic charm of purified patriotism»[44] of the glorious rebels. Easter Week had been a triumph in failure and O'Higgins wrote: «Deep in your hearts let their names be borne From early morn till set of sun, The way they walked was hallowed, worn, They fought, they lost - but Ireland won.»[45]. The metaphor of an inextinguishable fire lit by the rebels was to be echoed for years. In 1936, Ernie O'Malley attributed his «mystical» conversion to the rebels' cause to the fact that «something strange stirred in the people, some feeling long since buried, a sense of communion with the fighting dead generations, for the dead walked around again.»[46] A rhetoric of good versus evil enshrining a hallowed Irish heroism opposing a vile British oppressive structure would dominate the work of influential figures like Seán MacEntee[47], Desmond Ryan[48], Desmond FitzGerald[49], Kathleen Clarke[50], Tom Barry[51]

40. Seachráidhe (Frank Ryan), Easter Week and After (Dublin: National Publicity Committee of Sinn Féin, 1928).
41. It is possible to get access to a collection of Cumann na mBan's (CnmB) publications at the Main Reading Room (MRR) of the National Library of Ireland (NLI), Librarian's Office (LOLB) 161 1-78, Dublin.
42. The Sinn Fein Rebellion, 1916: Picture Souvenir (Belfast: W & G Baird, 1916?).
43. S. P. Kelly, 1916 Pictorial Review (Dublin: Parkside Press, 1946).
44. Brian O'Higgins, The Soldier's Story of Easter Week (Dublin: self-published, 1925), 19.
45. Ibid., cover page. See also Brian O'Higgins, Ten Golden Years Ago, A Little Memorial of Easter Week, 1916 (Dublin: Brunswick Press, 1926).
46. Ernie O'Malley, On Another Man's Wound, A personal History of Ireland's War of Independence (Boulder: Roberts Rinehart, 1999(1936)), 44.
47. Seán MacEntee, Episode at Easter (Dublin: Gill and Son, 1966). and Easter Fires: Pages from Personal Records of 1916 (Waterford: St. Carthage Press, 1943).

and W. J. Brennan-Whitmore[52] to name a few. Up to 1966, Easter Week literature remained largely dominated by the authority of direct experience and by sympathetic or even eulogistic views.

Yet, debates surrounding the Rising and its legacy were never as unidimensional or triumphant as the literature discussed so far might suggest. The 50th anniversary brought an avalanche of publications largely exalting the 1916 moment, but this sympathetic outlook was not hegemonic. Authors like Conor Cruise O'Brien[53] rather insisted on «the premature character of the Rising (...) (which) may have been the misfortune of all who hoped, like Lenin, to see 'the European revolt of the proletariat.' It may also have been the misfortune of those who were to die in the Second World War.»[54] Professor Francis Shaw also chose 1966 to challenge dominant nationalist interpretations of the Rising. He condemned the rebel leaders for having propagated a sinful conception of Irish life since «objectively this equation of the patriot with Christ is in conflict with the whole Christian tradition and, indeed, with the explicit teaching of Christ.»[55] He was adamant that «were it not for the countermanding orders of MacNeill, the Rising would have been even more a civil war than it was (...) the Rising of 1916 was then a minority one, not only by reason of the ideals of the men who fought, but also by reason of the choice of physical force as

48. Desmond Ryan, The Rising, the Complete Story of Easter Week (Dublin: Golden Eagle Books, 1949).
49. Desmond FitzGerald, Memoirs of Desmond FitzGerald, 1913-1916 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968).
50. Kathleen Clarke, Revolutionary Woman, My Fight for Ireland's Freedom, edited by Helen Litton (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 1997).
51. Tom Barry, Guerilla Days in Ireland (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1981 (1949)).
52. W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, The Easter Rising from Behind the Barricades (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1996).
53. Conor Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).
54. Conor Cruise O'Brien, «The Embers of Easter», New Left Review 37 (May-June 1966): 5.
55. Shaw, «The Canon of Irish History», 123.

a means.»[56] Written in 1966, Shaw's challenge would not be published before 1972. By then, the author had gone to his reward and would not witness the furore it generated. Despite an unfavourable attitude to the Rising, Leon Ó Broin did manage to get his work published in 1966. He argued that British officials in Ireland had been generally in favour of reform and leniency towards the population[57] in the 1910s, therefore making Easter Week a useless enterprise.

Largely in reaction to the Northern 'Troubles' from the late 1960s, more and more voices called for a revision of the nationalist celebration of Easter Week. Labelled as revisionists, these authors rejected the nationalist emphasis on British agency and colonialism to explain the Irish misfortunes and insisted that a more accurate depiction of historical developments on the island depended on notions of contingency and indigenous factors. As Dermot Keogh suggests:

> there are a number of reasons why that has come about. Firstly, the carnage in Northern Ireland, which has claimed over 3,000 lives, has sensitised the official mind to the dangers of the oversimplification of the past. Secondly, the work of the New Ireland Forum, which reported in 1984, posited pluralism and the diversity of the Irish tradition. Thirdly, the mystique of violence definitely lost its appeal in the 1970s and 1980s as members of the historical profession looked at the past from the perspective of having to live at a time when paramilitary violence in Northern Ireland heaped atrocity upon atrocity.[58]

Revisionists such as T. W. Moody, F. S. L. Lyons, Oliver MacDonagh, Roy Foster[59] or Ruth Dudley Edwards presented the Rising as a harmful event. They proceeded to «debunk» 1916 myths and what they saw as a «political legacy which could be

56. Ibid., 143 and 150.
57. Leon Ó Broin, Dublin Castle and the 1916 Rising (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1970 (1966)).
58. Dermot Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 2005 (1994)), xvii.
59. See for example Brady, Interpreting Irish History, where revisionist views are voiced by T. W. Moody, F. S. L. Lyons, Oliver MacDonagh and Roy Foster.

construed as a defence of the die-hards.»[60] The perpetuation of the «Troubles» generated increasing blame towards excessive commemoration in Ireland, with the golden jubilee context being specially targeted for having fuelled resentment and having led to the sectarian violence north of the border. In 1992, David Trimble, the future Nobel Peace prize winner alongside John Hume for their works relating to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, declared that 1966 commemorations could explain the «ease with which some of those children turned to riot and rebellion barely two years later.»[61] Former Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service and Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Victims Commission, Sir Kenneth Bloomfield similarly stressed the malign influence of commemoration, saying that «anniversaries are the curse of Ireland. (...) the dates of historically resonant events punctuate the Northern Ireland calendar, calling for an orgy of reminiscence, celebration and demonstration from some section or other of the population.»[62]

Overall, the revisionists' narratives surrounding commemorations largely failed to take into consideration the various Irish voices which persistently contested the «triumphant» nationalist readings of the Rising during the 1916-1966 period. Caught in the throes of the 'Troubles', many revisionists seemingly found it difficult to acknowledge these Southern traditions of contestation. Taking pride in the Rising from the 1970s became prejudicial. It was linked to a support for the violent actions of present-day Irish paramilitary organizations. Muted at the official level and loudly honoured by extremist

60. Ruth Dudley Edwards, Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure (London: Victor Gollancz, 1977), 327.
61. David Trimble, The Easter Rebellion of 1916 (Lurgan: Ulster Society, 1992).
62. Brian M. Walker, «Commemorations can be strong unifying influence», Irish Times, January 27, 2012; http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/opinion/2012/0127/1224310807738.html.

factions, a public engagement with the Rising gradually faded. Yet, a collective reflection over 1916 was still encouraged in some quarters as it was a national opportunity to come to grip with key historical realities. In the late 1970s, historian John Murphy notably professed «that the Easter Rising is one of those rare epic events in the history of a nation which will continue to have all the perennial appeal, at the very least, of a great myth. For this reason, if for no other, the State will ignore 1916 at its peril.»[63] State officials remained unmoved and largely chose to ignore 1916 in subsequent years.

In 1991, the 75th anniversary underlined once more the contentious nature of 1916 in both Irish states. For example, in her analysis of the conflicting experiences of the Rising and the Battle of the Somme, Edna Longley concludes that sanctified histories had spurred violent behaviours and served as murderous tools on each side of the Irish divide[64]. However, several people raised objections to this idea. A civic movement called «Reclaim the Spirit of 1916», under the initiative of artist Robert Ballagh, organized dozens of activities across the Republic in efforts to bring the Rising back from the margins of extremism into mainstream Ireland. The movement justified its actions through a poll suggesting that 65% of Irish citizens still took pride in the Rising[65].

Declan Kiberd defended the need to commemorate and condemned the intelligentsia for having become fervently anti-nationalist during the 'Troubles'. He argued that the revisionist perspective had denied intellectual freedom and that it too simplistically

63. John Murphy, «Introduction», The Insurrection in Dublin, xxiv-xxv.
64. E. Longley, «The Rising, the Somme and the Irish Memory», in Revising the Rising, Máirín Dhonnchadha and Theo Dorgan, eds. (Derry, Field Day, 1991), 29-49.
65. Sighle Breathnach-Lynch, «The Rising 1916: Constructing a Canon in Art & Artefacts», History Ireland 5, no. 1 (Spring, 1997): 41.

linked the glorification of 1916 rebels with young people joining the ranks of the Irish Republican Army. Kiberd contrasted the 1916 and the 'Troubles' contexts and concluded that «the real lesson of 1916 for today is that acts of violence which have no popular mandate evoke little support in Irish people.»[66] Similarily, Pauric Travers suggested the need for «a post-revisionist age in which those who would interpret or re-interpret the Rising might best go back to the evidence of those who were there.»[67]

The increasingly peaceful environment in Northern Ireland and the economic boom in the Republic in the new millennium has helped the pendulum to gradually move back from a revisionist approach to a more positive reassessment of the Rising's legacy. 1916 in 1966: Commemorating the Easter Rising[68] diversified the readings of 1966 initiatives as compared with what revisionists had previously done. Its geographical focus on Ulster increased our understanding of the local forces at play within unofficial commemorations. A North-South comparison highlighted a conflict of aims as the Republic's leaders integrated 1916 to a narrative of modernity while Northern nationalists, feeling abandoned, built a nostalgic vision insisting on the unfinished revolution. In a similar fashion, Rory O'Dwyer proposed a reflection on the golden jubilee in which he argued that a description of over-the-top expressions of triumphalism filled with Catholic verities in 1966 was a sweeping exaggeration[69].

66. Declan Kiberd, «The Elephant of Revolutionary Forgetfulness», in Revising the Rising, 12.
67. Pauric Travers, «Introduction», in The Easter Rising, Brennan-Whitmore, ix.
68. Daly and O'Callaghan, 1916 in 1966.
69. Rory O'Dwyer, «The Golden Jubilee of the 1916 Easter Rising», in 1916: The Long Revolution, 352-375.

Released in 2003, the 1700 witness statements pertaining to the 1913-1921 period deposited with the Bureau of Military History (BOMH) returned the focus to the experiences of participants. Annie Ryan[70] and Fearghal McGarry notably use these newly available sources and propose «the story of the Rising from within and below, describing the events of this period of those who lived through it, particularly the men and women from ordinary backgrounds who have remained unknown figures.»[71] This approach magnifies the diversity in human experiences during the Rising and since through its remembrance.

What Commemorations Can Teach Us

As Jay Winter argues, «to recognize this multivocality in the field of memory helps us to avoid all kinds of dead ends»[72] and this is what I will aim to do throughout my dissertation. The dynamic relationships between visions of the past, present and future will be scrutinized alongside the diversified representations of the 1916 Rising which prompted the development of ceremonial, ritualistic, monumental or symbolic acts of collective remembrance from the local and sectional to the national and official levels.

The academic interest for commemoration and collective remembrance has a long history. Among the pioneering contributions figures the one offered by Maurice Halbwachs in the 1930s[73]. Reflecting on memory, Halbwachs described its collective nature as always prompted by the need for individuals to consolidate their perceptions by

70. Anne Ryan, Witnesses, Inside the Easter Rising (Dublin: Liberties Press, 2005).
71. McGarry, The Rising, 4.
72. Winter, Remembering War, 277.
73. Maurice Halbwachs, La mémoire collective (Paris: Albin Michel, 1997 (1950)).

feeding on the views of the social groups to which they belong. While other authors from Henri Bergson[74] to Susan Sontag[75] have contested this collective aspect of memory and rather attributed to it a private and ineffable nature, these reservations against the possibility of a collective remembrance seem too restrictive. As Wulf Kansteiner suggests:

> although collective memories have no organic basis and do not exist in any literal sense, and though they involve individual agency, the term 'collective memory' is not simply a metaphorical expression. Collective memories originate from shared communications about the meaning of the past that are anchored in the life-worlds of individuals who partake in the communal life of the respective collective.[76]

Regardless, Paul Stern reminds us, «all human groups and societies develop systems of obligation, duty and morality that they transmit culturally.»[77] So while people partaking in commemorative activities «may range in sentiment from deep commitment to almost total apathy», writes Simon P. Newman, «(...) it is all but impossible for these people, whatever their original motives for taking part, to avoid making public political statements by and through their participation: both their presence and their participation involve some degree of politicization and an expression of political identity and power in a public setting.»[78] Consequently, commemorations can be interpreted as expressions of the lively relationships people establish with the past, but also as a reflection of the socializing processes and the power structures existing between them. Paul Connerton adroitly summarizes the argument favourable to a collective remembrance when writing

74. Winter, Remembering War, 139.
75. Susan Rubin Suleiman, Crises of Memory and the Second World War (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 3-4.
76. Wulf Kansteiner, «Finding Meaning in Memory: A Methodological Critique of Collective Memory», History and Theory 41, no. 2 (May 2002): 188.
77. Paul C. Stern, «Why do People Sacrifice for Their Nations?», Political Psychology 16, no. 2 (June 1995): 227.
78. Simon P. Newman, Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 8-9.

that «we experience our present world in a context which is causally connected with past events and objects, and hence with reference to events and objects which we are not experiencing when we are experiencing the present. And we will experience our present differently in accordance with the different pasts to which we are able to connect that present.»[79]

In what follows, the focus will be put on public initiatives held at Easter across Ireland: the actual space of the streets, parks, cemeteries, churches, public buildings and other sites within the public domain. The field of study will extend further into what Jürgen Habermas defines as the public sphere, this «virtual, discursive extension of what would in pre-modern conditions (the village well, the church porch, the coffee house or aptly-named 'public house') have been the locus of face-to-face information exchange and social control.»[80] This space reaches beyond tangible sites to include ideologies, mentalities and public opinion. Following Habermas's reasoning, Benedict Anderson expounds further on the development of powerful beliefs in the modern era which combined and led to the formation of «imagined communities»[81]. Within these communities, individuals have developed a sense of belonging to a large ensemble often described through the notion of national features and allegiances. For Anderson, these communities are imagined inasmuch as their existence depended on beliefs of common values and characteristics shared by individuals who would never encounter most of their fellow nationals.

79. Paul Connerton, How Societies Remember (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 2.
80. Joep Leerssen, Hidden Ireland, Public Sphere (Galway: Arlen House, 2002), 35-36.
81. Anderson, Imagined Communities.

In their more straightforward qualities, commemorative endeavours entail a coming together for which by-products can either be ephemeral or permanent representations: a monument, a plaque, a street name, a parade, an anniversary mass, a cemetery visit, a concert and so on. Commemorating always implies a dual process of the said and the unsaid. The character of Hugh in Brian Friel's Translations outlines this deftly when warning Owen that «to remember everything is a form of madness.»[82] Commemorating is accordingly always a partial process, the result of more or less conscious choices which end up emphasizing some aspects or events and leaving much aside.

David Lowenthal intimates that «for memory to have meaning we must forget most of what we have seen.»[83] The balance struck between what is to be commemorated and what will go by the wayside is never a logical or inexorable outcome. For instance, in his study of the remnants of the Great Potato Famine within the Irish folk memory, Cormac Ó Gráda stresses the danger of forthright readings of the past, insisting that «the correlation between the intensity of memory (...) and the injury suffered (is never) by any means straightforward.»[84] Ó Gráda concludes accordingly that if the memory of the famine «re-awakens in 2045 or so its concerns will be different and so will its interpretation of the past.»[85] What applies to the Famine also applies to the 1916 Rising.

82. Nuala. C. Johnson, Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 141
83. David Lowenthal, The Past is a Foreign Country (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 204, in Remembering the Year, 32.
84. Cormac Ó Gráda, «Famine, Trauma and Memory», Béaloideas 69 (2001): 140.
85. Ibid., 143.

In the last decades, numerous authors have further theorized the commemorative field. Among them, Eric Hobsbawm and Pierre Nora have made a great impact. Adopting a top-down approach, both authors stress the desire of national leaders to dictate the commemorative terms. Hobsbawm focuses on the «invention of traditions»[86], a widespread phenomenon he defined as «a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.»[87] For him, the appeal to a noble past and the power of rituals combined to legitimize the novelty of nationalism. Many have subsequently agreed that «images of the past commonly legitimate a present social order»[88] as Connerton suggests.

Commemorative initiatives have been seen in a variety of historical contexts as the result of uses of historical narratives by the national and political elite. Focusing on Ulster realities, Ian McBride notably argues that «in Ireland, perhaps more than in other cultures, collective groups have thus expressed their values and assumptions through their representations of the past.»[89]For McBride, recognizing this Irish predisposition helps «to understand some of the ways in which different people at different times have claimed to be, or refused to become, 'Irish'»[90]. As his work further reveals, identities may have tended to be construed as natural and immovable, but they have nevertheless always remained the result of fluid, dynamic, even at times contradictory and oppositional arguments. Change is the only constant in a forever changing world. Claiming high and

86. Hobsbawm, «Introduction: Inventing Traditions», 4.
87. Ibid., 1.
88. Connerton, How Societies Remember, 3.
89. Ian McBride, «Memory and national identity in Modern Ireland», in History and Memory, 3.
90. Ibid., 42.

loud their ties with an immemorial past, various individuals and movements have continuously supervised changes in the symbols, rituals and traditions meant to celebrate the timeless existence of the nation. In 20th-century Ireland, beyond the great drawing power of nationalism, factors like religion, class, gender, language, ethnicity and communal interests have been influential in the construction of identities.

Pushing Hobsbawm's reflection further, the work of Pierre Nora[91] on lieux de mémoire poses the fascinating and intricate «problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists.»[92] Concerned by the weakening of French national cohesion[93], Nora also adopts a top-down approach. Cumulatively, the evidence provided by Hobsbawm and Nora undoubtedly helps us to recognize the political forces and clashes shaping commemorations at the national or official level. However, these contributions have seemingly underestimated, or at least largely ignored, the impetuses coming from below at the popular level. Therefore, Hobsbawm and Nora have only uncovered part of the story. It appears necessary to cast our reflection wider since, as Alon Confino puts it, «by sanctifying the political while underplaying the social, and by sacrificing the cultural to the political, we transform memory into a "natural" corollary of political development and interests.»[94]

91. Nora, «Entre mémoire et histoire», 23-43.
92. Pierre Nora, «Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire», Representations 26 (Spring 1989): 7.
93. Gabriel D. Rosenfield, «A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory "Industry"», The Journal of Modern History 81 (March 2009): 138.
94. Alon Confino, «Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method», American Historical Review 102, 5 (Dec. 1997): 1393-1394.

One author who successfully departed from a top-down approach and, therefore, greatly inspired this dissertation, has been Guy Beiner. Through an engaging study of the commemoration of the 1798 United Irishmen, Beiner has furthered our understanding of popular aspirations at the core of commemorative gestures within the Irish context. In his Remembering the Year of the French, he convincingly illustrates how «official commemorative programs are (...) subject to reception and modifications by individuals who need to recognize their own past in the group's shared memory (or reorganize their memories accordingly).»[95] Beiner insists that only by «interrogating how provincial communities narrated, interpreted, reconstructed, and commemorated their pasts, it is possible to uncover traces of vernacular historiographies and discover practices of popular remembrance, which are distinct, though not entirely independent of national historiography and commemoration.»[96]. My own work will build upon Beiner's contribution by showing how a study of folk commemoration in Ireland helps to unearth key but often forgotten cultural and social realities.

Assessing the ramifications of First World War remembrance in the United States, Jay Winter draws similar conclusions. He deplores the academic overemphasis on the national leadership's capacity to dictate the forms taken by collective remembrance and the construction of national identities. For Winter, commemorative initiatives should not so much be seen as fair representations satisfying the great majority of citizens or members in any given nation or society, but rather as collective representations resulting

95. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 202.
96. Ibid., 5.

from struggles and impositions, collaborations, compromises, resistance and dialogues; various forms which are neither hegemonic nor everlasting.

This commemorative ebb and flow consequently gives life to a wide range of representations. Be it through social performances, monumental representations, symbolic actions or rituals, all commemorative renditions imply a complex web of meanings and readings. As Clifford Geertz writes, «through social performances we tell a story about ourselves to ourselves.»[97] The stories recounted by various groups for their own benefits are the results of an interdependence «so that commemorative practices are effectively dialogic cultural processes, which create and modify social memory through negotiations that take place both within each sphere and between various spheres of remembrance» according to Beiner[98].

Historicizing the portrayals of Marianne in the French Republic since 1789, Maurice Agulhon's work has made a great impression thanks to his exploration of the depths of symbolic representations, their metamorphoses and permutations through time and space. Agulhon's approach emphasizes the existence of a relationship between visual representations (images, monuments, artistic creations, etc.) and mental representations.[99] Revealing the fluidity of symbols, Agulhon concludes that «s'il est une conclusion bien

97. Jeffrey C. Alexander and Jason L. Mast, «Introduction: symbolic action in theory and practice: the cultural», in Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual, J. L. Mast, Bernhard Giesen, J. C. Alexander (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press , 2006), 13.
98. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 202.
99. Agulhon, Les Métamorphoses de Marianne, 10.

établie et bien confirmée (...), c'est bien celle de la polysémie et de la mutabilité des symboles.»[100]

A specific discussion pertaining to the commemoration of the Easter Rising over five decades from 1916 to 1966 has yet to be thoroughly explored, but some authors have shown how fruitful this approach can be. For instance, Yvonne Whelan discusses the ramifications surrounding the erection of permanent markers in the Irish capital before and after the accession to independence in the 1920s. She maintained that «the dynamic relationship between history and geography is demonstrated when national monuments, public buildings and streets celebrating national heritage are inserted into the landscape in a manner that maps history onto territory.»[101] Monuments are unveiled, streets are renamed, parades are organized, volleys are fired over the graves of patriots and pageants entertain crowds, but while these initiative reveal how people commemorate, they speak only superficially of what is actually being commemorated.

As Beiner writes, in most instances collective historical narratives and identities have largely been built around social disruptions, exceptional events, tales of suffering and survival. For most, it has seemed easier to commemorate traumatic times rather than triumphant episodes since «this appeal to a utopian time frame epitomizes the central principle of triumph of defeat, whereby memory of a defeated rebellion is presented as a step toward an inevitable triumph of national liberation.»[102] In some ways, Anne Dolan's

100. Ibid., 9.
101. Yvonne Whelan, Reinventing Modern Dublin: Streetscape, Iconography and the Politics of Identity (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2003), 15.
102. Beiner, «Between Trauma», 375.

opening story concerning the remembrance of the civil war in Ireland has exemplified Beiner's argument by highlighting the Free Staters' malaise when it came to commemorate their victory over their former comrades. Dolan tells us that, in 1970, Free State soldier Seán Irwin confided to former senator Michael Hayes about how he had continuously «cursed the fates, the frailty of the leaders, the stupidity of men, or whatever it was that brought the country to this pitch of barbarity. It is impossible to describe the harrowing and the anguish of the soul, of having to see one time comrades in arms brought out and shot to death by a firing squad. And to be aware that these men did not really know what it was all about.»[103] Victory felt like defeat and commemorating it appeared a burden to many in the victors' camp.

The consequences of the civil war were felt for generations in independent Ireland and, as will be shown, had a clear knock-on effect on how the earlier Easter Rising would be commemorated in the sovereign state. Within the Free State, authorities were rapidly confronted by militants who defied their legitimacy through a «subculture of grassroots remembrance»[104] and their past defeats were the promise of their imminent triumph. Joep Leerssen acutely notes how the dominant impetus of commemorating victimhood has contributed to the creation of an Irish paradox. Monuments or other representations have often been devised to register national triumphalism, but death and loss have overwhelmingly ended up being placed at their core[105].

103. Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 1.
104 Beiner, «Between Trauma», 378
105. Joep Leerssen, «Monument and trauma: varieties of remembrance», in History and Memory, 204-222.

Commemorating the Rising

Throughout the 20th century, citizens of the Free State have continuously «come together» or «come against each other» at Easter to commemorate «their» Easter Rising. The following chapters will study what Anne Dolan presents as the «conflict of impulses, this tussle of memory and forgetting(...) addressed at its most public point, at the very point at which it becomes part of the landscape - at the statues and crosses, in the ritual and rhetoric of commemoration.»[106] By limiting the survey to the Southern state, the hope is to go beyond the more spectacular and widely discussed clashes which persistently occurred between Catholics and Protestants, nationalists and unionists, North and South to rather focus on the less than placid negotiation process anchored around the Easter Rising in the national context of the modern Irish state.

My dissertation will complement previous works among which Daly and O'Callaghan's 1916 in 1966 figures as one of the most influential. Still, the single year timeframe of their study constitutes a limitation on the otherwise excellent contributions. While there can be no doubt that the golden jubilee represented a crucial commemorative moment, our understanding of what unfolded there and then can surely profit from a consideration over half a century. Daly and O'Callaghan rightfully suggest that «much of the battle for the control of representation of the history of modern Ireland and its profound connection with debates about 'the North' is incomprehensible if the commemoration of 1966 is ignored»[107]. 1966 nevertheless belonged to a fifty-year continuum during which an extensive commemorative network operated across the Irish state. Thus, the need for a

106. Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 5.
107. Mary E. Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan, «Introduction: Irish Modernity and 'The Patriot Dead' in 1966», in 1916 in 1966, 2.

treatment from the Rising's aftermath to 1966 arises from the simple fact that its legacy has been a permanent rather than sporadic feature in Ireland. Golden jubilee events were maybe particular in their nature, size and unfolding, but they belonged to a fluid and ever-changing commemorative spectrum.

Furthermore, the well-studied landmark period of 1966 may have contributed to partially deflect our attention from consequential gestures which occurred in a more ordinary context. Examples abound of commemorative initiatives which did not coincide with any obvious milestone: the 1917 commemoration around the ruins of the General Post Office (GPO), the erection of the 1916 Memorial in Glasnevin cemetery in 1926-27, the Cuchulainn statue project unveiled in the GPO in 1935, and the gradual reopening of Kilmainham jail in 1962 to name a few. Thereby, the idea is not to discard the golden jubilee from my reflection on Rising commemorations, but rather to use it as a culminating point.

Confined to the Southern borders, my analysis will hopefully broaden our understanding of the interconnections between centre and peripheries, between Dublin and provincial Ireland, between classes and linguistic groups. By giving more leeway to local proceedings and offering a comparative approach of commemorations in the capital, the main theatre of the Rising, and provincial Ireland, dominated by inactivity, our understanding of lesser-researched cultural dialogues will be furthered.

The Rising was meant to have a national dimension. The whole island was supposed to rise for the creation of an Irish Republic. In the end, these grand aspirations turned out to be in stark contrast with what unfolded. After the creation of the Irish Free State, the new wave of leaders, most of whom were Rising veterans, sought a posteriori to «nationalize» the meaning of 1916 events. This proved a difficult undertaking and commemoration over the ensuing decades exposed the contrasting representations offered through official or national endeavours and the ones conceived by smaller sections or movements across the state. A comparative study built around the counties of Dublin, Cork and Galway will allow for this commemorative disparity to be given a tangible dimension, while making sure to challenge the notion of hegemonic power of official gestures to dictate how the whole nation remembers.

This centre-periphery approach will also assess the often ignored dimension of Irish-language commemorations. Despite the steady decline of the Irish-speaking population in the 20th century, Easter Week commemorations through the indigenous language always remained a reality. Further sections will survey the commemorative involvement of other groups and movements who persistently used the Easter context to campaign for change and the improvement of their conditions.

A wealth of primary sources is available to get us on the road. The documents and correspondence issued by government departments contained in the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) disclose operations, plans, delays, clashes, difficulties or ambiguities underlying official initiatives. Parliamentary debates and documents of political parties

available at the archives of University College Dublin (UCD) and on the Website of the Houses of the Oireachtas[108] also reveal frenzied activities within the political field.

Newspapers provide a window onto the more informal or the local. They narrate Easter events which punctuated community life and describe the large array of initiatives from religious processions to countywide schemes and official initiatives designed by national authorities. The dimensions of centre-periphery, Irish-language initiatives or sectional commemorations were well served by national publications such as the Irish Independent, Irish Times, Irish Press and Freeman's Journal and provincial papers like the Connacht Tribune,Galway Observer, Tuam Herald, Southern Star and Cork Examiner among others. More specialized publications with a religious outlook like Capuchin Annual, the Catholic Bulletin, the Irish Catholic, with an Irish-language content in Indiu (Today), Comhar (Partnership) and Feasta (Future) or with a republican outlook like An Phoblacht (The Republic) offered engaging views of the Rising's legacy and will therefore help to diversify the perspectives examined and make it multivocal.

The 1700 witness statements deposited over a decade from 1947 to 1957 with the BOMH (Cathal Brugha Barracks, Dublin) will further flesh out the experiences of participants and onlookers as they remembered them from a considerable distance. As McGarry attests:

> the Bureau's statements represent a heavily mediated form of oral history, recording those aspects that interviewees were able or willing to recall, reflected through the lens of a state-sponsored historical project. (...) As oral historians point out, what is thought to have happened is often more significant than what actually occurred, while, for those who study historical memory, the selective nature of oral

108. See Archives of the Houses of the Oireachtas; http://www.oireachtas.ie/parliament/.

> testimony - its distortions, confusions, and omissions - is more valuable than its accuracy.[109]

The vast archives of the National Library of Ireland have provided access to an extensive ephemera collection particularly rich in visual representations, but also to a wide-ranging literature pertaining to and emanating from key national and local organizations such as the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA), Cumann na mBan, labour associations, National Graves Association (NGA), Easter Week veterans associations or committees. Archives relevant to the activities of Irish Left movements in the Irish Labour History Society (Beggars Bush, Dublin) and the personal archives of key individuals such as Éamon de Valera, Seán MacEntee and Desmond FitzGerald (archives of UCD) were also consulted.

The dissertation's structure will be simultaneously chronological and thematic. Each chapter will offer a snapshot of a specific commemorative dimension while moving forward in time. This «coming together» at Easter in the Southern state from 1916 to 1966 will be told over five chapters. Chapter two will consider the pre-Irish Free State period of 1916-1921 and focus on the commemorative strategies conceived to defy the repressive measures of the British State. Chapter three will extend from the creation of the Free State in 1922 to Éamon de Valera's first years in power up to 1934. This will be the chance to assess the discordant uses of public space through parades, masses, cemetery visits and other initiatives in an independent Ireland. Chapter four will complement chapter three by considering the erection of permanent markers from 1935 to the mid-1950s. Featured sporadically in prior chapters, the regional dynamics in counties Galway and Cork, the Irish-language initiatives and the broad question of relationships

109. McGarry, The Rising, 6.

between centre and peripheries in a post-Second World War Ireland will be the specific object of chapter five.

The sixth and final chapter will end our commemorative journey by examining the 1966 jubilee. This chapter will be retrospective in nature as it will highlight how the various dynamics of defiance, uses of public space, erection of permanent markers, tense centre-peripheries relationships and Irish-language initiatives found their way in one form or another within the 50th anniversary events. This chapter should validate the argument that 1966 was an exceptional moment but which nevertheless represented the culmination of a resilient, lively and far-reaching commemorative structure in the Irish state which was never merely one-dimensional or harmful in its repercussions. All in all, the ensuing story will uncover the multivocal nature of Easter commemorations for an historical event which, for better or for worse, has remained central in the construction and expression of Irish identities.

Chapter 2 Defying the Empire: Commemorating the Rising under British Authorities, 1916-1921

«Who were these leaders the British had executed after taking them prisoners, Tom Clarke, Padraic Pearse, James Connolly and all the others, none whose names I had ever heard? What did it all mean. In June, 1915, in my seventeenth year, I had decided to see what this Great War was like. I cannot plead I went on the advice of John Redmond or any other politician (...) nor can I say I understood what Home Rule meant. (...) I knew nothing about nations, large or small. (...) Thus through the blood sacrifices of the men of 1916, had one Irish youth of eighteen been awakened to Irish Nationality. (...) those sacrifices were equally necessary to awaken the minds of ninety per cent of the Irish people. (...) In all history there had never been so tragic a fate as that which Ireland had suffered at the hands of the English for those seven centuries (...) All history has proved that, in her dealings with Ireland, England had never allowed morality to govern her conduct.»[110] - Tom Barry, 1949

In 1949, the prominent War of Independence IRA leader Tom Barry ascribed his conversion to the «sacred» Irish quest for freedom to «the blood sacrifices of the men of 1916». According to him, Easter Week caused 90 per cent of the Irish people to be similarly awakened to the task at hand and soon triggered a national triumph after seven centuries of British oppression. Yet, the final phase of Ireland's struggles with Britain leading up to 1921 appears to have depended on more mundane factors. Accompanying the loathed executions were the implementation of martial law, the deportation of over 3000 people, the lack of prospect for Home Rule and the growing threat of conscription, all of which made support for Irish separation steadily gather momentum.

Throughout 1917, the endorsement of a rejuvenated SF, notably through the party's triumph in four by-elections, marked the demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party. SF's ascendancy was consolidated a year later when the party won 73 of the 105 Irish seats in

1. Barry, Guerilla Days, 2-5.

the 1918 British general election[111]. Nevertheless, the election also saw Unionist candidates dominate the six North-East counties, thereby confirming the prevailing north-south polarization. Despite this, nationalists were bolstered by their landslide victory in 26 of the 32 Irish counties. They increasingly vowed to lead a revolution which would see the benevolent Irish authorities replace the evil British Empire[112].

For the duration of the First World War, the stalemate over Home Rule had been shelved, but its conclusion signalled a return to the domestic deadlock. On January 21st, 1918, SF deputies boycotted the British Parliament and met for the first time in Dublin's Dáil Éireann. Elsewhere, an IVF ambush led against police forces in Soloheadbeg (Tipperary) showed that some republicans were unwilling to play the political game peacefully any longer. IVF Dan Breen justified the ambush, arguing that:

> The Volunteers were in great danger of becoming merely a political adjunct to the Sinn Féin organisation. (Seán) Treacy remarked to me that we had had enough of being pushed around and getting our men emprisoned while we remained inactive. It was high time that we did a bit of pushing. We considered that this business of getting in and out of jail was leading us nowhere. (...) We had thoroughly discussed the pros and cons and arrived at the conclusion that it was our duty to fight for the Irish Republic that had been established on Easter Monday, 1916. (...) Our only regret was that the escort had consisted of only two Peelers instead of six. If there had to be dead Peelers at all, six would have created a better impression than two.[113]

This episode accelerated the IRA's transition to armed action and gave way to a guerilla-style War of Independence which raged until July 1921. When a truce ended the hostilities, a winner could hardly be identified. The signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty in

2. An analysis of the reorganization and rise of Sinn Féin post-Easter Rising is provided in Michael Laffan, The Resurrection of Ireland, The Sinn Féin Party 1916-1923 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005 (1999)).
3. Ben Novick, «Propaganda I: Advanced Nationalist Propaganda and Moralistic Revolution», in The Irish Revolution, Joost Augusteijn, ed. (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 34-52.
4. Dan Breen, My Fight for Irish Freedom (Dublin: Anvil Books, 1964 (1924)), 38-39.

December highlighted the stalemate. The nationalists gained control over 26 of the 32 counties, but the new Irish Free State excluded the six Northeast counties where the dominant Unionist population successfully remained as part of the United Kingdom.

From the end of the Rising to the signing of the Treaty, British authorities maintained a tentative and highly contested control over the island. Faced by a far-reaching repressive system, Irish nationalists saw the Easter commemorations as an opportunity to symbolically demonstrate their disobedience. The Rising provided new nationalist shrines in the capital and, as Clair Wills notes, «in the twilight of the British administration in Ireland, the ruined GPO (General Post Office) acted above all as a reminder that the revolution was unfinished. What was at stake in invocations of the GPO was not so much the commemoration of the Rising but its continuation.»[114] The ruined GPO, the rebels' headquarters, was made to bear witness to the ongoing oppression of the immemorial Irish nation.

The 1916-21 period was marked by a game of commemorative cat and mouse between rebels and authorities. The British rulers had law and order on their side. Yet, as this chapter will highlight, their attempts to curtail the Rising's public presence largely failed. Focusing on the notion of Irish defiance manifested through sacred and secular 1916 commemorations, this chapter will narrate how Irish nationalists eagerly expressed their identity through their Catholicity. In parallel, it will illustrate how clergymen assumed roles which went well beyond the realm of spiritual matters, and ultimately further our understanding of an emerging Irish Free State linked so closely with the Catholic Church.

5. Wills, Dublin 1916, 133.

While recent decades have been marked by a steadfast, and ongoing, decline of religious practices in Ireland, the millenarian and mysticist overtones which dominated the rebels' and clergymen's rhetoric during Easter Week and thereafter cannot be dismissed as an «odd and parochial phenomenon.»[115] As Seán Farrell Moran suggests: «the fact is that Pearse spoke to a time and a society that understood him.»[116]

Commemorating under the Mantle of Religion: a Shield From the Empire

Throughout the 19th century, the demand for expanded Catholic rights was constant in British-ruled Ireland. The most ardent campaigner for Catholic emancipation was the «Liberator» Daniel O'Connell whose long crusade bore fruit in 1829. Victory however remained partial. Representing 10% of the Irish population, the Anglican Church endured as Ireland's established Church until 1870. Until that point, Catholics remained forced to pay tithes. Religious tensions and clashes occurred frequently and, «by the final third of the nineteenth century», R. V. Comerford argues, «confessional segmentation was an undeniable feature of Irish society.»[117]

At the turn of the century, the Catholic Church could count on overwhelming popular support and became the only organization capable of challenging, or at least tempering, British power and influence. For a fragmented Irish movement set on opposing the Empire, the Church's disapproval of revolutionary organizations in the past, such as the United Irishmen in the 1790s and the Fenians from 1867, had clearly shown its ability to

6. Seán Farrell Moran, «Patrick Pearse and the European Revolt Against Reason», Journal of the History of Ideas 50, no. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1989): 626.
7. Seán Farrell Moran, Patrick Pearse and the Politics of Redemption (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 14.
8. R. V. Comerford, Inventing the Nation: Ireland (London: Arnold, 2003), 261.

curb popular support for violence as a means to further Ireland's nationalist cause. However, the Church's influence went beyond such condemnations. For instance, when Irish Parliamentary leader Charles Stewart Parnell was embroiled in a divorce scandal in 1890, the Church publicly reproved his conduct and played a pivotal role in the party's split and Parnell's rapid fall from grace.

During early 20th century crises, the Irish Catholic clergy often reminded its flock of their first allegiances. In the midst of the 1913 «Great Dublin Lock-Out», Jesuit Lambert McKenna notably stressed the need to follow the Church's lead:

> It is true that just as no individual man fulfills his proper functions in life, or can attain to real happiness, unless he conforms to the laws of righteousness, so, neither can associations, whether of employers or of labourers, perform any real service to society unless they conform to the eternal laws of justice and moral conduct. The Church, therefore, is within her sphere when she dictates the moral principles which such associations must observe in their conduct, and when she lays down the moral conditions on which she will allow her children to join such association.[118]

It is therefore remarkable, and somewhat surprising, that key figures of the Catholic Church should have departed from their traditional opposition to physical-force strategies when faced with the Rising. As John Whyte observed, during Easter Week «the revolutionary movement was distinctly less hampered by opposition from ecclesiastical quarters at this period than it had been on some previous occasions in Irish history.»[119] Signatories of the Proclamation such as Patrick Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh, Joseph Plunkett, Éamonn Ceannt and other rebels like William Cosgrave, Cathal Brugha, Richard Mulcahy and Thomas Ashe were all devout Catholics. Consequently, the Church's benevolent attitude, Comerford tells us, was probably facilitated by the fact that

9. Rev. L. McKenna, The Church and Trade Unions (Dublin: Irish Messenger, 1913-14), 87-88.
10. John H. Whyte, «Revolution and Religion», in Leaders and Men of the Easter Rising: Dublin 1916, F. X. Martin, ed. (London: Methuen & Co., 1967), 215-226.

«the younger generation of Catholics coming of age in the early twentieth century tended to display religious devotion and personal piety to an extent not evident in nationalist activists of earlier times: communal recitation of the rosary was regular practice in rebel garrisons during the Easter Week.»[120]

F. S. L. Lyons notes that only seven bishops denounced the Rising, while 22 remained silent and one, Bishop O'Dwyer[121] of Limerick, vehemently defended it and became an overnight nationalist hero[122]. O'Dwyer publicly confronted Sir John Maxwell, British Commander-in-Chief, over the repressive measures put in place[123]. O'Dwyer passionately rejected Maxwell's request for the removal of two priests under his supervision and his answer gave an aura of nobility to the rebels' aspirations:

> I have read carefully your allegations (...) but do not see in them any justification for disciplinarian action on my part. They are both excellent priests, who hold strong national views, but I do not know they have violated any law, civil or ecclesiastical. In your letter of the 6th (May) instant you appealed to me to help you in the furtherance of your work as military dictator of Ireland. Even if action of that kind was not outside of my province, the events of the past few weeks would make it impossible for me to have any part in proceedings which I regard as wantonly cruel and oppressive (...) You took great care that no plea for mercy would interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The first information we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood. Personally, I regard your action with horror, and I believe that it has outraged the conscience of the country. Then the deporting of hundreds and even thousands of poor fellows without a trial of any kind, seems to me an abuse of power as it is arbitrary; and altogether your regime has been one of the worst and blackest the (sic) chapters in the history of the misgovernment of the country.[124]

11. Comerford, Inventing the Nation, 113.
12. O'Dwyer was awarded the Freedom of the City by the Limerick Corporation in September 1916 as a result of his support for the rebels.
13. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine, 133.
14. An interesting study of Bishop O'Dwyer's views on the Rising is provided in E. P. O'Callaghan, «Correspondence between Bishop O'Dwyer and Bishop Foley on the Dublin Rising, 1916-17», Collectanea Hibernica 18/19 (1976/1977): 184-212.
15. Bishop Edward Thomas O'Dwyer of Limerick, «Untitled», 17 May 1916, Correspondence and unpublished letters and Full Speech at Limerick, September 14th, 1916 (Limerick: P. Gallagher, 1917?), MRR, Ir 280 p171, NLI.

Soon after, O'Dwyer claimed that «Ireland is not yet dead; while her young men are not afraid to die for her in open fight and, when defeated, stand proudly with their backs to the wall as targets for English bullets, we need never despair for the old cause.»[125] For him, the old Irish cause, being a just one, would never be stifled. Nationalists revelled in the idea. When conferred with the Freedom of the City of Limerick in September 1916, O'Dwyer encouraged the Irish people to stand up to British brutality:

> Even if the rebellion was not justifiable theologically was I to join in the condemnation of Pearse, MacDonough, and Colbert, who were shot without a trial, and of the men and women who, without trial, were deported from their country in thousands? (...) Irish rebels only carried into practice their rulers' principles. (...) The gratitude of conquerors is not much. Sinn Fein is, in my judgement, the true principle, and alliance with English politicians is the alliance of the lamb and the wolf.[126]

Pure theological matters could not dictate the assessment of Easter Week and O'Dwyer's stance galvanized support from the lower clergy which, as evidence shows, had largely been so inclined in the lead-up to the Rising. This alliance was showcased during the Rising when Catholic priests joined the rebels to hear confessions, lead daily prayers and delivered messages to the participants' families. This participation gained popular respect and recognition for clergymen and distinctively coloured future commemorations.

In her 1949 BOMH statement, Éamonn Ceannt's widow Aine stressed that «enough praise could not be given to both Father Augustine, O.F.M. Cap., and to his comrade Father Albert, for all they did for the executed men.»[127] Dublin priests had attended to Kilmainham prisoners' spiritual needs until the very end and in this role figured

16. O'Dwyer, «Letter to the Guardians of the Tipperary Union», 23 June 1916, Correspondence, 13.
17. O'Dwyer, «Conferring of Freedom of City of Limerick on 14th Sept. 1916», Correspondence, 3, 5, 7 and 8.
18. Aine Bean E. Ceannt, 24 May 1949, BOMH, WS 264.

prominently among the rare witnesses of the executions. This proved instrumental in making the priests' accounts so coveted thereafter and placed religious devotion at the core of the Rising's story.

In the months following the surrender, numerous clergymen publicly endorsed SF. Their support was facilitated by the fact that «while Sinn Féin, like the Nationalist Party, adhered to the doctrine of non-confessional nationalism, both shared the ambiguity going back to (Daniel) O'Connell's time of combining that with the de facto Catholic definition and inspiration of the movement.»[128] Religion and politics were blended so thoroughly that Dermot Keogh describes modern Ireland's early development as «the intermingling of the green, white and orange with the yellow and the white.»[129]

While early Rising commemorations were never strictly religious in nature[130], Church-led events represented the first sustained and structured remembrance efforts. The facility with which the widespread Catholic network integrated the Rising to its activities should not come as a surprise. In his reflection on remembrance among societies, Paul Connerton reminds us that nowhere is an «explicit claim to be commemorating an earlier set of founding events in the form of a rite more abundantly expressed than in the great world of religions.»[131] Quickly, religious overtones pervaded the story of the Rising

19. Comerford, Inventing the Nation, 114.
20. Dermot Keogh, The Vatican, the Bishops and Irish Politics, 1919-1939 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.
21. For example, Sean Hennessy stated in his witness statement that the North Dublin Sinn Féin Club was quickly renamed the O'Rahilly Club in honour of leader The (Michael) O'Rahilly, killed during a charge on a British barricade while evacuating the GPO. Such measures remained nonetheless rare up to 1921. See Sean Hennessy, 12 November 1954, BOMH, WS 1037.
22. Connerton, How Societies Remember, 45.

while 1916 martyrs, such as Patrick Pearse, were portrayed with Jesus-like redemptive qualities.

Among the many active clergymen, Father Aloysius, a Capuchin friar, kept a detailed diary of events during the Easter Week and his recollections served as a catalyst for early commemorative ceremonies. British censorship prevented extracts from being published up to 1921, but Father Aloysius managed nonetheless to voice what he had witnessed during his regular public appearances. He stressed the devotion of Pearse and MacDonagh, emphasized James Connolly's in extremis conversion to Catholicism before his execution and commented on Pearse's relief when hearing of Connolly's final action. With many nationalist figures either dead or imprisoned in the Rising's wake, Father Aloysius became a symbol of Ireland's defiance and was deliberately chosen to celebrate requiem masses offered in the remembrance of the 1916 victims. He led graveyard visits at anniversaries and officiated at the funerals of 1916 rebels and well-known supporters[132]. The Capuchin friar made no secret of his motivations behind his unwavering engagement with the Rising. For him, commemorating Easter Week promised to «deepen the attachment of the Youth and of future generations to God and Fatherland»[133] as he believed that the Rising had been fought to halt the decay of Irish morality and Catholic traditions[134].

For years, the priests' presence alongside the rebels symbolized the essence of Easter Week. Fathers Dominic and Albert, also Capuchin friars, were similarly eulogized for

23. Father Aloysius, «Easter Week 1916, Personal recollection», Capuchin Annual, 1942: 211-220.
24. Father Aloysius, 25 February 1949, BOMH, WS 200.
25. Father Aloysius, The Catholic Home (Cork: Mercier Press, 1945), 127, MRR, Ir 173 A3, NLI.

their heroic participation in 1916. Arrested by the British Black & Tans in 1920, both were tortured and forced into exile in the United States. While Fathers Albert and Dominic's prolonged absence from the island prevented their narratives from ever becoming as prevalent in the Free State as that of Father Aloysius, these two clergymen continuously made their presence felt before their arrest.

If many stories remained unpublished, they did not remain untold. The extensive social network underlying the activities of the Catholic Church undermined the British capacity to curtail the Rising's presence in the public sphere. Preaching could not be hindered as easily as publishing. Father Albert's participation in numerous commemorative events from 1916 to his 1924 exile meant for instance that his account of Seán Heuston's final moments was rapidly «canonized» and cemented hopes for a fulfilment of the «Faith and Fatherland» ideal. In his account, Father Albert recalled how, blindfolded, the young rebel had kissed a crucifix and:

> His (Heuston) one thought was to prepare with all the fervour and earnestness of his soul to meet Our Divine Saviour and His Sweet Virgin Mother, to Whom he was about to offer up his young life for the freedom and independence of his beloved country (...) I rushed over to anoint him. His whole face seemed transformed, and lit up with a grandeur and brightness that I had never before noticed. (...) Never before did I realise that man could fight so bravely, and die so beautifully and so fearlessly as did the heroes of Easter Week.[135]

Throughout the First World War, Ireland, like the rest of Europe, was deeply entrenched in a revolt against reason and modernity. The seven signatories, under the influence of the Christian Brotherhood, notably used the Proclamation to express «the myth of a recurring

26. Father Albert, «How Seán Heuston Died from a letter by the late Father Albert», Capuchin Annual, 1935: 163-164.

past.»[136] The text depicted Irish history as «a memory of trauma awaiting resolution.»[137] The Proclamation swiftly became revered among the nationalist ranks and was granted a mythical presence in the story of Ireland's liberation. Mircea Eliade has described in depth the importance of foundational myths at the core of national existence:

> Myth is thought to express the absolute truth because it narrates a sacred history; that is, a trans-human revelation which took place at the dawn of the Great Time, in the holy time of the beginning ... The myth becomes exemplary and consequently repeatable, and thus serves as a model and justification for all human actions ... [By] imitating the exemplary acts of a god or of a mythic hero and heroes ... [man] detaches himself from profane time and magically re-enters the Great Time, the sacred time.[138]

Appraising violence as the promise of the nation's salvation, 1916 Irish rebels were far from exceptional. At the time, prominent intellectuals around the Western world, from philosopher George Sorel to poets Rupert Brooke and Charles Péguy or Thomas Mann and Sigmund Freud[139], all voiced similar beliefs in the regenerative nature of war and the spiritual redemption through violence. For the seven signatories, the Rising was conceived as a revolt against the modernity promised by an ongoing foreign control over Ireland. As Moran concludes, «Pearse found the source of Irish ills in English influence. As England was responsible for the increasing materialism of the Irish people, so it was also responsible for the institutions which acted to subvert Irish values and culture.»[140]

These fears of an increasingly materialistic and atheistic society were shared and exploited by the Catholic Church. Commemorating the 1916 events under their lead

27. Richard Kearney, «Myth and Martyrdom: Foundational Symbols in Irish Republicanism», in Navigations: Collected Irish Essays, 1976-2006, Richard Kearney (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 2006), 35-39.
28. Beiner, «Between Trauma», 375-376.
29. Mircea Eliade, Myths, Dreams and Mysteries (New York: Harper & Brother Publishers, 1960), in Navigations, 35.
30. Moran, «Patrick Pearse and the European Revolt Against Reason», 625-643.
31. Ibid., 636.

represented an opportunity for the clergy to consolidate their flock's faith. In many ways, the clergy's public role was magnified by the restrictions imposed by British censorship. By preventing a public discussion of the rebels' political and social aspirations, British authorities widely contributed to the glorification of the religious dimension. The mantle of religion was acting as a shield against British laws. Masses offered for the repose of the 1916 «martyrs» became common across the 26 Southern counties. The focus was put on notions of suffering, death and willing sacrifices. Prayer cards were circulated widely and became prized mementoes[141].

In November 1916, lá na marbh (all souls' day) was dedicated to the fallen rebels. Prayer cards were distributed for the occasion and read: «your prayers are earnestly requested for the repose of the souls of the following Irishmen who were executed by Military Law, this year: (listing of 16 names). Also for the Repose of the Souls of the following men who were killed whilst fighting for Ireland during Easter Week, 1916: (listing of 54 names).»[142] The role of the British remained implicit, probably to avoid reprisals against people who would be caught in possession of the cards as they made their way home. Even as the Irish presence on the Western front grew to tens of thousands of men, this early initiative made it clear that, for its organizers, the only place for Irishmen to die for Ireland was at home fighting the British enemy and not alongside them on the Continent. Accordingly, one of the first impacts of the 1916 commemorations was to put pressure on the definition of nationalist endeavours. A decade earlier, support for Home Rule had

32. Keogh, The Vatican, 3.
33. «Lá na marbh», 25 November, 1916, Ephemera collection (EC), NLI.

been enough to be labelled a nationalist, «but that was a category which had narrowed following 1916.»[143]

British repressive measures following Easter Week, especially through martial law, meant that large attendance at funerals of rebels was forbidden. Only immediate family members and close relations were allowed to attend. Consequently, the identification of 1916 graves became a priority for republican organizations. From 1917 onwards, members of the Irish National Aid Association and Volunteer Dependents' Fund systematically identified rebel graves across Glasnevin and other Dublin cemeteries. Nell O'Rahilly (sister of The O'Rahilly, a prominent Volunteer killed in the Rising) and Lily O'Brennan placed iron crosses on the 1916 graves to secure proper identification until a more auspicious time would permit to devise fitting monuments[144]. In August 1919, a report of the Fund's activities published in the Catholic Bulletin accounted for O'Rahilly's work:

> Miss O'Rahilly combined with her constant attention to the work of the Distribution and other Committees a special interest in the graves of the martyrs. She took the initiative in having them identified by means of shields and dressed with wreaths on Easter Sunday. Further, she undertook inquiries regarding the men buried, during the dark days following the surrender, in Stevens Hospital and in the Poor Ground in Glasnevin, with a view to having their remains translated to suitable resting places in the national cemetery. On her recommendation it was decided to purchase the grave beside that of Thomas Ashe.[145]

Easter requiem masses and graveyard visits to revered nationalist sites such as Glasnevin or lesser-frequented ones like the yard of Dr. Stevens Hospital allowed people to come

34. Keogh, The Vatican, 22.
35. See part concerning St. Paul's section in Glasnevin Cemetery in Ray Bateson, They Died by Pearse's Side (Dublin: Irish Graves Publications, 2010).
36. «Report of the Irish National Aid and Volunteer Dependents' Fund», Catholic Bulletin 9, no. 8, August 1919, 435.

together in the relatively secure context of Catholic proceedings. These commemorative gestures offered nationalists the opportunity to pay tribute to the fallen after having been largely prevented by British authorities from doing so in the wake of the Rising. The use of a comprehensive Catholic network helped to reach thousands of individuals across counties, classes, generations, professions and gender with minimal organizational requirements. For the clergy, commemorative masses represented a unique opportunity to make use of popular revulsion and anger by eulogizing 1916 «martyrs» from the altar. Imparting meaning to the Rising was commonly left to them as they possessed the means to circumvent censorship and martial law and could easily reach large audiences. Cumulatively, church proceedings allowed for a widespread diffusion of Easter Week events in countless places where these had remained a distant reality at the time.

The Easter proclamation was saturated with Catholic imagery, an imagery which was seamlessly integrated within Rising commemorations. As the civil rights campaigner Eamonn MacCann wrote about growing up in a post-Rising Ireland, «one learned, quite literally at one's mother's knee, that Christ died for the human race, and Patrick Pearse for the Irish section of it ... Nationalist candidates were not selected, they were anointed. Religion and politics were bound up together, were regarded, indeed, as being in many ways the same thing.»[146] The Brotherhood Supreme Council had deliberately timed its action, striking a blow at Easter so the Rising would be equated to the resurrection of Ireland[147]. In many ways, the Rising was in itself a commemorative gesture celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Despite his opposition to the Rising, IVF Chief of Staff

37. Eamonn MacCann, War and an Irish Town, (London: Pluto Press, 1980), 9 and 13, in Navigations, 35.
38. Laffan, «The Sacred Memory».

Eoin MacNeill had himself sought international recognition for the movement by seeking the formal endorsement of the Holy See. Father to signatory Joseph Plunkett and first SF candidate elected in 1917, Papal Count George Noble Plunkett was sent to Rome in April 1916 where he secured Pope Benedict XV's approval and blessing for the Volunteers' plans for a rising[148]. After the surrender, this papal benediction was widely used to impart a Catholic dimension to the Rising and defend the morality of the rebels' actions.

In 1952, Kieran Downey recalled that his father, Joseph, had been in contact with Joseph Plunkett in Richmond Barracks after the surrender. When calling to render spiritual aid to the imprisoned rebels, a certain Father Ryan, Downey tells us, «censured my father, Plunkett and various other prisoners for attempting to disrupt the British Empire. With that Plunkett turned on the priest and asked him if he would condemn something which already had the blessing of the Holy Father in Rome.»[149] Building on the dogma of Papal infallibility, this benediction marginalized clergymen like Father Ryan who felt the rebels had been wrong to defy the Empire. Hours before his execution, Plunkett insisted once more that Downey tell all his fellow prisoners of the Pope's blessing. Other leaders such as Eamonn Ceannt recognized the importance of this Papal Benediction and enthusiastically told their troops[150].

39. Jérôme ann de Wiel, «Monsignor O'Riordan, Bishop O'Dwyer and the Shaping of New Relations between Ireland and the Vatican during World War One», Archivium Hibernicum 53 (1999), 102, and Brian Murphy and Tommy Graham, «Interview: The Gardener of Glenstal», History Ireland 14, no. 2 (2006): 53.
40. Kieran Downey, 26 November 1952, BOMH, WS 753.
41. Thomas J. Doyle, 2 February 1949, BOMH, WS 186.

A Catholic Flavour to Circumvent Censorship

At the outbreak of the First World War, the British Parliament passed the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA)[151] in order to censor the press. As a result of the Rising, British authorities enacted even more rigourous restrictions in Ireland. In such a context, commemorative initiatives under the supervision of the Church became a crucial space to circumvent British censorship, while highlighting the purity of the Irish cause and the pernicious dangers of alien and immoral cultures. In July 1916, the Catholic Bulletin emphasized the crucial role of religious commemorations of the Rising:

> Easter Week and its sequel occupy the minds of us all. Elsewhere the story is told in part. The time has not yet come to write it in full. This, however, can be said from independent testimony that history does not record a cleaner fight than that fought by the Volunteers. Another landmark has been fixed in the course of our history. Another epoch has opened. Whatever the future has in store, no one who knows anything of the country can fail to see that the founts of our nationality have been stirred to their depths, that there has been a great searching of hearts and a great quickening of religious feeling. It looks as if with the Requiem Masses for the dead, there it is united, as if by common consent, a general union of prayer for Ireland amounting almost to exaltation. Whilst this represents the general feeling, we warn our readers against malicious stories that are being put in circulation by interested parties against the dead and against the living. Some of these stories have origins similar to those put forward as «evidence» in the course of the Parnell Commission. Any person circulating them should be considered suspect by all decent Irish men and women.[152]

The «true meaning» of 1916 was conveyed during requiem masses and through the narratives of Catholic priests rather than in publications under the control of or censored by British officials. The rebels represented a link to an authentic past and survivors personified the hope for a future to be dictated by the Catholic precepts of Irish life.

42. «Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act», 27 November 1914, MUN 5/191221/8, National Archives of the United Kingdom Government, Richmond, Surrey, England, available online; http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/first_world_war/p_defence.htm.
43. Laegh, «Matters of the Moment», Catholic Bulletin 6, no. 7, July 1916, 333.

The Catholic Bulletin similarly insisted on what a distinguished Capuchin Father (unnamed but who was probably Father Aloysius) had said during a recent requiem mass: «I sincerely hope (...) that those who differed from him (James Connolly) in life will remember his dying words and recognise that he was actuated by the most Christian and Catholic spirit of forgiveness even at the very last.»[153] Second in command of the ICA, Michael Mallin's final moments were also recounted to reject fears that the organization had wanted to achieve something other than the establishment of a Catholic nation. Often quoted as encapsulating the Rising's spirit, Mallin's last request was for his children Una and Joseph to be given to the service of God while insisting: «I do not believe our blood has been shed in vain. (...) But Ireland must not forget she is Catholic, she must keep her faith.»[154]

In September, with General Maxwell's assent, an account of Sir Roger Casement[155]'s life was published in the Catholic Bulletin. The story began with an hour left before his execution. Casement thanked Father Carey «whom he addressed as his 'Prison Father', for having instructed and brought him to the knowledge of the true Faith, assured him that he 'wholly accepted, wholly believed, and wholly trusted in the Divine Plan -

44. «Events of Easter Week», Catholic Bulletin 6, no. 7, July 1916, 398.
45. Ibid., 399.
46. Roger Casement became recognized internationally in the years preceding the Easter Rising for his work depicting and condemning the abuse of workers in the Belgian Congo and the Putumayo in Peru. This recognition led to his knighthood. From 1912, his view of the Irish situation was radicalized by the Unionists opposition to Home Rule. and led him to join the Irish Volunteer Forces on their inception.At the start of the First World War, Casement was sent to Germany in the hope of securing arms, the help of German officers for the planned Irish insurrection and to form an Irish brigade composed of Irish soldiers of the British Army held prisoners in Germany. His efforts however bore few results and when learning of an imminent Rising at Easter, Casement returned to Ireland to try to stop what he believed to be a doomed uprising. He was captured soon after landing in Kerry, tried, found guilty of treason and later hanged at Pentonville prison in August 1916.The online exhibition on the Rising prepared by the National Library offers a good overview of Casement's life and engagement with the Volunteer forces: http://www.nli.ie/1916/1916_main.html.

Christ's Catholic Church,' that he wished for a few years more of life for one reason only, that he might show what a loyal son of the Catholic Church he was, and that he had joined her from conviction and not from any other motive.»[156] After reading the Casement article, Lord Decies, head of the press censorship office, told Attorney General James Campbell how Irish nationalists had, once more, circumvented censorship by exploiting the British reluctance to intervene against commemorations of a religious nature:

> The attached account of the death scene of Roger Casement is intended to present him as a pious Catholic ... It cannot fail to stir the sympathy of a large section of the readers of the Catholic Bulletin who would probably be unaffected by matter of an openly seditious nature. Although this article is an insidious attempt to keep alive the resentment at Casement's fate. It preserves moderation of tone, and since it purports to be written with a religious motive, is most difficult to censor.[157]

Over the 1916-1921 period, it is therefore not surprising to come across so many conversion stories concerning key 1916 figures: from the embrace of Catholicism by Connolly and Casement on the eve of their execution, to the reformation of Countess Constance Markievicz and the conversion of Grace Gifford, known as the «tragic bride» for marrying Joseph Plunkett in Kilmainham Jail hours before he faced the firing squad. The censorship structures were undoubtedly constraining, but they equally contained weaknesses which were duly exploited.

The British difficulty or reluctance to suppress Catholic-driven commemorations was harnessed by religious and nationalist leaders alike. Anniversary masses abounded. Services were held in churches around Dublin city on the first anniversary of the men's

47. «Events of Easter Week», Catholic Bulletin 6, no. 9, September 1916, 515.
48. Lord Decies to Attorney General (James Campbell), 5 September 1916, SPO (Dublin), CSO, Press Censorships Records, White Cards 1916-1917, number 54 in Brian. Murphy, « J. J. O'Kelly, the Catholic Bulletin and Contemporary Irish Cultural Historians», Archivium Hibernicum 44 (1989): 74.

death and became a regular feature at Easter[158]. Commemorative cards on which appeared religious set-phrases such as «Go saoiraidh Dia Éire» (May God save Ireland) and «Do chum Glóire Dé agus onóra na hÉireann» (To God's glory and Ireland's honour) accompanied the ceremonies. Pictures of the «martyrs» adorned one side while their words appeared on the other[159].

While the religious nature of these initiatives made their curtailment a delicate and difficult matter, the British administration exercised a stricter control over public space. No permanent commemorative markers took shape outside of the cemeteries until the advent of the Free State. A British edict even forbade the return of the executed men's bodies to their families. They were instead confined out of the public eye in Arbour Hill, Cork and Pentonville prison grounds. This furthered popular anger as these heroes and Christian men were denied the paramount right to a burial in consecrated ground.

The logic of British officials was straightforward. With the likes of Theobald Wolfe Tone (1798) and Robert Emmet (1803) as foremost examples, authorities had a first hand knowledge of the republicans' ability to transform graves into shrines. Recent Dublin events in 1915 had been the latest reminder of how republicans' veneration for their «martyrs» could be turned into a manifestation of dissent and a show of strength. In August, Rising leaders Patrick Pearse and Tom Clarke had turned the internment of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, an Irish Fenian and IRB member, into a grand spectacle. Clarke had Rossa's remains repatriated from the United States, while Pearse gave his

49. James Ryan, «Anniversary Masses», April/May, 1917, p88/290 (19), Archives of the University College Dublin (UCD).
50. Nannie O'Rahilly, «Commemorative material», various dates, p 102/501, UCD.

famous graveside oration in Glasnevin in which he warned that «while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.»[160] As long as British authorities ruled over Ireland, burial sites of the leaders remained out of reach.

Subsequent funerals of key characters associated with the Rising in Dublin became opportunities to compensate for the lack of access to Arbour Hill and the graves of the 14 Rising martyrs. The British forces could only attempt to keep these funerals from turning into large manifestations of dissent, but could not fully stop them from happening. In August 1917, Muriel MacDonagh, Thomas MacDonagh's wife and sister to the «tragic bride» Grace Gifford, drowned while on holiday in Skerries (Dublin). Her death allowed for an impromptu celebration of the Rising. The deceased had not herself participated in Easter Week, but she had «offered» her husband for the Irish cause. The Bulletin described the context of her death, but also emphasized the fact that «Mrs. MacDonagh made her first Holy Communion on May 3rd, 1917, the anniversary of her husband's execution, and since then has been a devout and weekly communicant. (...) The public funeral to Glasnevin the following morning will rank amongst the historic funerals to the national cemetery.»[161] The link to the Rising was made even more explicit by a funeral procession led by a trio of priests including Father Albert.

A month later, the death of another 1916 veteran enhanced the narrative of martyrdom associated with the Rising. The death of Thomas Ashe, Commandant of the Fingal Battallion who had led his troops in Ashbourne (Meath) to the only rebel victory of the

51. Patrick Pearse, «'The Fools, the fools! They have left us our Fenian Dead.'», in Great Irish Speeches, Richard Aldous, ed. (Northampton: Quercus, 2009 (2007), 53-56.
52. «The Events of Easter Week», Catholic Bulletin 7, no. 7, July 1917, 511.

Rising, marked a return to commemorative defiance with an illegal Dublin procession. Having died in prison from force-feeding complications, Ashe's funeral was narrated by the Catholic Bulletin in these terms:

> His death moved the whole country to the deepest resentment and won more adherents to the Republican cause than did all the executions following the Rising. His remains while lying in state for four days in the Mater Hospital and the City Hall were visited by an unending procession of sympathetic mourners; and his funeral to Glasnevin - though the provinces were practically precluded from participation in it - proved the greatest and most impressive manifestation of national sympathy ever witnessed in Ireland.[162]

British laws restricted the freedom of movement and prevented a countrywide convergence on Dublin, but authorities could not so easily impede the movements of locals. A year later, the first anniversary of Ashe's death was the renewed occasion to violate British laws. 500 youths and 300 members of Cumann na mBan, a women auxiliary organization to the IVF, walked in ranks behind the Glasnevin-bound procession led by the iconic trio of Fathers Augustine, Albert and Dominic.[163] Throughout the day, hundreds more disregarded the British orders and visited the grave.[164]

As a whole, the mantle of Catholic proceedings allowed for a widespread commemoration of Easter Week up to 1921 despite the best efforts of British authorities to prevent public expressions regarding the Rising. Without the support of the Catholic Church, commemorative undertakings by nationalists would not have reverberated so widely. The clergy imparted a «Faith and Fatherland» reading on the Rising, while

53. «Events of Easter Week», Catholic Bulletin 7, no. 12, December 1917, 377.
54. «Funeral of procession of Thomas Ashe», RTÉ Cashman Collection, 0510/052; https://stillslibrary.rte.ie/.
55. «The Ashe Anniversary, A Graveside Commemoration», Irish Independent, 30 September, 1918.

nationalists profited from religious proceedings such as funerals, requiem masses, anniversary masses and the relatively secure environment of graveyards to by-pass the repressive British structure and keep the memory of the Rising alive. Beyond the circumvention of British powers through commemorative endeavours, the relationship which was established between politics and religion during the 1916-1921 period was conceived as a barrier against British influence.

Waving the Irish Tricolour Against the Empire

Rising commemorations were strongly anchored around religious practice, but were never exclusively religious in nature. Nationalists also conceived secular ways to recall the Rising while the British remained in control. Acting simultaneously as a challenge to the British power and to the constitutionalist ideals of the Irish Parliamentary Party, Easter Week represented the ideal moment to introduce new traditions and symbols which were to occupy centre stage in subsequent commemorations. Among the variety of traditions and symbols introduced during Easter Week, this section will focus specifically on the presence of a new Irish Tricolour in 1916 and its prominence at subsequent Easters. Over the 1916-1921 period, the nationalists‘ desire to have new Irish symbols stand as representations of their values and aspirations followed a well-defined path. The French and American revolutions had already generated an extensive allegorical field celebrating the nation, a field which continued to expand thereafter. While distinct imagery was introduced within the nations, all sprang from similar motivations.

As Maurice Agulhon has written regarding the metamorphoses of Marianne, the famous French symbol of liberty, «il existe donc bien un rapport entre les représentations

visuelles (matérielles, concrètes, images, objets d'art, etc.) et les «représentations» mentales ou intellectuelles des réalités considérées.»[165] It follows, therefore, that a history of symbols and imagery is inextricably linked to wider historical forces and developments[166]. Reflecting on parades and other street gatherings, Simon Newman has established that «the partisan battle for control over the use and meaning of simple songs, signs, and symbols underscores the vitality of the popular political culture that comprised such a vital part of the politics of the street.»[167] Similarly, Markus Kemmelmeier and David Winter have shown in a recent study how the outburst of patriotism in post-9/11 United States brought, among other things, a resurgence in flag displays which were meant to symbolize a patriotic nation marching on. For centuries, flags have constituted key symbols contributing to the reification of the nation. As discussed by Kemmelmeier and Winter, «as one of the most evocative American national symbols, the flag plays a critical role in focusing and channelling national attachment.»[168]

Between 1875 and 1916, the dominant Irish Parliamentary Party introduced diverse national symbols such as a flag, an anthem, festivals, monuments and street names in order to display the distinct character of an Irish nation[169]. Irish leaders proceeded with what Eric Hobsbawm has defined as the «invention of traditions», a practice whereby symbols, all recent in origins, are meant to confirm the immemorial existence of the nation. Following on the Parliamentary Party's efforts, SF's national imagery differed

56. Agulhon, Les Métamorphoses de Marianne, 10.
57. Ibid., 249-258.
58. Newman, Parades and the Politics of the Street, 153.
59. Markus Kemmelmeier and David G. Winter, «Sowing Patriotism, but Reaping Nationalism? Consequences of Exposure to the American Flag», Political Psychology 29, no. 6 (December 2008): 861.
60. Peter Alter, «Symbols of Irish Nationalism», Studia Hibernica 14 (1974): 104-123.

only superficially as, borrowing from Hobsbawm, these continued to be the result of «a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition.»[170]

In many ways, Peter Alter is right to argue that the Rising represented «a definite break in the history of Irish political symbolism.»[171] SF leaders could not however escape the paradox underlying the revival of of older «traditional» symbols since, to paraphrase Hobsbawm, the appeals for a defence or revival of traditions always implies the existence of a break with the past deemed worth preserving[172]. In a post-Rising Ireland, the demise of the Parliamentary Party was accompanied by an equivalent collapse of popular reverence shown towards its symbols. Initially promoted by Rising leaders and buttressed by their followers, The Soldier's song replaced God Save Ireland as the national anthem, Easter Sunday succeeded St. Patrick's Day as the designated day for national commemoration, the ruins of the GPO took over the O'Connell monument as the most revered national site and the tricolour superseded the green flag adorned by a harp.

For the Rising leaders, enshrining new symbols would help to distance themselves from the constitutionalist path of Home Rule. Many nationalists interpreted Easter Week as a struggle to return to an authentic Ireland corrupted by seven centuries of British oppression, but never fully conquered. SF promised that a successful outcome to their quest would be the advent of a glorified future. The green, white and orange tricolour hoisted around the island in 1916 was not a novelty per se. By the late 1840s, the Young

61. Hobsbawm, «Introduction: Inventing Traditions», 4.
62. Alter, «Symbols of Irish Nationalism», 110.
63. Hobsbawm, «Introduction: Inventing Traditions», 8.

Irelanders, under the impulse of their leader William Smith O'Brien, made the tricolour their official emblem, helping it to gain limited recognition. It nevertheless remained largely unused until the 1916 Rising[173]and only became the official emblem of the Irish State in 1937[174]. At the time of the Rising, the green flag was deemed by the rebels to be too closely associated with the Parliamentary Party to be used. Rather than introduce a new flag which would lack the appeal of tradition, the older tricolour flag, with its association with mid-19th century revolutions and its three stripes emulating the French republican tradition, was chosen[175]. This fit nicely with the 1916 leaders' wishes: the tricolour would allow them to claim continuity with a glorious past while enabling them to impart new meanings to it.

As the first anniversary of the Rising drew closer, British authorities banned all Easter processions and gatherings, a decision which would recur until 1921. Over the five-year period, British officials kept a tight control over public space and sought to dictate how people were permitted to use it. Succeeding General Maxwell, reassigned to a lesser post in England in November 1916, General Bryan Mahon issued a proclamation on the eve of Easter 1917 justifying the ban as commemorative events would likely «conduce to a breach of the peace and will promote disaffection.»[176] Restrictions extended to wearing uniforms, displaying flags, pictures, memorabilia and singing revolutionary songs. Such impediments hindered, but did not prevent, expressions of Irish defiance.

64. A history of the National flag is available online on the site of the Department of the Taoiseach (DOT), Government of Ireland; http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Youth_Zone/About_the_Constitution,_Flag,_Anthem_Harp/The_National_Flag-PDF.pdf.
65. See Article 7 in the «Constitution of Ireland, 1937» available online on the site of the DOT; http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/attached_files/Pdf%20files/Constitution%20of%20Ireland.pdf.
66. Some observers persistently described the flag as green white and gold.
67. «Easter Monday in Dublin, Incidents in the City», Irish Times, 14 April, 1917.

Made famous by his role in the War of Independence, Dan Breen gave an example of a nationalist disregard for British edict, narrating the events surrounding Éamon de Valera's address delivered in Tipperary Town in August 1917:

> We did not carry rifles; instead we carried hurleys, thereby committing a threefold act of defiance. It was unlawful to march in military formation; it was a still more serious offence to wear uniforms; greatest offence of all, we were violating a recent edict against carrying of hurleys. Some weeks previously, on Sunday afternoon, 10 June, a meeting had been convened in Beresford Place, Dublin, to protest against the detention in British jails of Volunteers who had taken part in the 1916 Insurrection. The assembly was addressed by Cathal Brugha and Count Plunkett. Major Mills, an Inspector in the Dublin Metropolitan Police ordered his men to disperse the crowd which included several young men who were returning from a hurling game. The police used their batons, and in the melée which ensued the Inspector was struck on the head with a hurley and received fatal injuries, the first casualty amongst the British forces of occupation since the Rising of 1916. Thereupon General Sir Bryan Mahon, Commander-in-Chief of British troops in Ireland, issued a proclamation which prohibited the carrying of hurleys in public. The result, as one would have expected from the Irish temperament, was that hurleys were brazenly carried in districts where the game of hurling had never previously been played.[177]

For Breen, this specific event captured how the Irish temperament was consumed by a quest for freedom and a disdain for the British authority. His depiction of Irishness was, unsurprisingly, contradicted by constitutionalists, businessmen, Protestants, relatives of soldiers, police forces and other groups. These individuals tended to define themselves as Irish, but did not share Breen's vision of Ireland. Breen's characterization nevertheless echoed a growing support for the republican pursuit and an equivalent disaffection towards the Crown Forces.

As Sean O'Faolain wrote in his autobiography, Irish nationalist ideology was saturated with specific myths, symbols and imagery:

68. Breen, My Fight for Irish Freedom, 26-27.

> And so blinded and dazzled as we were by our ikons, caught in the labyrinth of our dearest symbols - our Ancient Past, our Broken Chains, our Seven Centuries of Slavery, the Silenced Harp, the Glorious Dead, the tears of Dark Rosaleen, the Miseries of the Poor Old Woman, the Sunburst of Freedom, that we had almost always believed would end our Long Night and solve all our problems with the descent of a heavenly human order which we would immediately recognize as the reality of our never articulated dreams. The result was what one might expect. (...) I had nothing to guide me but those flickering lights before the golden ikons of the past (...) the simplest pieties of old Ireland for which these same men would once have died rather than by one least compromising word betray it.[178]

Still, O'Faolain refuted the existence of a unique Irish identity or of a single definition of nationalist aspirations. The only thing which endured among nationalist forces was a desire to reconnect with a distant and authentic past.

Many flags flew over Dublin during the Rising. The ancient green flag with a harp was hoisted. A green flag emblazoned with the golden words of Irish Republic, a creation of Countess Markievicz, flew alongside the tricolour over the GPO. The depiction of the death of ICA captain Seán Connolly offered by Peter de Rosa hints at the importance of the green flag at the start of the Rising: «Sean fell with the flag falling and billowing around him. (...) The green flag was reddened with Sean's blood.»[179] This particular flag had been recognized as the Irish standard since the mid-17th century and «was undoubtedly the most popular symbol of the Home Rule Movement.»[180]

A demonstration held by the ICA at Liberty Hall a week before the Rising provides insight into the shift in popularity and significance of one flag to the other over a

69. Sean O'Faolain, Vive Moi! An Autobiography (Boston: Atlantic-Little Brown Books, 1963), 186 and 189.
70. Peter de Rosa, Rebels, The Irish Rising of 1916 (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 278.
71. Alter, «Symbols of Irish Nationalism», 106.

relatively short period of time[181]. The main event of the demonstration held in Beresford Place was the solemn hoisting of an Irish flag. A girl wearing a green sash was given the honour of tying the green flag adorned with a harp, «the sacred emblem of Ireland's unconquered soul»[182], to the mast of the Hall. Yet only a week later, a different flag was flown over the sites of the Rising. Several witness narratives offered from James Stephens, Maurice Joy, John F. Boyle[183] and later rebel accounts[184] confirm the predominance and importance of the new tricolour. While James Stephens mistakenly placed the reading of the proclamation from the steps of the Mansion House rather than the GPO, he mentioned that «the Republican and Volunteer flag was hoisted on the Mansion House. The latter consisted of a vertical colours of green, white and orange.»[185] That Stephens felt the need to describe the tricolour attests to its novel character as a nationalist symbol.

Scores of BOMH witness statements substantiate further the impact the tricolour had on Rising participants and bystanders. The Proclamation summoned Ireland's children to the flag in the name of God and of the dead generations, while documents published during the week stressed the importance of the new flag. In an April 28th letter addressed to every rebel, James Connolly mentioned that «the flag of our country still floats from the most important buildings in Dublin, and is gallantly protected by the officers and Irish soldiers in arms throughout the country. (...) Let us remind you what you have done. For

72. The most eloquent evidence of the interest aroused by the display of the new flag can be found in the numerous references contained in the 1 700 witness statements of the BOMH.
73. Alter, «Symbols of Irish Nationalism», 118.
74. See Stephens, The Insurrection in Dublin, Joy, ed., The Irish Rebellion of 1916 and its Martyrs and Boyle, The Irish Rebellion of 1916, 27-67.
75. See for example O'Malley, «1916 Dublin», On Another Man's Wound, 30-50 and Ryan, «At the General Post Office», The Rising.
76. Stephens, The Insurrection in Dublin, 23.

the first time in 700 years the flag of a free Ireland floats triumphantly in Dublin City.»[186] The flag Connolly refers to was not the ancient green flag, but the tricolour. Decades later, Judge Charles Wyse-Power told the Bureau that «there was a hush over the street and the Dublin people were standing looking at the flag and wondering what the whole thing was all about.»[187] That is, the sight of the tricolour flying over Dublin buildings did not initially make it clear to people who or what it represented.

A similar ambiguity prevailed in provincial Ireland. James Harte, a member of the IVF Whitechurch Company in Cork, told the Bureau that he did not know exactly what was happening at the start of Easter week because of cancellations, counter-orders and a general lack of direction. Yet, the sight of a tricolour convinced him that something serious was in the making[188]. Events surrounding the occupation of the South Dublin Union by Volunteers under the command of Éamonn Ceannt are also worth detailing. Fighting alongside Ceannt, James Foran told the Bureau how determined he was to fulfil Ceannt's order to have the tricolour fly over their heads, despite being under fire from British snipers, and how proud he was of his success[189]. The statement of Ceannt's widow Aine confirms the novelty of the tricolour, but also stressed her husband's resolve to have it fly over the occupied buildings. On the eve of the Rising, faced with the difficulty that no tricolour was readily available to him, Ceannt asked Mrs. Mellows, probably Liam Mellows's mother, to sew one for his troops. As Alderman P. S. Doyle

77. James Connolly, «Letter to soldiers», 28 April 1916, in The Irish Rebellion of 1916, 96-100.
78. Judge Charles Wyse-Power, undated, BOMH, WS 420.
79. James Harte, 30 October 1947, BOMH, WS 61.
80. James Foran, 3 May 1949, BOMH, WS 243.

later commented, flying the tricolour over Dublin buildings represented for Ceannt a clear «challenge to the Crown forces.»[190]

Throughout the week, tricolours also appeared in Enniscorthy, Kerry, Galway and Cork. Denis Hegarthy recalled that his Kilcarvan Company (Kerry) had remained inactive, but that he had himself defied the authorities: «on the Saturday night of Easter Week I made a tri-colour flag by painting the colours on a piece of cloth. I erected it that night on the chimney of a building next to the Catholic Church. It took the police until noon on Sunday to get it down.»[191] Another tricolour was hoisted in Enniscorthy on the Tuesday where it remained until the surrender. It was then given to Reverend Canon Patrick who still retained it in his possession in 1955[192]. Flags became cherished souvenirs on each side of the struggle. In the vicinity of the GPO, British soldiers proudly posed around a seized flag which symbolized the crushing of the rebellion[193]. The contempt of British soldiers for Irish standards was widespread and the officer John O'Beirne proudly told Captain E. Gerrard, of the 5th Division of British Forces in Ireland, that he had fired generously at the tricolour flying over the GPO[194].

Diverse personal stories attached a great importance to tricolours. In 1951, Eamonn Bulfin still took pride to have been the one to hoist the tricolour which flew over the GPO: «the thing I remember the most clearly about its hoisting is that I had some kind of a hazy idea that the flag should be rolled up in some kind of a ball, so that when it would

81. Alderman P. S. Doyle T.D., undated, BOMH, CD 97.
82. Denis Hegarthy, 12 March 1948, BOMH, WS 106.
83. Very Rev. Canon Patrick, 22 July 1955, BOMH, WS 1 216.
84. Conor Kostick and Lorcan Collins, The Easter Rising (Dublin: O'Brien Press, 2009 (2000)), 123.
85. Captain E. Gerrard, 3 February 1950, BOMH, WS 348.

be hauled up, it would break out.»[195] Curiously, other participants emphasized their heroic part played in the Rising by similarly claiming that they had raised the tricolour on the rebels' headquarters. R. H. Walpole and Theo Fitzgerald were adamant in their 1949 joint witness statement, that the late Lt. Gen. Gearoid O'Sullivan had not raised the tricolour on the GPO as claimed in newspaper obituaries published at the time of O'Sullivan's death in March 1948. They argued that the tricolour was not the original flag of the IRA, as popularly recognized. The tricolour had been brought over from Liberty Hall by ICA men and it had been Connolly himself who had given his men the order to raise it[196].

A maximum of 1500 people took part in the Easter Rising, but thousands more later claimed to have played an heroic role in 1916. This prompted some critics to ridicule this tardy popular conversion to the cause. A cartoon published in August 1924 by the Dublin Opinion notably showed a drawing of GPO accompanied by the caption «Don't worry about accommodation this building held 30,000 patriots in 1916.»[197] Similarly, the number of participants claiming to have raised a tricolour widely surpassed the number of standards which appear to have been raised. Among recollections, there ended up being more hoisters than hoisted flags. In spite of such exaggeration, it remains the case that in a very short time, the tricolour went from a relatively unknown symbol to a powerful national one. In a text entitled «A Brief Personal Narrative of the Six Days of Defence of the Irish Republic, Easter 1916» deposited with the BOMH, Thomas Craven remembered how, when the men were being marched to detention after the surrender, predictions were

86. Eamonn Bulfin, 29 March 1951, BOMH, WS 497.
87. R. H. Walpole and Theo Fitzgerald, 10-11 April 1949, BOMH, WS 218.
88. Wills, Dublin 1916, 145.

that it would not be long «before the green, white and orange flag would wave over us array again.»[198]

When All Is Illegal, Waving a Flag Is Heroic...

All this presses home how the Rising and its legacy created new national symbols. The tricolour would persist as a key symbol of the Rising and was often displayed during commemorative ceremonies to invoke memories of the rebels and their values. In 1955, Seamus Bevan remarked that the flag which flew on the GPO at the Henry Street corner was a potent symbol: «I thought it was rather important and that the flag had been deliberately altered to mark the beginning of a new era of history.»[199] Member of the Fianna Éireann, Bevan remembered that small replicas had been promptly sold after the surrender by a Dublin merchant named Whelan situated on Ormond Quay. He had bought one and fixed it to his bicycle where it remained for at least a year. Tricolour badges were also worn on coats, caps and hats, allowing individuals to «participate in the politics of the street on a day-to-day basis»[200] as proposed by Newman.

Nonetheless, this transition to the tricolour did not come instantly or uniformly within nationalist circles. In 1947, Fianna Éireann member Seán Healy recalled that immediately «after Easter Week, 1916, the Cork Fianna did everything possible to revive the spirit of the people and to change their apathetic attitude.»[201] That said, during a commemorative concert, he remembered how an armed guard of honour had proudly held the green flag

89. Thomas Craven, «A Brief Personal Narrative of the Six Days of Defence of the Irish Republic, Easter, 1916», undated, BOMH, CD 141.
90. Seamus Bevan, 7 January 1955, 2, BOMH, WS 1 058.
91. Newman, Parades and the Politics of the Street, 152.
92. Seán Healy, 4 October 1947, BOMH, WS 47.

with the harp. While there was some delay in the adoption of the tricolour, by Easter 1917, it was firmly established as a potent symbol of nationalist aspirations.

Despite General Mahon's ban on all processions that year, a group gathered at Liberty Hall on Easter Monday to mark the first anniversary of the Rising. What ensued was a reenactment of the 1916 events as the participants marched from the Hall to the GPO on Sackville Street (officially renamed O'Connell Street in 1924). A well-orchestrated plan saw tricolours unfurled on the GPO and the close-by Nelson Pillar, the contentious monument honouring the British Admiral Nelson made famous by his 1805 Trafalgar victory over the Napoleonic fleet. The Galway Observer described the initiative as part of an «incidental theatrical display»[202]. Exactly a year after the Proclamation had been read in front of the GPO, ICA member Paddy Morrin climbed on the ruins and raised a tricolour at half mast as noon struck. A strong police force posted in the vicinity had been outdone by the simple fact that «none could climb like Paddy Morrin.»[203]

By this time, no one needed to be told what and whom the tricolour represented. The green, white and orange had become intrinsically associated with the fast growing SF. The sight of the flags brought cheers from the crowd and, within half an hour, thousands more had flocked to the GPO to witness the act of defiance. Many waved small tricolour replicas while scores of girls wore paper flags and coloured threads in their hair. Several more sported black armbands surmounted with green, white and orange ribbons. For five

93. «Easter Week Anniversary», Galway Observer, 14 April, 1917.
94. Máire Comerford, «Unpublished memoirs», 1956, LA 18/11, UCD.

hours, the flags flew amongst scenes of jubilation[204]. When the police finally dislodged the pole on the GPO, a scramble ensued: «with the flag, the pole fell to the ground, where they were seized by youngsters, who made off with them down Middle Abbey street (...) The side streets off Mary Street and Henry Street were decorated with bunting, in which the Sinn Fein colours predominated, and there were other indications that the lower element was seeking to let itself loose in honour of 'Easter Week'».[205] The Irish Times made no secret of its contempt for «the lower element» and troublemakers who wanted to destroy even more of Dublin.

As time went on, the situation degenerated and the crowd threw stones and smashed glass[206]. The Irish Times trivialized the disturbances, limiting them to the folly of youth who made the most of the available rubble. Yet, the reverence for the new flag went far beyond this section of Ireland's population. It was displayed in Cork over Bandon's Town Hall on Easter Saturday[207] and Cork's City Hall by the ex-Lord Mayor Paddy Meade on Passion Sunday[208]. Accompanying the raising of tricolours in Dublin, members of Cumann na mBan, the ICA, Fianna Éireann and the IVF challenged further the British commemorative ban by posting copies of the Proclamation across city walls. Female ICA members distributed copies to passers-by[209] while Maeve MacDowell and Miss ffrench-Mullen hired a car and read the Proclamation around the capital[210]. A hundred girls placed wreaths decorated with green, white and orange colours over graves of rebels in

95. Ibid.
96. «Easter Monday in Dublin, Incidents in the city», Irish Times, 14 April, 1917.
97. Wills, Dublin 1916, 117-119.
98. Patrick Crowley, 4 May 1948, BOMH, WS 136.
99. Diarmuid Ó Donneabhain, 5 December 1947, BOMH, WS 79.
100. John O'Connor, The Story of the 1916 Proclamation (Dublin: Abbey Books, 1986), 22.
101. Mrs. MacDowell (Maeve Cavanagh), 1 June 1949, BOMH, WS 258.

Glasnevin. The strong police presence prevented the girls from attempting a procession which would have violated the ban.[211]

For Máire Comerford, the 1917 commemoration confirmed the irreversible character of the movement initiated a year before. British authorities were simply unable to contain nationalist initiatives. On June 25th 1916, tricolours had been illegally sold to raise money for the dependents of dead or imprisoned rebels. Tricolours were sold thereafter and showed that nationalists possessed sufficient resources to by-pass British edicts, but also that concerted efforts were made to enshrine the tricolour as a nationalist icon. Decades after the events, Comerford commented with delight that «one might search far into military history to find another occasion when such a high triumphant and victorious general (Maxwell) was thwarted, scorned and defeated by a Flag Day Committee.»[212] By April 1917, the Committee reported having collected £107 069.

Selling flags at Easter would be embraced largely among the separatist movement in attempts to demonstrate their desire to continue the 1916 martyrs' sacrifice while it would finance further actions. In 1919, the ICA council produced 150 000 flags, each adorned by three pictures of 1916 leaders, and postcards of fallen men[213]. Nationalists were however not the only ones taking to the streets at Easter to sell flags to fund their activities. The Irish Catholic reported that Sisters of the Holy Faith Convent in Dublin

102. «Dublin Revolution Anniversary», Cork Examiner, 9 April, 1917.
103. Máire Comerford, «Unpublished memoirs», 1956, LA 8/8, UCD.
104. Minutes of the meetings of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), 3 March and 19 March 1919, ICA Minutes, February 3rd 1919 - September 8th 1920, Labour Museum Archives, Beggars' Bush, Dublin.

held a flag day in their efforts to feed and clothe 500 of the poorest children in the capital, a task rendered more difficult by the Great War and the spiralling cost of commodities[214].

In a State where authorities were using their resources to prevent challenges to their rule, symbolic gestures such as flag-waving became conceived and depicted as heroic deeds. The game of cat and mouse was forever renewed. Irish citizens repeatedly tested British resolve by posting or waving tricolours at Easter and during other public events such as the general amnesty of prisoners in June 1917, the electoral campaigns in 1917 and 1918 and anti-conscription meetings in 1918. British authorities consistently seized the flags and made efforts to arrest the culprits.

Each Easter became a source of anxiety and concern for the British authorities. Recounting 1919 Easter Monday events in Dublin, the Irish Times described how «the gaunt walls of the burned-out General Post Office in Sackville street were yesterday kept under pretty close observation by both uniformed and plain clothes officers. There was apparently an idea that the Sinn Feiners might again scale the broken heights of the roofless building, and «decorate» the statues with republican tri-coloured flags, as on former anniversaries on the Easter Monday Rebellion of 1916. No one essayed the climb on Monday, however.»[215] Numerous pictures and descriptions of that nature provide a visual of the struggles over the tricolour repeated again and again until 1921[216].

105. «Dublin's Poor Children», The Irish Catholic, 23 March, 1918.
106. «Easter Monday in Dublin», Irish Times, 26 April, 1919.
107. Photographic archives are available online on the site of RTE; https://stillslibrary.rte.ie/.

By 1920, the War of Independence was in full flow. Easter was marked by raids, killings, ambushes and all sorts of violence. Some observers were even afraid that a second Easter Rising was imminent. The Cork Examiner reported that «in general the military acted as they did immediately after the suppression of the Rebellion of 1916.»[217] Rumours spread like wildfire and the Cork Examiner answered news emanating from London:

> Mr. Clem Edwards, M. P., may sleep easy in his bed. The rising which he foretold for Eastertide this year will not take place, says the «Freeman». (...) His insurrection is a burst bubble like the «Daily Mail» story of the Sinn Fein Black Hand. His story of German ammunition is a pipe dream. The Government's sleuths have been sleuthing, and they can find no vestige of confirmation. The game of make belief is up. The whole thing was organised by the Hidden Hand Brigade, whose business it is to invent false stories and to try to provoke the Irish people into actions that would deliver them into the hands of the enemy. (...) We beg to suggest to them (journalists from around the world) that on Easter Monday the place to spend a happy day is in Fairyhouse. It will be better than fairy tales.[218]

Military precautions were taken, but nationalists were not deterred. On Easter Sunday, shots were fired in Sackville street, provoking a stampede among the two to three thousand people present. A tricolour was seized from The Republican Bar, Findlater's Place, and «an attempt was made to rescue the Sinn Fein flag, but proved unsuccessful.»[219] A total of six men were arrested over the incident. Others went ahead with their «Easter pilgrimage» to Glasnevin cemetery. Crowds converged once more on the GPO, tricolours were raised and cut down while the government accused individuals of firing at military forces which had merely returned fire in self-defence.

Over the course of that turbulent year, the IRA employed methods at Easter which would recur in the Free State. It was no coincidence that the IRA chose Easter to burn down

108. «Easter Rising Myth, Barricades Around Dublin, Epidemic of Irish Fires», Cork Examiner, 5 April, 1920.
109. Ibid.
110. «Exciting Scene in Dublin, Military Arrests and Seizure of Flag», Irish Times, 10 April, 1920.

British landmarks in quick succession[220]. The Connacht Tribune made mention of bonfires on Easter eve which saw fire consume dozens of police barracks, the capture of Dublin's Custom House, attacks on tax offices and the destruction of income tax papers[221]. The following weeks witnessed the destruction of dozens more and on May 19, the Irish Independent wrote that «this brings the total of barracks destroyed on and since Easter Saturday to 361.»[222] An unsuccessful attempt was made on a police barrack in County Meath. Attackers had announced their intentions by posting a tricolour on the mast of the targeted edifice. The failure of their expedition meant that the tricolour remained flying afterwards[223].

Tricolours continued to be used publicly to challenge British authorities. In 1921, Crown Forces were called to remove two flags flying over Boland's Mills, where de Valera had commanded troops in 1916. They were left red-faced when only managing to remove one. The remaining standard kept on symbolically defying their power[224]. Operating within an extensive structure of British repression, raising tricolours at Easter was a symbolic way for nationalists to reenact the actions of their 1916 «martyred» heroes. These acts of disobedience were conceived as the continuation of their long-drawn struggle by other means and demonstrations of their willingness to fight on.

111. Wills, «Commemoration», Dublin 1916, 133-171.
112. «Bonfires of Easter Eve: Burning Police Barracks and Captured Custom Houses», Connacht Tribune, 10 April, 1920.
113. «Echo of Late Raids: Cork Courthouse burned out», Irish Independent, 19 May, 1920.
114. «Meath Barracks in Ruins. Easter Activities», Meath Chronicle, 10 April, 1920.
115. «Republican Flags in Dublin, One Seized by Crown Forces», Irish Times, 29 March, 1921.

The consecration of a new Irish standard during the Rising and its repeated illegal hoisting in subsequent commemorations helped nationalists to stake their claim to the ideological legacy of 1916, but also to the actual Irish territory. The territory was still in the hands of the British authorities, but by repeatedly defying them with tricolours at the high sites of the Rising and throughout the island, nationalists linked the spatial aspect of memory to their ongoing quest for freedom. As Guy Beiner writes, flags, like other «artifacts are not only aides-mémoire - mnemonic devices that evoke recollections - but also portable lieux de mémoire - symbolic entities that represent constructions of social memory.»[225] Flags do not retain memory, but tricolours, wherever they were raised, recalled and reappraised the Rising thanks to an associational memory «generated through the meaning and interpretations that (are) attached to objects.»[226]

In December 1921, the Anglo-Irish treaty created a 26-County Irish Free State. Until then, supporters of the Rising had not been in control of the State's affairs. This meant that commemorative efforts, either in their sacred or secular forms, always had to circumvent British repression. The sacred and secular initiatives combined to successfully challenge the authorities' desire to keep the Rising out of the public sphere. Dublin had the GPO as a focal point where nationalists converged each Easter. With its long association with the Irish struggle, Glasnevin cemetery welcomed the Rising within its gates, strengthening its role as a republican shrine. Yet, official 1916 monuments remained absent from the territory. For Dubliners, this appeared to matter little since they had lived through the events and possessed vivid reminders in the ruins surrounding

116. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 235.
117. Ibid., 242.

them. Such physical spaces were missing in provincial Ireland and rendered it more difficult to create a geography of remembrance outside of the church grounds where Catholics prayed for the 1916 fallen souls.

The reverence shown towards new nationalist symbols such as the tricolour would expand in the Free State. For instance, the story surrounding Muriel MacDonagh's death came to be closely associated with the new Irish standard. In 1932, 15 years after her death, the NGA contended that MacDonagh had drowned while trying to place the flag of the republic on an island off the Skerries coast. The Association's publication nevertheless concluded that «truly had she given her life for the flag.»[227] This take on MacDonagh's death contrasted with the factual accounts published in 1917. This add-on gave to the life of a signatory's wife a great symbolic and patriotic end. Her death had not been in vain after all.

The co-existence of early religious and secular commemorations is just one of the many examples of the close relationship between Catholicism and nationalist politics in Ireland during the early 20th century. This alliance between the clergy and state leaders would come to greatly define the Irish State. Both the sacred and secular commemorations spread the Rising's story beyond the narrow geographical space in which it had occurred. Early in 1922, an indigenous government took control over Ireland's political destiny, but the relative unity which had seen the election of 73 Sinn Féiners in 1918 was soon shattered by a civil war. This fratricidal conflict would have a long-lasting impact on the nature of 1916 commemorations. Overall, a study of commemorations over the 1916-

118. The Last Post, Glasnevin Cemetery (Dublin: NGA, 1994 (1932)), 30, MRR, Ir 94109 D 44, NLI.

1921 period appears key to understanding better what followed in the Free State since, James Moran claims, «those who strove to dramatise the Rising in the period immediately after 1916 helped to influence the way the insurrection was viewed for the rest of the twentieth century.»[228]

119. James Moran, Staging the Easter Rising (Cork: Cork University Press, 2005), 4.

Chapter 3 «The Broken Dream»: Processional Commemorations in the Free State, 1922-1934

«Looking at parades in their social-historical context (...) reveals that parades do more than reflect society. Such public enactments, in their multiplicitous and varied forms, are not only patterned by social forces - they have been part of the very building and challenging of social relations.»[229] - Susan G. Davis

«The 1916 rebellion could be celebrated in the heart of the capital and its epicentre reflected the strategic heart of the rebellion itself. In other words, the parades and memorial to the Rising were directly mapped on to the geography of the conflict and the intellectual dramatisation of the rebellion by its leaders as an exercise in national martyrdom was literally and symbolically reinforced by this action.»[230] - Nuala C. Johnson

In Ireland, visions of the past have always influenced and informed identities, behaviours and mentalities. These visions have found public expressions through commemorative performances such as parades, processions and gatherings which, as Susan Davis remarks, are part of «the very building and challenging of social relations». Accordingly, this chapter will look at how processional commemorations of the Rising in the Irish Free State during the 1922-1934 period interacted with larger developments and realities.

For the first time in generations, Irish leaders were granted control over Ireland's polity and destiny, more precisely over 26 of the 32 counties which became known as the Irish Free State. However, the experience of independence began in a nightmarish context. For pro-Treaty leader Michael Collins, a republic had never been a possible outcome of the negotiations with the British[231]. According to him, the Treaty represented a stepping-stone, a first step towards complete independence. Meanwhile, hardline republicans like

1. Susan G. Davis, Parades and Power: Street Theatre in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), 5.
2. Johnson, Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance, 169.
3. Michael Collins, «Let us in God's name abide by the decision», , in Great Irish Speeches, Aldous, ed., 56-61.

President de Valera implored the Dáil to renege on the Treaty. Similarly Margaret Pearse, mother to Patrick and William, was adamant that her sons would have rejected it[232].

When a tight vote favoured the ratification of the Treaty, opposing TDs refused to abide by the decision and walked out of the Dáil. In June 1922, the Free State was plunged into a devastating civil war which lasted until May 1923. Ultimately, the Provisional Government prevailed, but «in winning», Anne Dolan argues, «it had proved itself as brutal as any British army. It had executed seventy-seven men[233], sacrificed two leaders (Michael Collins and Arthur Griffth), hundreds of soldiers and countless civilians.»[234] The memory of this war left a legacy of bitterness described at length by Michael Hopkinson:

> The prevailing memory of the conflict has been of considerable importance in determining the way the inhabitants of the Twenty-Six Counties regard their own state. Failure to come to terms with the war and its consequences, together with the frequent neglect of it as a historical subject, has often proved a barrier to an accurate examination of the new state's foundation; it has also hindered prospects of reconciliation between Ireland and Britain, loyalist and nationalist, as well as Republican and Free Stater.[235]

The war's impact would have further ramifications as Margaret O'Callaghan chronicles:

> The civil war had confirmed the (Catholic) Church's belief in their people's need for moral guidance, in their plasticity in the face of false teaching. (...) The blood sacrifice of poets and martyrs who identified their sacrifice with the imagery of Catholicism led on to years of brutality and cruelty that terrified the Catholic

4. «Treaty Debate», 17 December 1921, AHO, DED, 9, no. 5, http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1921/12/17/00002.asp#.
5. This number has remained contentious. See for example Thomas P. O'Neill, «In search of a political path: Irish republicanism, 1922 to 1927», Historical Studies X (1976): 147 in which he refers to 81 executions rather than 77.
6. Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 6.
7. Michael Hopkinson, Green against Green: The Irish Civil War (Dublin: Gill & MacMillan, 1988), 276.

> bishops and unnerved many of the former revolutionaries who saw it as their duty to turn their faces from the wild dreams and language that had ended so bitterly.[236]

Altogether, the conflict created a great vaccum in leadership, left hundreds dead, generated an economic burden and created deep-rooted national scars which are still prevalent to this day. As Gavin Foster states, «rival interpretations first developed by pro- and anti-Treaty polemicists in the aftermath of the Civil War continue to shape scholarly analyses of the conflict.»[237] The new Irish leaders would struggle to convince their compatriots to adopt lawful and orderly behaviours thereafter[238]. Led by 1916 veteran William T. Cosgrave, the Cumann na nGaedheal government adhered to a program dictated by realpolitik while defeated republicans occupied the higher ground of idealpolitik.

A decade of revolutionary hostilities was followed by a quest for stability[239]. The urgent tasks facing the government were vast: stimulating an underdeveloped economy, fighting unemployment and emigration, reviving the Irish language, expanding education, consolidating the democratic ethos, facing up to paramilitaries and developing a state structure through the actions of men who had scant experience to achieve a project of such magnitude.

Leaving death, destruction and desolation in its wake, the civil war shattered the dream of unity in the nascent Free State and contaminated the commemorative field. The «tug-of-

8. O'Callaghan, «Religion and Identity: The Church and Irish Independence»: 70.
9. Gavin Foster, «In the Shadow of the Split: Writing the Irish Civil War», Field Day Review 2 (2006): 296.
10. Hopkinson, Green against Green.
11. Terence Brown, Ireland: A Social and Cultural History, 1922-1985 (London: Fontana Press, 1985 (1981)), 13-14.

war» over Easter Week's legacy which arose during the war and endured in its aftermath has been described by David Fitzpatrick and Diarmaid Ferriter as the unremitting «contest for possession of the Irish dead»[240] and the «figurative scramble for the bones of the patriot dead»[241]. These commemorative tussles ensured that «just as memory is continually reworked and reorganized, memorial sites never stand still.»[242]

The contest over the Rising's legacy between 1922 and 1934 gave life to an extensive network of processional commemorations. Claims over public space and its occupation at Easter, through parades and ceremonies, were conducted like dramatic representations. Davis describes the «pragmatic objectives, and concrete, often material, results»[243] of such commemorative gestures. Public space in Ireland was ritualized at Easter in order to build, maintain and/or confront the power structures. Since the late 17th century, the public sphere gradually evolved as Jürgen Habermas tells us. As a consequence of momentous revolutions in the United States and France, «the emergent bourgeoisie gradually replaced a public sphere in which the ruler's power was merely represented before the people with a sphere in which state authority was publicly monitored through informed and critical discourse by the people.»[244] Such a structural transformation promoted a democratization of society, generated growing political consciousness, bolstered the importance of the organization and the representation of the masses. As a result, commemorative manifestations can be seen «as a complicated negotiation of

12. David Fitzpatrick, «Commemoration in the Irish Free State: A Chronicle of Embarrassment», in History and Memory in Modern Ireland, 184-203.
13. Diarmaid Ferriter, «Commemorating the Rising, 1922-65: 'A Figurative Scramble for the Bones of the Patriot Dead'?», in 1916 in 1966, 198-218.
14. Sarah Bennett Farmer, Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 11.
15. Davis, Parades and Power, 5.
16. Ibid., xi.

inside and outside, of internal and external - a battle of meaning, a battle within meanings.»[245]

When Irish factions reclaimed the streets at Easter in an emerging Free State, they did so to display their strength, voice protest and gather support for their aspirations[246]. Through varied Easter commemorations, groups sought to inscribe the past into space, to stake out their claims over the territory and promote their visions of an Ireland in the making. In the Free State, just as in post-revolutionary France and United States, «politics extended far beyond the ruling elite, for in their parades, festivals, civic feasts, songs, crowd actions, and badges many (...) ventured into an arena in which 'politics assumed both shape and significance'.»[247] Thus, commemorations not only represent potent expressions of an intricate relationship between state and civil society, but a dynamic space in which people voice dreams and disillusions. After all, by occupying the streets at specific and predictable moments, citizens insert their «concerns into the public realm where they can be acknowledged by others.»[248]

In the case of Ireland's capital Yvonne Whelan attests to the contested nature of the commemorative space in a British Ireland as «various strands of Irish nationalist, republican and socialist opinion used the cultural landscape to express resistance and opposition to the empire and to assert that Ireland laboured under a malign form of

17. Dana Polan, «The Public's Fear, or Media as Monster», Social Text 25/26 (1990): 262.
18. Nadine Rossol, Performing the Nation in Interwar Germany: Sport, Spectacle and Political Symbolism, 1926-36 (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 13.
19. Newman, Parades and the Politics of the Street, 6.
20. Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris and Renia Ehrenfeucht, Sidewalks: Conflict and Negotiation over Public Space (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2009), 62.

colonial rule from which every effort should be made to break free»[249]. Independence changed the leaders, but it did not alter the essence of the game. Rather than promote an Irish concord so often prophesied to result from the departure of the British, commemorating the Rising in independent Ireland would be a divisive and politically contested operation.

For the 1922-1934 period, sectional Easter processions rather than official commemorations dominated the memorial landscape. In control of Ireland in the 19th and early 20th centuries, British authorities had fallen prey to the impulses of what Maurice Agulhon has described as the «statuomanie»[250]. As Ellen Carol Jones has outlined, the direct impact of the British presence was that «monuments within the 'monumental city' (Dublin) materialized, celebrated and memorialized this (British) power.»[251] Heroes of the Empire such as King William III, Lord Nelson and the Duke of Wellington, among others, brazenly populated Dublin's public space. In contrast, before 1935, Free State leaders made very few attempts to commemorate 1916, or other nationalist events for that matter, through the erection of permanent markers.

Victorious in the civil war and democratically elected in the 1923 elections, Cumann na nGaedheal's government showed little interest in commemorating the Rising during its decade in office. For Prime Minister William Cosgrave and his colleagues, the state's origins lay in the 1921 Treaty and the creation of the Free State. Rather than the 1916

21. Whelan, Reinventing Modern Dublin, 2.
22. Maurice Agulhon, «La 'statuomanie' et l'histoire», Ethnologie française 8, 2/3 (1978), 145.
23. Ellen Carol Jones, «History's Ghosts: Joyce and the Politics of Public Memory», Journal of Irish Studies 25 (2010): 5.

martyrs, the real heroes worth celebrating were the pro-Treaty men such as Collins and Arthur Griffith whose vision promised the rise of a stable and normalized society. On the other side, defeated republican forces were in disarray. Thousands were imprisoned, key leaders were dead and tensions ran high between militarists and political proponents. The movement's reconstruction would later be hindered by laws and acts rendering it illegal. Internal struggles eventually led to a 1926 split when Éamon de Valera and his followers left SF to found Fianna Fáil (Soldiers of Destiny, FF). Coming to power in 1932, FF favoured a heightened awareness of the Rising, pushing the Treaty proponents to the periphery of the national story. However, more time would be necessary for the party to impose its imprint on official commemorations.

Amid this context of power struggles and efforts to reconstruct, normalize and organize the Free state before 1935, taking to the streets at Easter was the best chance for Irish factions to present themselves as the living embodiment of the Rising's legacy. Groups sought to colonize the 1916 sites through their physical presence. In the 1920s and early 1930s in the Free State, government-led commemorations emphasized the need for regulation and orderly behaviours, while oppositional initiatives sought to expose and contest the authorities' betrayal of the 1916 dream. Easter Week commemorations mirrored a «discursive factor in which basic community values and issues are negotiated on a symbolic level.»[252] From 1922 to 1934, citizens came together as much as they opposed each other at Easter, and did so in increasing numbers. They acted out their loyalties, performed their oppositions and legitimized their causes through ritualized

24. Ibid., 158.

occupations of public space. They manifested allegiances to «imagined communities»[253] while showing a desire to belong to embodied communities.

Inscribing the Past Into Space

In theory, Irish citizens were now free to commemorate the 1916 Rising without fears of sanction. The hasty and defiant nature of commemorations prevailing before the advent of the Free State was officially a thing of the past. Yet, realities on the ground were to be more complicated. In 1922, the post-Treaty fallout and the upcoming June election projected their long shadow on the lively Easter events held across the state. For anti-Treaty forces, the day of the ultimate triumph still lay ahead, and they increasingly depicted the spirit of the Rising as akin to the one motivating Brian Boru in 1014, comparing the old King who forfeited his life to defeat the Norsemen to men like Tom Barry, «the legendary leader of the West Cork Flying Column during the Anglo-Irish War (1919-21)»[254]. On the other hand, for Free Staters, Easter 1922 was an occasion to insist on the democratic aspirations of 1916 leaders, on the need for unity and stability. They sought to forge links between the 1916 Proclamation and the 1921 Treaty.

From the advent of the Free State, its opponents celebrated individuals who did not owe their fame to the Rising, but who embodied its gallant spirit and its courageous refusal to compromise on republican ideals and aspirations. Annual Easter Sunday tributes[255] were paid in Fermoy (Cork) to Liam Lynch, the IRA's Chief of Staff who had staunchly

25. Anderson, Imagined Communities.
26. «Barry, Tom», Oxford Companion to Irish Histoy, S. J. Connolly, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011 (2002)), 42.
27. «Mr. De Valera and a Republic: not possible by force of arms», Irish Times, 18 April, 1925.

opposed the Treaty or to Tomás MacCurtain and Terrence MacSwiney in Cork city to name a few. Similarities were stressed between the 1916 heroic resistance of the few against an Empire and the suppression of the republican challenge by government forces during the civil war. For dissident republicans, the minority had been in the right in 1916, a fact only recognized in hindsight. Thus, they reasoned, people would soon recognize that the anti-Treaty forces, although outvoted, would be shown to be righteous in time.

For many observers, the republican actions in the civil war were determined as much by the movement's opposition to the Provisional Government as by a desire to tangibly pay tribute to the Easter martyrs. Well beaten in the 1922 June election[256], anti-Treaty Sinn Féiners and militarists refused to relinquish their dream of an islandwide republic. When Michael Collins reluctantly gave the order for an assault on them, F.S.L. Lyons tells us that:

> many of the old warriors of the republic were in the field again - Brugha, Stack, Countess Markievicz, de Valera, all hastened to the Dublin Headquarters of the Irregulars. But as fighters they seemed to have learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. Once again, as in 1916, they occupied prominent buildings in the heart of the city, mainly - as if to make the parallel complete - in O'Connell Street, and once again their enemies methodically blasted and burnt them out of their fixed positions. There was a certain symbolical aptness in the fact that when this phase of the war ended after a week of fighting, it ended with the shooting down of Cathal Brugha, that legendary warrior of Easter week, as he emerged, gun in hand, from the ruins of a burning building.[257]

Rising events were mirrored during the civil war: intense fights occurred around the ruins of the GPO and along O'Connell Street. Anti-Treaty forces also occupied the Four Courts. In December 1922, Liam Mellows, former 1916 leader of the Galway IVF, was executed alongside three other opponents to the State. Becoming known within the

28. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 7.
29. Lyons, Ireland since the Famine, 462.

republican movement as the «four martyrs», these men were added to a long list of «never-say-die» heroes. The multiplication of violent events extended the catalogue of hallowed republican sites in the capital and elsewhere. Therefore, the civil war not only had a tremendous impact on the development of the Free State, but it changed how the Rising would be anchored in public space.

From 1916 to 1921, the Rising had been eulogized in nationalist quarters. The 1918-1921 period represented a natural extension to the 1916 uprising. The realities of the civil war shattered this neat narrative of «us, Irish, versus them, British» and brought a cumbersome dimension of «us versus us». One consequence would be that coming together at Easter increasingly translated into exclusive and inimical occupations of public space as former comrades refused to commemorate together.

Experiences of defeat encouraged dissident republicans to present themselves as the true inheritors of the 1916 aspirations. At Easter 1930, An Phoblacht reflected this republican sense of entitlement, establishing a tidily uninterrupted struggle for freedom spanning from Boru's battle in 1014 to Easter Monday 1916. An Phoblacht told its readers: «this Easter let us think, not of the shameful years since 1921, but the glorious years of revolution and of the time to come when Ireland will again win the admiration of the world as the flaming torch of liberty.»[258] This blending of the past, present and future reflected what Guy Beiner defines as a deep memory of trauma which shaped a republican model of martyrdom and epitomized the principle of triumph in defeat.

30. «The Day of Renewa(sic)», An Phoblacht, 19 April, 1930.

At the same time, the pro-Treaty triumph made the Rising a somewhat tricky period to celebrate for Free Staters. Especially after Michael Collins's death, government forces had increasingly used ruthless methods. Seventy-seven official executions were carried out, extrajudicial killings took place and more than 12 000 republicans were made prisoners. In view of these numbers, many accused Free Staters of having outdone the 1916 British repression[259]. When President Cosgrave appeared before an American Commission held in connection with litigation over Dáil Éireann funds in June 1923, he reminded the court that he had not read the Proclamation before turning out and spoke of the seven «so-called signatories», as «one of these signatories (Eamonn Ceannt) informed me shortly before his death that he did not sign it. I don't mean to say that he repudiated it, but he said as far as putting his name to it was concerned that he did not sign it.»[260] His government would not be straightjacketed by the Proclamation. What Ireland needed was a return to stability promised by the terms of the Treaty.

Accordingly, official Rising commemorations remained low-key events under the guidance of Cumann na nGaedheal. The men in power mostly looked in the direction of their own constitutionalist martyrs, Collins and Griffith. In 1923, a temporary cenotaph dedicated to the two fallen leaders was erected in front of Leinster House, the site of Irish constitutional and political power. For Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, this gesture represented a government «desperate to establish a secure power base (...) and to legitimise the new rulers by creating the impression among the citizens of Ireland that

31. Hopkinson, Green against Green, 176-179.
32. «Extract from the deposition of Mr. William T. Cosgrave, President of Executive Council, before American Commission appointed to take the evidence in Ireland in connexion with litigation in New York Supreme Court, concerning certain funds of Dail Éireann (May-June 1923)», 7 June 1923, DOT, S 14501, National Archives of Ireland (NAI).

they were being governed in a tradition already established by men considered worthy to be commemorated as heroes.»[261] Free State heroes had to outdo republican ones and a way to do so was to enshrine compromise as an act of patriotism. Yet, when the Cenotaph was unveiled, the Free State was far from a peaceful society. Eleven thousand of the twelve thousand civil war republican prisoners were still detained and the implementation of the recent Public Safety Act revealed the government's intention to keep them there[262].

For the first official commemoration held on Easter Sunday 1924, the government and its followers congregated at Arbour Hill, the site where the seven signatories of the proclamation had been hurriedly buried in a communal plot alongside seven other executed leaders. Built in the 1840s as a military prison, Arbour Hill remained an operating prison in the Free State. A commemorative service was held in the adjoining Church of the Sacred Heart before the crowd made its way to the plot. Opponents were quick to stress the irony underlying this first official gesture. The 1916 martyrs were celebrated while dozens of republican prisoners, who blamed their internment to a defence of the republic proclaimed in 1916, still populated the prison overlooking the plot. Renewed clashes between the two sides in ensuing years perpetuated the irony as republicans continued to be detained in Arbour Hill.

Dissidents took offence to the choice of Arbour Hill as the venue for official commemorations. Yet, the government's decision showed how Irish control over the

33. Sighle Bhreathnach-Lynch, «Public Sculpture in independent Ireland 1922-1972: expressions of nationhood in bronze and stone», The Medal 21 (Autumn 1992): 45, in Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 9.
34. «Public Safety (Emergency Powers) Act», 1 August 1923, Irish Statute Book, 28; http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1923/en/act/pub/0028/print.html.

territory opened up new commemorative spaces. Easter 1924 was the first time a public event was ever conducted at Arbour Hill as the British authorities had always kept the prison grounds sealed off. The raw memory of the civil war however prevented the 1924 initiative from playing a unifying influence. Invitations were sent to participants and relatives across the political spectrum, but most boycotted the ceremonies[263].

In following years, Arbour Hill remained the site for state commemorations. Year after year, Cumann na nGaedheal members and supporters attended the ceremonies, while opponents converged instead at the GPO and Glasnevin cemetery. In control of Arbour Hill, the government was also determined not to let either the GPO or Glasnevin slip outside its control. Clair Wills has shown how this set «in motion a yearly back-and-forth over the timings of parades, in an effort to ensure that no two politically opposed commemorations turned up at any of the crucial sites at the same moment.»[264] The precarious compromise always threatened to break down. Depending on when onlookers turned up at the GPO or Glasnevin, they would be exposed to contrasting narratives.

Up to 1932, Arbour Hill commemorations remained unilateral government events and infuriated opponents. In 1927, Cumann na mBan lamented «the humiliating experience of reading in Daily Papers of the sacrilege committed by members of 'The Free State Government' who assembled at Arbour Hill.»[265] In previous months, several arrests of

35. Wills, Dublin 1916, 133-137.
36. Ibid., 137.
37. «Who Fears to Speak of Easter Week?», CnmB, p106/1273, UCD. See Desmond C. Greaves, The Easter Rising in Song & Ballad (London: Kahn & Averill, 1980), 23-29, and Seán Ryder, «Young Ireland and the 1798 rebellion», in Rebellion and Remembrance in Modern Ireland, Laurence Geary, ed. (Dublin: Four Court Press, 2001), 135-143.

republicans had been carried out by the government and Cumann na mBan accused state leaders of being unfit to lead the commemoration at Arbour Hill's «holy ground». Such attacks recurred each Easter, but dissidents were largely powerless to prevent the «sacrilege» from occurring again and again.

Confrontations over Arbour Hill ceremonies also arose at unexpected moments. In May 1929, during a debate on the protection of juries, FF TD Patrick J. Little declared from the opposition benches:

> Deputy (Michael) Tierney referred to the spirit of nationality and made the amazing contention that Irish nationalism meant the right of the majority—I do not want to misinterpret him—I gathered that he said that it meant the right of the majority in the country to do more or less what they liked because they were the majority. Now, there is a different conception of nationalism. I think the President, the Minister for Education, and the Minister for Defence attended a ceremony recently at the graves in Arbour Hill. One of the graves is the grave of Patrick Pearse. I take it that in attending that ceremony Ministers were paying a tribute to the beliefs of Patrick Pearse. He had expressed, perhaps better than anybody else what he calls authentic nationalism. He certainly has conveyed that intense spirit of nationalism with which we have all become familiar during the period of the last thirteen years, if we were not familiar with it before.[266]

The rule of majority, as the 1916 rebels' actions had rightfully contested and present-day republican forces claimed to be keen to emulate, was not necessarily a moral and legitimate rule. Cumann na nGaedheal commemorated on its own, and opposition members decried how the annual procession towards Arbour Hill represented a shameful and petty political appropriation of Ireland's past rather than a fitting commemoration of selfless martyrs. Before FF's election in 1932, the regime's opponents saw Arbour Hill not as a shrine dedicated to memory of the glorious 1916 dead, but more as a prison where republicans continued to be interned in squalid conditions. During a 1931 debate

38. «Private Business. - Juries (Protection) Bill, 1929 - Second Stage», 9 May 1929, AHO, DED, 29, no. 14; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1929/05/09/00029.asp.

on unemployment, FF TD Dr. James Ryan, medical aide posted in the GPO in 1916, accused the government of negligence:

> We are all aware, although the Executive Council took particular care that no information should get out, how the prisoners are being treated in Arbour Hill. The Government even went so far, I believe, as to make counsels and solicitors sign a declaration of secrecy when interviewing prisoners. We are aware, however, from a released prisoner, that the conditions are as bad as they could be in Arbour Hill, that there is no heating and that the cold is intense, that the windows are altogether too small and that sufficient exercise is not allowed. These conditions are not such as prisoners, no matter how the Executive Council may hate them or how they may have hunted them down, should be asked to live under.[267]

Beyond the relatively low-key official events held at Arbour Hill, the Cosgrave government entertained very few other commemorative projects pertaining to the Rising. This was in stark contrast with the persistent republican agitation surrounding 1916.

Criminalizing (Some) Commemorations?

Until FF rose to power early in 1932, republicans constantly accused the government of abusing its power. The state authorities were blamed for criminalizing republican commemorations while tolerating celebrations of the British heritage. Dissidents pointed out that just as British authorities had done before, the young Irish state had introduced acts which limited the use of public space by its citizens with the 1923 Public Safety (Emergency Powers) Act and its enhanced versions voted in 1924, 1925, 1927, 1928 and 1931[268]. These acts criminalized any assembly of a parliamentary, military or police powers nature existing outside of the state structure, prohibited unauthorized military exercises and outlawed numerous associations. While these acts did not specifically target commemorative endeavours, authorities employed the legal system to keep a close

39. «Adjournment Debate: Unemployment», 17 December 1931, AHO, DED, 40, no. 24; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1931/12/17/00033.asp.
40. These acts can be consulted online on the site of the Irish Statute book: http://www.irishstatutebook.ie.

watch on opponents' proceedings when not forbidding them entirely. Arrests became a regular feature at Easter and the judiciarization of public space reveals how «relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life.»[269]

In July 1924, alerted over recent Orange parade disturbances which had occurred in Raphoe (Donegal), Minister for Justice Kevin O'Higgins declared:

> My attention has been directed to this regrettable incident. The Government will maintain the right of any and every party in the State to hold meetings and processions to commemorate anything which they consider worthy of commemoration provided that the law is observed by those participating in such assemblies. Measures which it is hoped will be adequate have been taken to ensure that demonstrations by persons of Orange sympathies resident in the area of jurisdiction of the Free State Government will take place without molestation on the 12th inst. It is hoped that those taking part in any such meetings or processions will co-operate by observing the restraint and moderation which the circumstances demand.[270]

O'Higgins claimed that his government had no objection to public commemorations, but it could not and would not tolerate gestures promoting a violent overthrow of its regime. Insisting on the primacy of the law, O'Higgins was challenging the government's opponents who, until then, had refused to recognize the Free State as a lawful and legitimate institution. As Paul Connerton explains, dissident factions, wherever they are or who they oppose, often refuse to «pay lip-service to an alien set of rites, incompatible to their own vision of the 'truth'»[271] as it would imply a tacit recognition of the state's

41. Edward Soja, «The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory», Postmodern Geographies (New York: Verso, 1989), 6, in Sidewalks,127.
42. «Private Notice Question - Disturbances in Raphoe», July 9 1924, AHO, DED, 8, no. 8; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1924/07/09/00012.asp.
43. Connerton, How Societies Remember, 44.

legitimacy. Easter gestures were one channel through which Irish dissidents could publicly defy the laws and manifest their contempt towards the men in power.

Easter time was turned into a symbolic battleground. Claims made over specific 1916 sites through parades, procession and gatherings involved «simultaneous and complex spatial and social claims.»[272] They fused a sense of place to a sense of identity. Government forces kept a close watch on every event organized by its opponents. On Easter Sunday 1923, while Mary MacSwiney, sister to the famous Cork IVF leader Terence MacSwiney, was addressing a crowd at the GPO, the Cork Examiner described how «three men in civilian clothes approached a young man selling copies of the 'Irish Workers' Republic'. (...) He attempted to resist (arrest), and immediately a number of women rushed to his assistance and endeavoured to rescue him: whereupon the three men whipped out revolvers in the presence of a large crowd, and took the man down Prince's Street.»[273] Faced by a permanent menace of arrest, state opponents adapted their commemorative strategies. The GPO remained a crucial site ripe with symbolic value, but republicans tended to make it a stop en route from St. Stephen's Green to Glasnevin where orations were generally delivered.

The cemetery environment, where a reverence for the dead prevailed, became a choice setting for addressing republican supporters. Just like the wider nationalist movement had done before 1922, republican factions used the cover of religious sites to commemorate the Rising in an attempt to limit the coercion of the Free State forces. Repressive actions

44. Kathleen O'Reilly and Michael E. Crutcher, «Parallel Politics: The Spatial Power of New Orleans' Labor Day Parades», Social & Cultural Geography 7, no. 2 (April 2006): 248.
45. «Dublin Street Scene», Cork Examiner, 3 April, 1923.

were regularly witnessed at GPO events, but the intervention of state forces would not be as easily taken within graveyards. While providing a more secure environment, standing at the gravesides of heroes and martyrs also allowed for dissident orators to stress continuity between their aspirations and the uncompromising ones preached by the deceased. The living were encouraged to serve the dead's aspirations. Furthermore, while the GPO stood as a collective symbol of the rebels' fight, cemeteries allowed families and communities to individualize their losses.

In 1925, SF proclaimed Easter Sunday as its annual day for remembrance. Doing so, republican forces sought to counteract official events held around the island. That year, a republican procession marched through Dublin and headed to Glasnevin. This route saw participants depart from St. Stephen's Green, occupied by rebels in 1916, and head towards the GPO before continuing on to Glasnevin. By following a single itinerary year after year, republican organizers sought to enhance the legitimacy of their gesture by ritualizing it.

In 1925, the initial Glasnevin gathering was closely monitored by state forces which refrained from interfering with the proceedings, other than forbidding the traditional firing of volleys over the graves. Participants complained that the police presence was unnecessary, aggressive and provocative[274], even if no arrests were made. In following years, graveyards continued to be patronized by dissident organizations for the relatively secure environments they provided.

46. «Mr. De Valera and a Republic: not possible by force of arms», Irish Times, 18 April, 1925.

These commemorative strategies were emulated outside Dublin. At Easter 1927, Cork republicans marched through the heart of the city before convening at the republican plot in St. Finbarr's cemetery. There, the IRA Chief-of-Staff Andrew Cooney warned the crowd of the danger of complacency. It was essential for all «not merely to come there occasionally, once a year or twice a year, or to think occasionally in their ordinary life of the sacrifices that those men made, but to think of it in all their daily actions.»[275] The parade was the opportunity for four Fianna Éireann members to act upon Cooney's advice. Incarcerated under the Treasonable Offences Act, they were accused of having given illegal military orders. They answered the accusations by stating that since «imperial» Baden Powell scouts were freely allowed to parade in Ireland, they demanded similar rights. The four young men were soon released[276].

As the years went by, evidence suggests that the composition of Easter crowds tended to reflect the general state of affairs in Ireland. In 1928, the Irish Times suggested that the radicalization of politics accounted for the almost exclusively masculine participation that year in St. Finbarr's cemetery. A more prominent presence of both women and children had prevailed in previous years, but the public space at Easter was now perceived as a hostile place with the heightened possibilities of confrontations and crackdowns.

State restrictions against commemorative efforts were never confined to Easter. In 1931, Cumann na mBan rued that «so many foreigners come and go away from our country

47. «Cork Ceremony», Cork Examiner, 18 April, 1927.
48. Ibid.

under a complete misapprehension of our position that we find it necessary to issue this short leaflet giving only the barest information»[277]. Cumann na mBan condemned the:

> ruthless and unscrupulous use of force (which) has hitherto maintained British rule in Ireland, (...) the Free State government, assuming to itself powers of a Dictatorship, ordered the cancellation of trains from every part of Ireland, to a Republican gathering at the Grave of Wolfe Tone. (...) Such then is the position in Ireland to-day, two alien governments struggling to prolong their existence, watching powerlessly the gathering forces of an angry and determined people. The coming fight will, it is hoped, be Ireland's last, Ireland's victorious fight (...) and not the Mulcahys or Cosgraves, nor all the (Macreadys and Lloyd Georges) will prevent the Irish people from achieving their goal in the very near future.[278]

Not only were republicans denied access to Arbour Hill, but the government forbade gatherings at Wolfe Tone's grave, «the holiest place of republican pilgrimage»[279].

Tight surveillance of republican commemorations encompassed the whole State. That same year in 1931, Father Crawley addressed a gathering at Shanaglish (Galway) and reminded the crowd that «it was an extraordinary state of affairs that the ceremonies in Shanaglish last year were interfered with by a Civic Guard. (...) These celebrations are ordinary celebrations for the men who died for the country, and if they had not died there would be no Civic Guards or C.I.D. men at all.»[280] Republican anger towards the curtailment of their gatherings was compounded by what they conceived as an unpatriotic state tolerance towards Armistice Day events. In stark contrast with the dissident factions, First World War Irish veterans and supporters seemed eager to act in lawful and orderly fashion at commemorative gatherings probably to stress the respectability and nobility of events they were so intent to commemorate. This divergence of outlook between

49. «To Foreign Visiting our Country», August 1931, CnmB, MRR, LOLB 161-34, NLI.
50. Ibid.
51. Comerford, Inventing the Nation, 261.
52. «Remarkable Speech», Connacht Sentinel, 7 April, 1931.

republican dissidents and First World War veterans goes a long way in explaining why First World War commemorations benefited from relative leniency from Irish authorities.

From 1923 to 1931, the Department of Finance provided funds for a wreath to be laid on behalf of the government on Armistice Day in Phoenix Park. A commemorative cross was erected on the eve of November 11th. Tolerance, however, only went so far as for the cross to stand for a day. For the rest of the year, the park showed no evidence of being a site where the First World War was annually commemorated. For republicans, Armistice Day became an ideal moment to display their opposition to the government and the War veterans' gestures. Convinced that they were unjustly prevented from commemorating their heroes, republicans sought to deny this right to supporters of rival experiences.

On November 11th 1925, unidentified individuals raided the British Legion Club on Bachelor's Walk[281]. A man was struck by an assailant at Trinity College's main gate, one of the pro-British bastions in the capital, and later died from his injuries[282]. Smoke bombs were thrown at a gathering of 125 000 people in St. Stephen's Green. The choice of the Green, the site from where the initial Easter republican procession had departed earlier that year, probably appeared like a direct challenge to the republican claims on the site. During the 1925 Cumann na mBan national convention, President Constance Markievicz, a 1916 veteran, praised members for seizing Union Jacks and described the initiative as

53. «Armistice Day Spirit», Irish Independent, 14 November, 1925.
54. «Armistice Day Tragedy», Irish Independent, 13 November, 1925.

one of the most valuable nationalist demonstrations since the treason of the Treaty[283]. Cumann na mBan vowed to interfere with public efforts to honour Ireland's participation in the War.

Condemnations against the leniency shown towards First World War commemorations rose again in 1929 when FF TD Patrick Little told the Dáil:

> You have in this country a spirit, on the one hand, which is deeply hostile to Irish nationality, which indulges in the waving of Union Jacks, which creates an atmosphere of hostility and of anger amongst a certain section in this community. The people who display that spirit have been unfortunately encouraged; they have been allowed to wave their Union Jacks. They have been given a feeling of domination in this country once again.[284]

Despite these recurrent accusations that Cumann na nGaedheal preferred to celebrate the British heritage rather than the republican struggle, evidence suggest otherwise. Already in 1927, a few months before his assassination, Minister for Home Affairs Kevin O'Higgins had clearly expressed the government's belief concerning the state's origins:

> I believe that to devote Merrion Square to this (First World War memorial) purpose would be to give a wrong twist, as it were, a wrong suggestion, to the origins of this State. It would be a falsehood, a falsehood by suppression of the truth and by a suggestion of something that is contrary to the truth. I want Deputies to picture the effect on the minds of strangers coming into this State and visiting this capital. You have a square here, confronting the seat of the Government of the country, and it is proposed to devote that square to this purpose. I say that any intelligent visitor, not particularly versed in the history of the country, would be entitled to conclude that the origins of this State were connected with that park and the memorial in that park, were connected with the lives that were lost in the Great War in France, Belgium, Gallipoli and so on. That is not the position. This State has other origins, and because it has other origins I do not wish to see it suggested, in stone or otherwise, that it has that origin.[285]

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55. «Cumann na mBan's Ard Chruinniu», 15 November 1925, CnmB, p106/1136, UCD.
56. «Private Business - Juries (Protection) Bill, 1929 - Second Stage (Resumed)», 9 May 1929, AHO, DED, 29, no. 14; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1929/05/09/00029.asp.
57. «Private Business. - Merrion Square (Dublin) Bill, 1927. Seanad Resolution», 29 March 1927, AHO, DED, 19, no. 5; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1927/03/29/00010.asp.

Merrion Square would remain devoid of any memorial. Yet, in many ways, the state's officials appeared caught between a rock and a hard place. Pleasing one and all was simply impossible. In July 1928, a reader, signing «Remembrance», expressed to the Irish Independent his disappointment at seeing the government being bullied by dissident forces. He rued the apparent unwillingness of leaders to celebrate the Treaty which had given Ireland its independence:

> Many Irishmen and women were very much gratified by the news of the commemoration of the anniversary of the day on which the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed, but why was this commemoration confined to the dining saloon of a transatlantic steamer in mid-ocean? Why was the day not celebrated in a fitting manner in Dublin and throughout the Saorstat? Are the government or the plain people afraid or ashamed to celebrate the anniversary of the day which brought us freedom?[286]

On the republican side, a man signing Sean-Fhear (old man) wondered in the pages of An Phoblacht why the government was so reluctant to commemorate the 1916 heroes. Fourteen years had passed since the Rising and a new generation had reached maturity. The «jazz» (in quotation marks in his letter) age now posed a threat to the 1916 ideals. A few men had saved Ireland from the «cannibal orgy of the Great War», but all the government could show for it was poverty and stagnation. Sean-Fhear (old man) asked: «where are the memorials to the countless martyrs who shed their blood in resisting English tyranny and who died for Irish independence? Are they still to be named apologetically with bated breath and whispering humbleness? Is the unseen hand still all-powerful?»[287] Both these men were criticizing the government for its unwillingness to commemorate the real Irish heroes while disagreeing over who these heroes were.

58. «Commemoration Day», Irish Independent, 16 July, 1928.
59. «A Retrospect: 1916-1930», An Phoblacht, 26 April, 1930.

«We Shall Overcome»: Counter-Initiatives and Alternative Sites

Shunned from power, republican forces argued that the 1916 martyrs would have never supported the Ireland built under the guidance of Cumann na nGaedheal. Anti-Treaty forces took steps to honour their own martyrs and cancel government's initiatives through counter-commemorations of their own in and outside the capital. As Beiner highlights, «republicans sustained a subculture of grassroots remembrance spearheaded by the National Graves Association and manifested in countless local unofficial commemorative initiatives (which were not widely advertised and remain mostly undocumented).»[288] They would however not be the only ones to do so, as the Labour movement acted similarly, albeit for different reasons.

The NGA was founded in 1926 by Rising participants and other well-known republican figures: Kathleen Clarke, Lily O'Brennan, Joseph Clarke, Christopher Byrne, Sean O'Moore and James Stritch. The constitution stated that the NGA's mission was to «perpetuate the memory of Ireland martyred and heroic Republican dead.»[289] Its first efforts targeted the graveyards where modern martyrs killed since 1916 reposed. On Easter Sunday 1929, the association organized a grand procession, which included six bands, through the streets of the capital. For the occasion, thousands gathered in Glasnevin to hear Frank Ryan, leader of the IRA Dublin Brigade, deliver his oration. Local committees organized similar processions from the inception of the association. Despite their enthusiasm and dedication to fulfill the republican dream, the NGA was

60. Beiner, «Between Trauma and Triumphalism»: 378.
61. «Constitution and Rules», Cumann Uaigheanna na Laochradh Gaedheal (National Graves Association, NGA), Dublin, 1960?, Manuscript Collection (MS) 25 583, NLI.

hampered by the lack of financial resources at its disposition and the legal hurdles which prevented it from boosting its presence in the public space.

The substantial challenges dissident republicans had to face under a Cumann na nGaedheal government did not prevent them from promoting alternative commemorative sites where like-minded individuals could display their allegiances to the unfinished revolution. Throughout the 1920s, Cumann na mBan actively tried to make Kilmainham Jail an alternative shrine to the inaccessible Arbour Hill. Cumann na mBan reminded its followers that «'twas in this jail that Padraig Pearse, Thomas Clarke and the men of 1916 were shot at dawn for proclaiming our Irish Republic (...) There, in 1916 James Connolly, who was dying from wounds received in the G.P.O., was propped up on a wheel-barrow and shot dead.»[290] Whoever wanted to commemorate where 1916 leaders had drawn their last breath was however faced with a major barrier. Still in use, Kilmainham jail naturally remained closed to the public.

As long as Cumann na nGadheal remained in power, Cumann na mBan encouraged the population to commemorate the Rising in order to publicly defy the treacherous nature of the Free State. Cumann na mBan's vision went further. As the Free State authorities and the Catholic Church were gearing up to mark the centenary of Catholic Emancipation in 1929, the republican women's organization insisted that Daniel O'Connell, the man behind the campaign, was no hero. His vision for Ireland had rather led to the development of two confessionalized states. O'Connell had reneged on the ideals of the

62. Marie O'Neill, Grace Gifford Plunkett and Irish Freedom: Tragic Bride of 1916 (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), 72.

1798 United Irishmen and the 1840s Young Irelanders who had tried to build a nation on an Irishness conferred by birthrights irrespective of religion. As the real heirs of the republican ideals, Cumann na mBan prescriptively encouraged its compatriots to stay aloof of O'Connell commemorations as «there are far greater Irishmen whose memories you ought to honour while you are in Ireland.»[291] Wolfe Tone, Emmet, Pearse, Connolly, Brugha and Mellows were named among others.

This centenary context made Cumann na mBan and the Labour movement circumstantial allies. A July meeting of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions (DCTU) saw the leaders express their shame over the conduct of members during the Emancipation celebrations: «the appalling lack of political consciousness among the people of the working class is in large sense the fault of the organisms of the working class itself. It was never more evident than to-day when we see such a deliberate and inveterate enemy of Trade unionism as O'Connell being honoured by our working people.»[292] The need to educate the working masses had been acutely stressed a year earlier when the DCTU despaired at how easy it was to fool its members «because there is much of the slave mind.»[293]

For Labour leaders, the allegiances of the working class were owed not to O'Connell, but to the great 1916 leader James Connolly. Easter was the opportunity to stress the reigning social injustices, to promote the rights and needs of their disadvantaged members rather than praise the nation's achievements. No one had better defended the plight of the

63. «To the Boys and Girls of Ireland», 1929 CnmB, MRR, LOLB 161-27, NLI.
64. Executive meeting of Dublin Council of Trade Unions (DCTU), 2 July 1929, Council Minutes, Minutes 1/12-13, Dec. 1928 to June 1941, MSS 21/DCTU, Labour Museum Archives. Beggars' Bush, Dublin.
65. «The Workers' Charter», An Phoblacht, 7 April, 1928.

working classes than Connolly and in 1930, the Dublin Council held a joint demonstration on May 11th to celebrate May-Day and Connolly. Its committee invited members to parade by industries. In efforts to increase the display of unity and reflect a sense of shared values, all members were taught the song of «the Watchword of Labour»[294]. The demonstration did not however meet the organizers' expectations. Helena Molony petitioned the executive of the Council for another form of commemoration to be devised to get all members to participate. She proposed to hold a mass demonstration in Phoenix Park or some other site. P. Holahan, representing unionized woodworkers, supported the suggestion and added that an annual Aeridheacht (pageant) should be held in Croke Park.

The latter idea met with some resistance. R. O'Byrne, of the I. U. Bookbinding and Machine Rulers, disagreed and suggested instead to use the «natural lung of the City (Dublin)» at Dollymount, situated by the sea-side, where women and children would enjoy themselves[295]. The council continued to look for ways to maximize the impact of the Connolly commemoration. Republicans had Glasnevin and the government had Arbour Hill as their Easter anchors, but indecision prevented the labour ranks from choosing a traditional congregation site. «Natural» ties between labour aspirations and 1916 events constructed upon a specific physical site had yet to take shape.

To be sure, defenders of the Irish workers saw the creation of the Free State as much as an opportunity as a threat. As the civil war was winding down in May 1923, labour

66. Executive meeting of DCTU, 1 April 1930, MSS 21 DCTU, Minutes 1/12-13 Council Minutes, Dec. 1928 to June 1941, 21/DCTU, Labour Movement Archives (LMA).
67. Idem., 20 January 1931.

representatives asserted their claims for a fairer political representation and improved conditions for their members. Commemorating the Rising by themselves, Labour forces saw a crowd estimated at 10 000 gather by the GPO to listen to James Larkin. He underlined the crucial need for discipline among the organization[296] as the use of violence would only delegitimize the Labour cause by proving its detractors right. Presiding on the day, Thomas Foran believed that «they who had suffered and whose views had been ignored should now assert their right to say what was going to happen to this country.»[297] Labour forces were however far from a united block and rival elements contributed to frequent interruptions, derisive cheers and copious booing. When Nellie Hynes interrupted the proceedings, she «exclaimed that she could not stand hypocrisy, and demanded the release of prisoners, and what, she asked, was Labour doing to achieve that end? Her observation were drowned in the general uproar which prevailed and she stepped down.»[298]

A pursuit for alternative 1916 sites to challenge the official ones was perpetuated by state opponents throughout the period. Cumann na mBan sought ways to map the republican struggle in the Dublin streets. Instead of congregating at the O'Connell statue at the top of the street renamed after him in 1924, Cumann na mBan told people that they should head to the Gresham Hotel, on the same street, where «one of the noblest of all our heroes Cathal Brugha was mortally wounded for refusing to surrender to Britain's Free

68. «Labour Views on Terms of Peace», Irish Independent, 14 May 1923, 7.
69. Ibid.
70. Ibid.

State Troops.»[299] Despite Cumann na mBan's best efforts and intentions, the location of Brugha's last stand remained unmarked.

SF similarly undertook to create an alternative commemorative geography. Its efforts targeted the vicinity of the GPO. From 1923, republicans held an annual demonstration on O'Connell Street on December 9th to commemorate the anniversary of the four martyrs' death. Comparisons were drawn between Free Staters and former British authorities, but also between the contexts of the Rising and the civil war. Mellows's execution by a Free State firing squad linked him with the fate of 1916 martyrs and meant that his association to the Rising could only be remembered with caution by those who supported the Rising then and sided with the government now. The decision to converge to the ruins of the GPO was a direct claim to the Rising's legacy and to this iconic space in the capital.

Throughout 1924, anti-Treaty supporters multiplied the commemorations paying tribute to the 1867 Manchester martyrs[300], Liam Mellows, Cathal Brugha[301] and other proponents of the hard line. Galway Volunteers gathered at Moyode Castle, near Athenry, and James Kelly wrote to the Connacht Tribune for the occasion, noting that «it were well, indeed, even at this hour that the people of Galway - especially his one-time unworthy constituents - should learn to know a share about the (...) humality (sic) of

71. «To the Boys and Girls of Ireland», 1929, CnmB, MRR, LOLB 161-27, NLI.
72. The Manchester martyrs were William O'Meara Allen, Micheal Larkin and William O'Brien. These three men were convicted of murdering a British sergeant during an attack on a police van which was transporting two Fenian leaders, Thomas Kelly and Timothy Deasy, from Manchester's court house to the county jail. They were publicly hanged at Salford Gaol on 23 November, 1867 and quicly became seen as Irish heroes. See The Oxford Companion to Irish History, p. 359.
73. «List of elements 1924», CnmB, p106/1105, UCD.

Liam Mellows' character in life and death, as so eloquently revealed by our far off exiles by his devoted admirer, Father Dominic; and thus purge their minds of the very malignant calumnies broadcasted by our renegade pro-British Press.»[302]

Essentially, commemorative initiatives in the 1922-1932 decade fuelled hatred, enmities or, at best, indifference towards divergent historical experiences. The inclusiveness praised by the government during Arbour Hill events met staunch resistance from various opposing factions. In November 1931, Cumann na mBan penned an open letter addressed to President Cosgrave that compared him to Oliver Cromwell. The letter continued:

> It is not Communism which threatens to overthrow you and the Capitalist system you uphold, and well you know it. It is the application of the proclamation of Easter Week. As long as the Proclamation was simply treasured as an historical document of interest you had no objection to our giving it lip service - aye, you had the audacious hypocrisy to honour its signatories yourself. But NOW, that the People of Ireland have realised the meaning of that proclamation and have determined to put it into effect, terror has once again driven you insane.[303]

After a decade in power, Cumann na nGaedheal's star was fading. The regime had failed to resolve important structural problems which plagued Ireland since its accession to independence: an average of 33 000 emigrated each year, unemployment was still soaring, reunification seemed a far remote possibility, and the economy remained persistently weak. With the rise of IRA threats in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the government was under ever more pressure and 1932 saw the election of the first republican FF government. Yet, as Dermot Keogh reminds us, Cumann na nGaedheal

74. «Easter, 1916», Connacht Tribune, 26 April, 1924.
75. «An Open Letter to Mr. Cosgrave», November 1931, CnmB, MRR, LOLB 161-16, NLI.

had been widely successful in securing «the popular legitimacy of the liberal democratic state during their turbulent ten years in office.»[304]

The Great White Hope

In February 1932, de Valera was back at the helm of the state. His FF party won the support of 44.5 % of the electorate, but needed Labour TDs' support to secure a majority. The preparations for the Dublin Eucharistic Congress, to be held later in June, contributed to a bridge-building operation between state and Church. David Holmes describes the 31st International Eucharistic Congress as «a flashpoint in the formation of a specific Irish Catholic identity that held much influence (...) in the Irish Free State and Republic. Eamon de Valéra's dream of Ireland (...) and the Irish Catholic church's vision of Ireland as a spiritual beacon in an ever more materialistic and hedonistic world meshed well with the themes arising out of the Eucharistic Congress.»[305] Initial support for de Valera's government spread wider. For example, Peadar O'Donnell, committed republican and socialist activist, insisted that FF ought to be given a chance[306]. Another writer asked for time to be given to FF to undo the wrong done by Cumann na : «tá muinighin againn as an Riaghaltais nuadh: ach is mó an muinighin atá againn asainn féin...»[307] (We have confidence in the new government; but even more we have confidence in ourselves...)

76. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 64.
77. David G. Holmes, «The Eucharistic Congress of 1932 and Irish Identity», New Hibernia Review 4, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 55.
78. Peadar O'Donnell, «Give Fianna Fail a chance», An Phoblacht, 2 April, 1932.
79. T. J. Ryan, «An Sean-Riaghaltas agus an Riaghaltas nuadh, maidir leis an Ghaedhilig», An Phoblacht, 26 March, 1932.

Over 50 commemorative events were held across the state at Easter that year. While a large number of events had also been held across the island in previous years, FF's rise to power brought increased enthusiasm and furthered popular participation in them. In Dublin, a usual procession between St. Stephen's Green and Glasnevin was organized and included members from the IRA, Cumann na mBan, Fianna Éireann, Girl Scouts, SF, FF, 1916 clubs, Labour forces and trade unions. This event displayed a unity at a level rarely witnessed during the previous decade. Cumann na nGaedheal members were suddenly on the outside looking in.

During the procession, the GPO was an obvious attraction and 10 000 later gathered at Glasnevin. De Valera was perceived as the «great white hope»[308], but the oration delivered in Glasnevin by IRA Chief-of-Staff leader Maurice Twomey reminded his government that it had to act quickly to retain the allegiance of dissident republicans: «the cry was being raised that law and order were being imperilled, and this old British catchcry appeared to be specially directed against the I.R.A. (...) If there were British Acts of Parliament made in London or Dublin which made volunteers abnormal in their own land, then these Acts should be abolished or ignored.»[309] To answer such concerns, «the Public Safety Act was suspended, thus automatically abolishing the military tribunal, and lifting the ban imposed on the IRA and kindred organisations. All 'political' prisoners were immediately released from jail.»[310]

80. P. J. W., «Poem to Eamon de Valera», Catholic Bulletin 22, no. 12, December 1932, 983.
81. «The Anniversary of Easter, 1916», Irish Tmes, 28 March, 1932.
82. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 66-67.

De Valera's rise to power marked the advent of new commemorative possibilities. Previously precluded from commemorating at the gravesides of the executed leaders, republicans converged en masse on Arbour Hill at Easter. The large number of officials attending the official event however meant that only a limited number of citizens could be accommodated. To compensate, the graveyard was thrown open for visitors on Easter Sunday and Monday and FF promised to introduce more suitable arrangements in the future. Outside of Dublin, monster processions were held and 8 000 people notably gathered in Galway where a resurgence in the participation of the IRA was noted[311].

The magnetism of Arbour Hill was also felt among Labour forces. The Dublin Council of Trade Unions requested from the Department of Justice the right to organize its own commemoration in homage to Connolly at Arbour Hill's communal plot. Acting just like Cumann na nGaedheal and Fianna Fáil, the DCTU kept a tight control over proceedings. Non-affiliated unions were prevented from participating and a single wreath was laid at the grave rather than many small ones as wanted by the unions[312]. The minutes of the Council also revealed concerns over a climate of favouritism. The leaders protested against the inaction of the broadcasting station with regard to their demonstration and stated that «when another demonstration (organized by FF) was held of different political texture it was broadcast.»[313]

83. «Easter Week Celebrations», Connacht Tribune, 2 April, 1932.
84. Executive meeting of DCTU, 22 May 1932, MSS 21 DCTU, Minutes 1/12-13 Council Minutes, Dec. 1928 to June 1941, 21/DCTU, LMA.
85. Idem., 12 June 1933.

The Labour movement wanted to have access to the commemorative high sites, but continued to search for ways to assert a specific link with the Rising in the capital's landscape. The Council proposed the creation of a Connolly Commemoration and Children's Playground which would give a tangible expression to «Connolly's nurturing ideal» by helping mothers and maidens[314]. The fulfillment of the project would be anything but straightforward as it will be shown in further detail in the next chapter.

Later in 1932, persistent rumours circulated that the government was prepared to ban Armistice Day events. The pro-FF Irish Press, launched by de Valera himself, refuted these allegations. Those rumours were unfounded and originated from individuals hostile to the government[315]. The Irish Press relayed the government's hope that «it should be possible to carry it without the unnecessary and often provocative displays, which have led to disorderly conduct and riotous scenes on previous anniversaries.»[316]

In January 1933, FF consolidated its grip on power by securing an overall majority. The party proceeded to make the access to Arbour Hill easier and thousands of citizens were admitted freely to attend the official commemorations. The FF government was still busy trying to establish its legitimacy and official events on Easter Sunday marked a new departure. The relatives of the executed leaders were invited to attend alongside those of the 77 men executed under Cosgrave's government during the civil war[317]. The commemorative context was a chance to settle scores and exact revenge. A Dáil

86. Ibid.
87. «Armistice Day Ceremony», Irish Press, 12 October, 1932.
88. Ibid.
89. «The State Commemoration, Relatives of the 77 Invited to Attend, New Departure», Irish Press, 20 April, 1933.

exchange between Cumann na nGaedheal's General Mulcahy and Minister for Defence Frank Aiken revealed the intensity of the commemorative battle:

> General Mulcahy, Cumann na nGaedheal: asked the Minister for Defence if he will state whether invitations to the Official Commemoration of the 1916 Leaders on the 2nd May last were withheld from a number of persons who in previous years received such invitations; and, if so, what reasons or principles underlay such differentiation (...)
>
> Minister for Defence (Mr. Aiken, Fianna Fáil): Two hundred and forty-one persons who were invited in former years were not included in this year's list (...) The invitation list was revised this year on my instructions (...) It is hoped to make it really representative of those who took part, and of the relatives of those who were killed, in the National struggle. (...) Deputy Mulcahy will have to bear in mind that it is we who are preparing this list (...) People who fought in 1916 were deliberately excluded in the past. We have the compilation of this list now and anyone who wants to get on the list will have to satisfy us as to his claim.
>
> General Mulcahy: I can assure this House that no person who was known to be out in 1916, was excluded in the previous list. I again ask why persons who are prominent in Dublin and who are known to have taken part in the 1916 Rising were taken off that list[318].

In the long run, the presence of a new government did little to calm the resentment towards authorities inherited from the civil war era. Despite an august first year in power, FF's honeymoon was a short one. In 1933, Cumann na mBan, Fianna Éireann and Clann na nGaedheal already showed signs of impatience while the IRA was disillusioned by the «feeble and ineffective measures»[319] undertaken by the government since its accession to power. In December, Cumann na mBan went further and claimed that FF had betrayed the Proclamation[320]. Resistance towards FF being left in charge of official 1916 commemorations was also felt among associations of 1916 men. The 1916 Associated Easter Week Men, representing close to a 100 members, met on April 9th 1933, and its

90. «Ceisteanna - Questions. Oral Answers - Invitations to 1916 Commemoration», 10 May 1933, AHO, DED, 47, no. 7; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1933/05/10/00014.asp.
91. «IRA Statement», Cork Examiner, 17 April, 1933.
92. «Liam Mellowes: His Life and Aims», CnmB, December 1933, MRR, LOLB 161-22, NLI.

President Andy Dunne justified the association's decision to hold a parade on its own. For him, this gesture was not antagonistic to any other movement, but was warranted as the survivors of Easter Week «should not take second place in any parade to any other organisation»[321].

Weeks later, a special meeting of the 1916 Associated Easter Week Men was held to consider a FF invitation to attend the official events at Arbour Hill. Fergus O Connor told members that FF had no right to present its initiative as a «Natural commemoration» and a clear majority voted against participation[322]. For these 1916 men, the NGA was the only organization which could unite all at Easter. The distrust of the 1916 Associated Easter Week Men towards FF found further expressions. In May 1933, members raised objections against representing FF in future elections. The 1916 men with records felt that their support had been sought in previous elections merely as a political stunt. They promised that they would not be fooled again[323]. In 1934, the Associated Easter Week Men once again abandoned the idea of participating in official Arbour Hill events. Their decision was motivated by their failure to have FF and the IRA accept to appear together at the commemoration. After a mass celebrated by Father Aloysius, «the annual march to the graves of the leaders, executed in 1916, was abandoned (...) as a protest against the 'deplorable division of the Republican parties, each claiming the dead as their own for political purposes'.»[324]

93. Minute book of the 1916 Associated Easter Week Men, 9 April 1933, 21 Ms 1B32 19, Kilmainham Jail Archives (KJA).
94. Idem., 21 April 1933.
95. Idem., 21 May 1933.
96. «March to Mass, an Abandoned Parade», Irish Independent, 2 April, 1934.

Increasingly, de Valera's government was confronted by the renewed threat of physical-force which had characterized Cumann na nGaedheal's time in office. Entering the political realm meant that FF had been forced to move towards the necessities of realpolitik. This rapidly disappointed the republicans who continued to hold on firmly to the objective of a 32-county republic. The government was briefly challenged by forces from the left, but authorities were more concerned with the threat emanating from the right. The success of fascism in Catholic countries was a source of anxiety. Eoin O'Duffy, sacked by de Valera as the Garda commissioner, went on to create the blueshirt movement of the National Guard and, for a while, fears arose over the possibility of a Mussolini-type march on Leinster House.

Commemorative events in 1934 displayed signs of a renewed radicalization and polarization of opinions. A large event in Galway city featured a street banner with the caption «1798, 1803, 1848, 1867, 1916, 1922, 193---, We shall rise again»[325]. While some wanted the government to fall, an editorial published in the Connacht Sentinel condemned the factional dimension of Easter celebrations: «the Irishman who could express pride in the celebrations of Easter Week, 1934, would have, to put it mildly, a poor conception of the future of his country. (...) Most Irishmen, however, resent this sacred memory being turned into not merely political party propaganda, but into the narrowest and meanest kind of sectionalism.»[326] The first Easter commemoration in Arklow (Wicklow) was the occasion for speakers to criticize FF, a government which had turned out to be as big a disappointment as its predecessor. During a procession

97. «Commemoration Ceremony», Connacht Tribune, 7 April, 1934.
98. «Editorial: Bitterness», Connacht Sentinel, 8 May, 1934.

comprising members of the IRA, Fianna Éireann, Cumann na mBan, various public bodies, trade councils and members of the general public, critics were directed at the government and the Irish Independent reported that an orator had declared that «it ill became Fianna Fail to march to Arbour Hill to-day to honour Padraig Pearse and the leaders of 1916 while they held at Arbour Hill prisoners of war. There was no complete difference between Fianna Fail and the Blueshirts.»[327] While Fianna Fáil had released all the prisoners of war when first coming to power in 1932, it was not long before the new government fell back on imprisoning opponents to its rule. By 1934, hundreds of republican dissidents once again populated Irish prisons.

Unrest was also felt within the ranks of the leading party. An Phoblacht reported the resignation en bloc of the executive of the Ennybeg Cumann in Longford because the government had reneged on its promise to push for a republican programme. The resignation of the FF Martin Savage Club (honouring the IRA man killed in 1919) and attempts to disrupt official commemoration by the rank and file of the party were reported[328]. By Easter 1935, de Valera's government was struggling with the same difficulties its predecessor had failed to overcome during its decade in power. The intensity of the fights over the 1916 memorial unveiled in the GPO that year showed that the Rising remained a highly divisive legacy in the state. More than a decade after the advent of independence, the Easter context continued to pose threats of violent outbursts.

99. «Wicklow: Fianna Fail criticized», Irish Independent, 2 April, 1934.
100. An phoblacht, 7, 14 and 21 April, 1934.

The Irish control over polity and territory had not yet brought about more unified commemorative experiences. The promise for an Irish concord once the evil British presence would be removed had so far failed to deliver on several levels. The uses and meanings of public spaces remained contested and reminded one and all of the divisive character of Easter Week. The union of Irish citizens through commemorations and more widely in the political, social and cultural spheres remained a distant dream.

All in all, the 1922-1934 period was a difficult one. The use of public space to commemorate the Rising in a sovereign Ireland continuously fed hatred, enmities and suspicions between sections of Irish society. Parades, processions and gatherings represented permanent features thereafter, but these became increasingly overshadowed by a desire to safeguard the memory of 1916 by casting it in stone. In 1935, the unveiling of the Cuchulainn monument in the GPO contributed to shift the focus from processional commemorations to a material dimension. Gathering momentum in the following two decades, physical markers became an increasingly prominent commemorative battleground within the Free State.

Chapter 4 Marking the Occasion: Erecting Memorials, 1932-1950s

«by making symbols or remnants stand for the whole, we ease ourselves into an illusion.»[329] - Tony Judt

In his study of the Holocaust Memorial of the Warsaw Ghetto, James Young writes: «unlike words on a page, always gesturing at something beyond the ink and paper giving them form, memorial icons seem to embody ideas, inviting viewers to mistake material presence and weight for immutable presence.»[330] Yet, immutable presence is never more than an illusion. Meanings conveyed through permanent markers are always tailored to meet the changing needs of the societies in which they stand. Surveying the aftermath of the 1944 nazi massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane, Sarah Bennett Farmer has described how French authorities attempted to preserve the ruins as a moment frozen in time, a «sacred place that belonged to the nation»[331]. This decision would soon generate preservation headaches: «the nature of memory and mourning shifted as new people moved into the community, as survivors grew older, and as the ruins of the old town continued to deteriorate.»[332] Not even ruins can ever be made to stand still.

While Pierre Nora never restricted his pioneering study on lieux de mémoire to the sole dimension of physical sites and representations, his take on the expansion of memory issues in modern societies provides good theoretical guidance. This chapter's focus on the material dimension of 1916 lieux de mémoire in the two decades which followed the 1932 election of a FF government will help identify and qualify escalating fears of a

1. Tony Judt, «À la recherche du temps perdu: France and its Pasts», in Reappraisals: Reflections on the Forgotten Twentieth Century (New York: Penguin Press, 2008), 197-198.
2.James E. Young, «The Biography of a Memorial Icon: Nathan Rapoport's Warsaw Ghetto Monument», Representations 26 (Spring 1989): 71.
3. Farmer, Martyred Village, 98.
4. Ibid., 181.

remembrance on the verge of a «rupture of equilibrium» as Nora put it. This is not to say that Rising memorials completely superseded parades and gatherings, but the 1930s did mark a shift in the nature of commemorative gestures. Factions increasingly aimed to marshal remembrance by erecting markers which would provide «a visible point on which emotion can be focused»[333]. Nora has well summarized the situation:

> if we accept that the most fundamental purpose of lieux de mémoire is to stop time, to block the work of forgetting, to establish a state of things, to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial (...) all of this in order to capture a maximum of meaning in the fewest of signs, it is also clear that lieux de mémoire only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, and endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications.[334]

This «endless recycling and capacity for metamorphosis» has been further discussed by Walter Benjamin and James Young who concluded that new times always bring about «new kinds of presence, new meanings and significance.»[335] Peter Novick has emphasized the inherent risk of desensitization which accompanies the proliferation of historical markers, arguing that memorials often end up attracting «more attention from pigeons than they do from human passers-by»[336]. Therefore, the erection of more memorials is no guarantee of more remembrance, far from it. Nora has described how the burgeoning of lieux de mémoire stems from self-consciousness, «from the fulfillment of something always already begun (...) (because) if we were able to live within memory, we would not have needed to consecrate lieux de mémoire in its name.»[337] Young similarly pressed home that «once we assign monumental form to our memory we have to some degree divested ourselves of the obligation to remember. In shouldering the

5. David L. Shalk, «Of Memories and Monuments: Paris and Algeria, Frejus and Indochina», Historical Reflections 28, 2 (2002): 249.
6. Nora, «Between Memory and History»: 19.
7. Young, «The Biography of a Memorial Icon»: 98.
8. Peter Novick, The Holocaust and Collective Memory: The American Experience (London, Bloomsbury, 2000), 276, in Remembering the Year, Beiner, 264.
9. Nora, «Between Memory and History», 7-8.

memory work, monuments may relieve viewers of their memory burden.»[338] Offering fixed shapes and engraved messages, memorials are irremediably at the mercy of time, cultural shifts, contestation, adaptation or misunderstandings. They constitute an encouragement to remember, but the decision to do so always remains the individuals' prerogative[339].

Furthermore, «fixing» the past through memorials always entails arbitrary representations. The forms given to historical markers do not depend «on some measured distance between history and its monumental representation but in the conflation of private and public memory, in the memorial activity by which minds reflecting on the past inevitably precipitate in the present historical moment.»[340] In Ireland, contemporary struggles and power shifts had an impact on the Rising memorials erected through time. Meanings ascribed to them swayed in a similar fashion. Altogether, a commemorative «materialization» of 1916 reflected a growing insecurity among nationalist leaders and organizations regarding the safeguard of the Rising legacy even as they sought to entrench the image of a self-confident nation proud of its heroic past.

A few Rising memorials had been unveiled under the rule of Cumann na nGaedheal. Yet, these were neither commissioned nor strongly supported by the government. The 1916 Sigerson memorial (1927)[341] or the 1916 republican plot (1929) were both erected in

10. James E. Young, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meanings (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 5.
11. Nora, «Between Memory and History»: 15.
12. Young, «The Biography of a Memorial Icon», 102.
13. The Rising monument which was given the form of the Pièta was named after the late poet and artist Dora Sigerson through whose efforts it was raised,

Glasnevin cemetery as part of mortuary rituals. With the election of a Fianna Fáil government in 1932, a desire for state-sponsored 1916 memorials swiftly emerged. The first such monument would be unveiled at Easter 1935 in the GPO, the Irish «shrine in a secular cult of memory»[342]. While this marked the opening of a new commemorative era, older clashing visions continued to compete.

On the campaign trail in 1932, FF steered the charge against Cumann na nGaedheal, but, Keogh remarks, «while de Valera had led the promised revolution at polls in February 1932, towns were not renamed nor statues torn down.»[343] Opponents had often raised red flags when considering what the election of a republican government would mean. In January 1930, this Irish Statement contributor warned that «when Fianna Fáil or the Republican Party come into power they will probably, as the result of preceding circumstances, yield to a patriotic impetus and destroy all monuments commemorating the founders of the Irish Free State.»[344] Such apprehensions failed to materialize. As Keogh comments, «showing no desire to declare himself a green duce, he (de Valera) quickly assumed the role of a conservative statesman, using a firm and restraining hand on his more radical colleagues.»[345]

While the government refrained from going on a prophesied «decommemorative» rampage, it did explore new ways to celebrate the Rising. For a decade, republicans had had to bide their time away from power. Still, the daily encounters of ruins in the capital

14. Farmer, Martyred Village, 102.
15. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 80.
16. T. Hennessy, «Letter to the Editor», Irish Statement, 13, 19 (January 1930), 374, in Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 43.
17. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 80.

had constituted a constant reminder of a 1916 British repression and wider oppressive structure. Within the shattered city centre, the GPO was «transformed into a national monument even before the Rising was half over.»[346] Dublin ruins helped to frame 1916 into a narrative of martyrdom. Yet, as time went by, the capital was made to resemble its former self. At the heart of it all, the GPO was reconstructed in the 1920s, but not without «delays (they were still clearing the site in 1926) and complaints that builders and contractors were not taking their national duty seriously enough.»[347] When officially reopened in 1929, the GPO stood, for Cosgrave and his colleagues, as a symbol of a new order promising to contribute to Ireland's prosperity. It represented a forward-looking nation rather than acting as a reminder of past injuries.

Therefore, when FF came to power, no more ruins testified to a brutal past or ongoing grievances. The distance from 1916 also meant that a generation born since the Rising was about to reach adulthood. Even if Rising veterans were to rule Ireland for years to come, it appears that Easter Week participants and supporters already felt uneasy towards the safeguard of a 1916 collective memory and the pursuit of unfulfilled aspirations. The dominant processional embodiment of the Rising, so dominant over the previous decade, now seemed to be renewed through new initiatives to prevent the dreaded effect memory erosion and forgetfulness were bound to have on Irish society.

A text published in the Irish Press at Easter 1933 echoed these growing fears. Anxious to preserve an ever-fresh collective memory of the Rising, its author advocated for a

18. Wills, Dublin 1916, 4.
19. Ibid,, 140.

flashing green sign reading «Easter Week, 1916» to be installed on the GPO. This would serve as a perpetual reminder that the modern Irish nation had been born there and then[348]. The flashing green lights never appeared on the GPO, but numerous other initiatives did garner sufficient support to materialize and revealed beliefs in a weakening organic presence of the Rising at the core of the national narrative. Older generations of Irish nationalists and republicans increasingly bemoaned a lack of gratitude expressed towards the 1916 founding fathers. The fulfilment of the republican dream appeared no closer. Partition, emigration, economic stagnation and decline of the language were reminders of the frailties and failures of an independent state. Hence, monuments, statues and plaques emerged as concrete expressions of a will to pursue the 1916 ideals, a will which would hopefully prove to be contagious at the popular level.

The Need for a New Pantheon?

For a whole decade, Cumann na nGaedheal had exerted significant energy attempting to consolidate the legitimacy of the Irish Free State. When FF assumed power, it continued its predecessor's efforts even while these were made to serve a different national outlook. For de Valera and his colleagues, the road to national respectability notably demanded a revision of the story of the heroic origins of the state. Discrediting Cumann na nGaedheal's perspective, FF «added inactivity to its predecessor's indecision»[349] when it came to commemorate the creation of the Free State. For the new rulers, the national revolution had begun with the ultimate sacrifice of 1916 martyrs and was still ongoing. Hence, the 1923 Leinster Lawn cenotaph which honoured pro-Treaty heroes Collins,

20. «A Banner of Light?, Ireland's Memorial of Easter 1916, On the G.P.O.», Irish Press, 28 March, 1933.
21. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 80.

Griffith and O'Higgins (from 1927) was ignored by FF: «decay was rampant, unchecked because of indifference, bitterness (...), unchecked because Blueshirtism could not be conceded even the slightest symbolic victory.»[350]

Soon after his election, de Valera confronted the British over the Treaty and, as Keogh explains, «the (ensuing) economic war provided the context of social threat in which such a movement (blueshirtism named after the shirts worn as the uniform of the National Guard) might develop. In 1933 the crushing electoral defeat encouraged usually staid members of Cumann na nGaedheal to become reckless. The success of fascism in many Catholic countries in Europe made that ideology attractive.»[351] In such a tense context, FF swiftly undertook to claim the legacy of the Rising for itself and proposed a government-led initiative for a 1916 memorial.

By 1933, FF supporters, such as Joseph Brennan (Sidney Gifford Czira's pen name[352]), agreed on the necessity of such a tribute. Brennan suggested that it was «about time that the G.P.O. in Dublin bore some memorial to the men who fought for us there in 1916.»[353] The proposal was for the proclamation to be engraved on a tablet outside the GPO with a second plaque listing the fallen heroes to be displayed inside. Days later, Liam Mac Fhionnlaoigh, the secretary of the Associated Easter Week Men, opined likewise «that this historic building should carry on its walls for our people and for foreign visitors a

22. Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 46.
23. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 82.
24. Sidney Gifford Czira was the sister of Grace Gifford, widow of the 1916 signatory Joseph Plunkett, and Muriel MacDonagh, the deceased widow of other signatory Thomas MacDonagh.
25. «National Memorials», Irish Press, 6 March, 1933.

memorial to mighty days.»[354] Suggestions abounded and most identified the GPO as the only fitting place to erect a memorial. Despite FF's best intentions, many efforts were necessary to transfer the memorial from mere ink on paper to a reality.

In the meantime, de Valera and his colleagues happily facilitated the replacement of pro-Treaty figures with staunch republicans within the nationalist Pantheon. In 1932, the Countess Constance Markievicz, «one of the most romanticized political figures of the early 20th century»[355], became the first 1916 figure to be formally commemorated. Granted state permission, a committee chaired by Cumann na mBan leaders Jennie Wyse Power (courier during Easter Week) and Madeleine ffrench-Mullen (ICA member under the command of Markievicz in Stephen's Green) erected a bust of the Countess in St. Stephen's Green where she had acted as the only 1916 female commander[356]. FF had played at best a peripheral role in the commemorative scheme, but de Valera put his stamp on the unveiling proceedings.

His description of Markievicz's life and aspirations would not be condoned by all her former allies, however. Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, feminist, activist and widow of the Rising victim and pacifist Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, decried this attempt by the government to hijack Markievicz's legacy:

> Monuments to the dead are often misused (...) by the living to misinterpret what those whose memorial is unveiled truly stood for. (...) The picture painted by Eamonn de Valera of labour's revolutionary heroine is conventionalised beyond recognition. (...) It is a matter of history that Boland's Mill (where de Valera

26. Irish Press, 8 March 1933, in «'A Statue's There to Mark the Place': Cú Chulainn in the GPO», Robert Tracy, Field Day Review 4 (2008): 207.
27. «Markievicz, Constance Gore-Booth, Countess (1868-1927)», Oxford Companion to Irish History, 364.
28. «Untitled», Department of Finance, 12 September 1952, DOT, S 15 368A/B, NAI.

> commanded) was the only rebel fortress in Dublin where no women were permitted to assist in 1916. (...) This fact sufficiently illustrates the radically conflicting viewpoints of Connolly and de Valera (...) towards women and towards class distinctions and revolution(...). To the one, woman was an equal, a comrade; to the other, a sheltered being, withdrawn to the domestic heart, shrinking from public life. (...) none will deny the self-evident fact that Constance Markievicz, Ireland's Joan of Arc, belongs to the former category.[357]

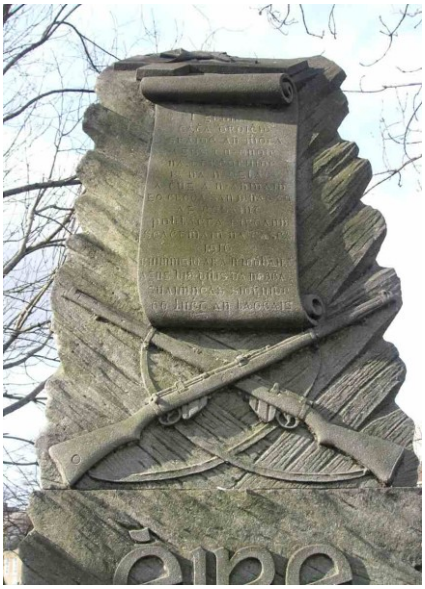
Sheehy-Skeffington attacked de Valera's party over the diminutive roles granted to women since accession to independence and bolstered the notion of class struggle at the core of the 1916 fights, but which had been obliterated by a «Faith and Fatherland» narrative. By «creating a sense of continuity with the past», she contended that the government was adapting «the past to suit the present.»[358]

The following year another monument was unveiled and revealed that some factions were unwilling to follow the lead of FF when it came to commemorate 1916. At Easter 1933, the Mount Street Area Memorial Committee and the NGA joined efforts to erect a memorial on Mount Street Bridge paying tribute to the Third Battalion of the Dublin Brigade. Brian O'Neill ranked the battle as an epic story similar to those of Táin Bó Cuailgne[359] and Homer's heroes[360]. Ever since 1916, anti-Treaty TD and Rising participant Brian O'Higgins had apologetically described «the bravest and fiercest engagement of all (...) known as the Battle of Mount Street Bridge (...) waged by nine men against thousands.»[361] Chosen to address the crowd at the unveiling, O'Higgins

29. Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, «Constance Markievicz - What She Stood For», An Phoblacht, 16 July, 1932
30. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 254.
31. «Táin Bó Cuailgne», The Oxford Companion to Irish History, 562: «the central tale of the Ulster Cycle (...). It depicts an invasion of Ulster by Queen Medb of Connacht in an attempt to secure a renown brown bull. The raid is blocked by the Ulster champion Cú Chulainn until the Ulstermen arrive to defeat the invaders».
32. Brian O'Neill, «Mount Street Bridge», Easter Week (New York: International Publishers, 1939).
33. Brian O'Higgins, Easter, 1916: The Story of the Rising (Dublin: Ardiff, 1941), 7.

described the gesture as an «important social occasion when the ideological imperatives behind the commission were articulated.»[362] The paramount aim of those behind the commemoration was to reassert that «only those who have refused to accept less than what was fought for to the death in the Battle of Mount Street Bridge (...) have the indisputable right to speak in the name of our Republican dead.»[363]

This commemorative gesture acted as a warning to FF, which, since coming to power, had shown signs of being keen to compromise. It implied that the Rising's legacy belonged solely to anti-Treaty forces who had not compromised on the 1916 promises.



The monument's form made this clear: the front consisted of a parchment symbolizing the 1916 Proclamation while two rifles posted underneath insisted on the ongoing fight to secure the Republic proclaimed at Easter Week.

34. John Turpin, «Nationalist and Unionist Ideology in the Sculpture of Oliver Sheppard and John Hughes, 1895-1939», The Irish Review 20, Ideas of Nationhood (Winter-Spring, 1997): 64.
35. «Memorial to the 1916 men», Irish Press, 24 April, 1933.

Fig. 1. Mount Street Bridge memorial (front and back), Dublin city (Photo courtesy of Michael Pegum, Irishwarmemorials.ie)

The back read: «In commemoration of the Battle of Mount Street Bridge and in honour of the Irish Volunteers who gallantly gave their lives in this area in defence of the Irish Republic, Easter Week 1916, Remember their sacrifice and be true to their ideals, God Rest the Brave»[364]. 3 000 people were present for the ceremony and the Irish Press reported:

> the proceedings were worthy of the occasion; but why were all those who bore a part in the 1916 fight in the Ringsend area and who have remained faithful to Republican principles since that period not present as participants in Sunday's act of homage? As a firm believer in the principles of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, I would hope that in all like demonstrations of the future there shall be found room for all Irishmen who by different methods seek the one goal of the independence of the Irish nation.[365]

36. Images of the monument and of the inscription are available online on the site of the Irish War Memorials; http://www.irishwarmemorials.ie/html/showMemorial.php?show=158.
37. «Mount Street Bridge», Irish Press, 27 April, 1933.

Absence on the day spoke as loud as presence. The committee insisted that while it was «hardly necessary to remind Republicans of the magnificent fight made by the Volunteers on this spot», less patriotic citizens had to be reminded of their duty of remembrance. The monument was also to counteract British imperialism which still exerted its influence on the island: «it is not without a sense of humiliation that Dublin citizens daily witness elaborate memorials of British imperialism erected on all sides of their ancient capital, while devoted men who fell fighting for Irish liberty remain uncommemorated.»[366]

The Cuchulainn Moment

In 19th century Ireland, statues and monuments, Beiner commented, were «ubiquitously erected to honor iconic representations of nations and patriotic heroes, whose memory was also fêted in countless ceremonies that were steeped in commemorative rituals.»[367] Memorials were notably raised to celebrate nationalist figures such as Daniel O'Connell, Henry Grattan, Patrick Sarsfield and William Smith O'Brien. The 1798 Rising centenary had also brought its share of markers and stimulated a demand which remained strong thereafter[368]. Yet, organizations such as the NGA were adamant that much more needed to be done to rectify the blatant commemorative imbalance in favour of the British heritage. Furthermore, for many republicans, these 19th century nationalist figures, especially O'Connell, had not fought the right fight.

38. Coiste Cuimhne Sráid an Mhóta (Mount Street Area Memorial Committee), p 106/2405, Archives of Sighle Humphreys O'Donoghue, UCD.
39. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 244.
40. Ibid., 243-275.

Thus, when Eamon de Valera was standing in the GPO on Easter Sunday 1935, ready to unveil the first official Easter Week monument, authorities were entering uncharted waters. The government's initiative provoked hostile reactions across the political spectrum. Every step of the way, heavy criticism ensured that no triumphant national unity would materialize[369]. By 1935, FF's honeymoon with dissident republicans was but a memory and «the opposition were determined to make a stand on the GPO anniversary event, but so too were militant republicans who now held that de Valera too had betrayed the Republic by taking office in the illegitimate political entity (...) With the IRA now a proscribed organisation, there was a serious likelihood of trouble.»[370] The commemorative project in the form of Oliver Sheppard's statue depicting the Death of Cuchulainn brought renewed feuding between FF and Fine Gael (FG, the revamped Cumann na nGaedheal renamed in 1933 after a merger with other centrist parties).

41. This commemorative project has already attracted a lot of academic attention. See for example Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War, Wills, Dublin 1916, Breathnach-Lynch, «The Rising 1916», Johnson, Ireland, the Great War and the Geography of Remembrance, Moran, Staging the Easter Rising, Comerford, Inventing the Nation or Tracy, «'A Statue's There to Mark the Place': Cú Chulainn in the GPO».
42. Wills, Dublin 1916, 159.

Fig. 2. The Death of Cuchulainn in the GPO, a sculpture by Oliver Sheppard unveiled at Easter 1935 (Photo courtesy of Kman999)

A resurgent nation was depicted through a dramatic representation of this mythological character of the Ulster cycle. The ancient and the new were linked through Cuchulainn who, with his «heroic ideals of service to one's people before one's self, and the evocation of an ancient and noble Irish society, appealed greatly to the romantic imaginations of Celtic revivalists.»[371] Cuchulainn's sacrifice to protect the Ulster kingdom was adapted and to stand for Ireland's fight against the British, for an «Irish political resurgence (...) (for) Patrick Pearse's ideology of 'blood sacrifice'».[372]

This appeal of romantic cultural nationalism was at the time widespread across Europe. Like Cuchulainn, the 16 executed leaders had faced their death standing. For decades, the Ulster hero had had numerous admirers among nationalist proponents, with Patrick Pearse its most recent and ardent one. During his life, Pearse had made Cuchulainn a

43. Ibid.
44. Turpin, «Nationalist and Unionist Ideology in the Sculpture»: 73.

central presence through his educational project at St. Enda's college[373] which had for its motto the warrior's words of «I care not though I were to live but one day and one night provided my fame and my deeds live after me.»[374] According to John Turpin, Pearse was not the only 1916 leader to have been infatuated by the Ulster mythical hero: «what was remarkable about the Cuchulainn saga for them (1916 leaders) was less its antiquarian nature than its modern relevance. The saga could be seen as a challenge to Irish political subservience to England and to modern 'materialistic' values.»[375] The choice of an Ulster protagonist highlighted FF's intent to fight the artificial partition of the island. It showed how myths always constitute something «like a reservoir of meanings which is available for possible use again in other structures.»[376]

Chosen by the government, Oliver Sheppard was a respected artist who had established for himself a solid reputation thanks to public commissions such as The Pikeman (Wexford,1904), a 1798 memorial (Enniscorthy, 1908) and the Mangan memorial (St. Stephen's Green, 1909)[377]. «With the coming of the Irish Free State in 1922, the Provisional Government was anxious to create a new identity which would link back to

45. See Elaine Sisson, Pearse's Patriots: St. Enda's and the Cult of Boyhood (Cork: Cork University Press, 2004). The entry about Pearse in The Oxford Companion to Irish History, 522, reads «founded in Dublin by Patrick Pearse in 1909 to give expression to his ideals, both nationalistic and educational. He intended that the Gaelic ethos and curriculum of the school should inspire his boys to a nobility of character in which love of Ireland would be the guiding principle. Condemning contemporary intermediate education, with its rigid pedagogy, emphasis on examinations, and neglect of Irishness, as a 'murder machine', he emphasized the importance of eliciting and fostering each pupil's talent through a school regime that, while humane, yet looked to the feats of Ireland's past heroes for inspiration.»
46. Edwards, Patrick Pearse: The Triumph of Failure, 117.
47. Turpin, «Art & Society: Cuchulainn Lives On»: 27.
48. Connerton, How Societies Remember, 56.
49. John Turpin, «The Life of Oliver Sheppard, Dublin Sculptor, 1865-1941: Part 1», Dublin Historical Record 48, no. 1 (Spring, 1995): 72.

the ancient Celtic past»[378] and Sheppard became a prominent artist through numerous state-sponsored commissions. He was involved in the conception of the 1923 Collins-Griffith Cenotaph and was seemingly excused by nationalists for executing war memorials[379], monuments «which commemorated Irish soldiers in the British army, a type of remembrance which was not politically favoured in Ireland after 1918»[380]. Until 1935, Sheppard's work had been appreciated by both sides of the nationalist divide. His latest commission would however fall victim to political battles[381] as he experienced for himself the minefield of Rising commemoration.

The monument itself reflected the intense feuding over 1916 which prevailed at the time and the only direct reference to Easter Week on the GPO memorial would be the Proclamation's third paragraph engraved on its marble base:

> 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.

By choosing this paragraph, FF chastised once more the pro-Treaty supporters who had reneged on the 1916 aspirations. Ironically, by 1935, this accusation was increasingly uttered against FF itself by dissident republicans. When unveiled, the memorial partially

50. John Turpin, «Oliver Sheppard, Albert Power and State Sculptural Commissions», Dublin Historical Record 55, no. 1 (Spring, 2002): 43.
51. Sheppard notably executed memorials commemorating Major William Redmond war's efforts and the ones of the Irish Barristers and the Solicitors.
52. Turpin, «The Life of Oliver Sheppard, Dublin Sculptor, 1865-1941, Part 2»: 148.
53. John Turpin, «Art & Society: Cuchulainn Lives On»: 27.

contradicted appeals for a monument which would concretely celebrate Easter Week and the birth of the modern state inside the Rising's most iconic site. The proclamation was only partially reproduced while the names of the fallen were nowhere to be seen.

In the lead up to the unveiling, Richard Mulcahy, FG TD, 1916 veteran and Provisional Army General during the civil war, had challenged de Valera in the Dáil:

> Is the President aware that the only invitation which has been received by the Dublin Corporation is from this Committee, which has already split up because the ceremonies are being conducted in a Party spirit? (...) Is the position then that the Government are having an official commemoration, and are unveiling in the G.P.O. a monument provided out of Government funds (...) but that the Fianna Fáil organisation in the meantime has taken the matter in hands and is running it as a Party function?[382]

De Valera denied accusations of partisanship laid at the door of the Easter Week Memorial Committee, but remained vague as to who sat on it. All he noted was that it was «not an official Committee set up by the Executive Council». Pressed to confirm that the committee had split up, de Valera simply replied: «I do not know anything about that, and do not think it is true.» Mulcahy pursued his attack by recalling how:

> Deputy Cosgrave pointed out at the time (August 1934) that it was an unreasonable action on the part of the Government, and that it was a very inadequate action on their part. He pointed out that neither was the form of the memorial nor the time suitable, and that there should have been some understanding with the particular people who were concerned with the Rising in Easter Week. He pointed out that they should have been consulted in the matter(...) (but) It was introduced without any previous notice to the House generally and was presented practically as a fait accompli.[383]

Supporting Mulcahy's protest, FG TD Gearóid O'Sullivan continued:

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54. «Questions and Oral Answers: Easter Week Memorial Committee», 4 April 1935, AHO, DED, 55, no. 14; http://oireachtasdebates.oireachtas.ie/Debates%20Authoring/DebatesWebPack.nsf/takes/dail1935041100049.
55. «Committee on Finance - Public Works and buildings», 11 April 1935, AHO, DED 55, no. 17; http://historical-debates.oireachtas.ie/D/0055/D.0055.193504110053.html.

> In seconding that motion, I need not (...) ask: "Where were you in 1916?" (...) It is possible, indeed very probable, that the Parliamentary Secretary (to the Minister for Finance, Hugo Victor Flinn) is not desirous of having any reference whatsoever made either to 1916 or to the particular function that he is preparing to participate in. I would say that his only association with 1916 would be the nineteen part of it—the nineteenth anniversary. (...) I think that you will at least allow me to say it is a regrettable day in this country when the memory of the men who died in 1916 is being celebrated as a State function on the one part, while, on the other hand, political and partisan capital is being made out of it. Nobody, Sir, would regret that more than the persons who are dead ——[384]

His intervention was cut short by Ceann Comhairle (Chairman) Frank Fahy who expelled him from the Dáil, alongside Mulcahy, for having shown contempt for his authority.

When Easter came, the executive of Clann na nGaedheal (Pre-Truce IRA) told his members to stay away from commemorative events across the state[385]. Key national figures such as Mulcahy, Cosgrave, Maude Gonne MacBride, Kathleen Clarke and President of the High Court Hugh Kennedy[386] boycotted the ceremony at the GPO. Reacting to his invitation, poet Oliver St. John Gogarty replied: «I must refuse to assist you in playing Hamlet when your Republicans are howling for Macbeth. In view of my experience of them, I consider your invitation to me personally an impertinence.»[387] The government compensated for this antagonism with a display of its strength. Thousands of soldiers paraded with de Valera taking the salute from the GPO platform where he was surrounded by clergymen among whom figured the 1916 chaplain Father Aloysius[388].

56. Ibid.
57. «The Commemoration of Easter Week, Pre-Truce I.R.A. Attitude», Irish Independent, 1 April, 1935.
58. «Outline of Civilian Participation as presented by Minister for Defence», 1 April 1935, DOT, S 6405A, NAI.
59. «Untitled», 15 April 1935, DOT, S 6405C, NAI, in Tracy, «'A Statue's There to Mark the Place': Cú Chulainn in the GPO»: 211.
60. «Untitled», 15 April 1935, DOT, S 6405A, NAI.

The IRA responded with its customary Glasnevin procession numbering around 1200 and planned a defiant halt at the GPO. This dual convergence forced the army to delay the IRA cortege to avoid clashes. Once in Glasnevin, IRA Chief of Staff Maurice Twomey spoke of «the imposture staged that morning in Dublin's streets (...) (which) was nothing more than a desperate attempt by the politicians to try to prevent their exposure.»[389] Security forces kept both sets of participants apart, but curious spectators fell enticed to attend both parades.

At the GPO, de Valera's speech turned out to be rather ambiguous. He first emphasized that the work of Easter Week could never be undone. Anything less than complete independence was simply impossible to contemplate in the wake of the Rising. He then stated that «everyone who enters this hall henceforth will be reminded of the deed enacted here. A beautiful piece of sculpture, the creation of Irish genius, symbolising the dauntless courage and abiding constancy of our people, will commemorate it, modestly, but fittingly»[390] only to later contradict this by arguing that «the time to raise a proud national monument to the work that was here begun and to those who inspired and participated in it has not yet come. Such a monument can be raised only when the work is triumphantly completed.»[391] The political, social, economic and cultural tensions prevailing at the time prevented the monument to stand as a representation of a thriving and self-confident nation.

61. «Demonstration by I.R.A.», Irish Times, 22 April, 1935.
62. «'Work of 1916 Can Never be Undone'», Irish Press, 22 April, 1935.
63. «Significance of 1916 Memorial: What Will Satisfy Ireland», Irish Times, 22 April, 1935.

FG leader and 1916 veteran Cosgrave used similar language to justify his antithetical stance. Refusing to attend the unveiling, the former head of government argued that «the time is not yet ripe for an adequate commemoration of 1916, which would be accompanied by that generous national enthusiasm indispensable to its success. (..) It is not possible to hide these national humiliations to-day, or to cover them with a veil lifted from the bronze statue of Cuchulainn.»[392] No consensus had been achieved under his guidance and Cosgrave's intervention made it obvious that FF had not been any more successful.

As many commentators were prompt to observe, the 1916 memorial did not even clearly commemorate Easter Week itself. Republican voices were quick to criticize the choice of Cuchulainn. The editor of the United Ireland Journal was adamant that «there is nothing told of Cuchulainn that would make a representation of his death suitable symbol for the struggle and sacrifice of 1916.»[393] The Irish Times deplored that it was «somewhat paradoxical that the warrior who had held the gap of Ulster against the southern hordes should now be adopted as the symbol by those whose object it is to bend his native province to their will.»[394] On Easter Sunday, despite meticulous orchestration, the unveiling was disrupted by a hiatus as de Valera ended his oration three minutes early and imposed an awkward silence before the unveiling could occur on the strike of noon.

Amid this persistent loathing by opponents, the government could nevertheless count on the unwavering, and unsurprising, support of the Irish Press. Founded by de Valera in

64. «Easter Week Memorial», Irish Times, 18 April, 1935.
65. United Ireland Journal, 20 April 1935: 1-2, in Turpin, «Art & Society: Cuchulainn Lives On»: 27.
66. Irishman's Diary, A Cuchulainn Anomaly», Irish Times, 10 April, 1935.

1931 to «give the truth in its news»[395], this pro-FF newspaper wholeheartedly backed the GPO initiative and claimed that «no other existing organisation is capable of doing it (unifying all) (...) The good will and the respect for each other's right, which Fianna Fail has inculcated since its foundation, are essential conditions of success.»[396] All the same, there were fears in the lead up to Easter Sunday that dissidents might try to «steal the show». On April 3rd, the Irish Times reported that «it is, in fact, rumoured, that the authorities were apprehensive of damage being done to a fine work of art in order to satisfy the pretensions of the dissident sections.»[397] These rumours were dismissed by the Irish Press which claimed that «the statue of Cuchulainn was removed temporarily from the Central Hall of the G.P.O. for the simple purpose of enabling the marble pedestal to be erected, and there was no authority for the suggestion made by the 'Irish Times' to-day that the memorial was removed 'to preserve it from wanton injury.»[398] No attack was eventually mounted, but the rumours appeared plausible to many. From then on, rather than promote a concord, the statue provided a target upon which factions focused their long-drawn opposition.

From the onset, the Cuchulainn memorial proved somewhat puzzling or unsatisfactory to many. Weeks after the unveiling, the Irish Times suggested that positioned between gigantic pillars, this heroic figure was diminished. Furthermore, visitors were forced to admire it in quasi-darkness[399]. The choice of Cuchulainn itself was questioned in Ireland and abroad. In August 1935, the British World Research Society made contact with the

67. «Truth in News Will be Chief Aim of Irish Press», Galway Observer, 8 August, 1931.
68. «Way to Unity», Irish Press, 2 April, 1935.
69. «Post Office Memorial», Irish Times, 3 April, 1935.
70. «Why the Statue Was Removed», Irish Press, 4 April, 1935.
71. «Cuchulain Criticised», Irish Times, 6 May, 1935.

Secretary of the Executive Council to inquire about «the history of this (memorial) and the legend attached thereto.»[400] Critics persisted and, two decades on, Sean Mac Seosaimh expressed the popular malaise and alienation which had come to surround the monument. He regretted the absence of a clear indication as to what the statue was meant to commemorate. It provided the signatories' names, but no date or any reference to the Rising. Mac Seosaimh noted how «this was forcibly brought to my notice when I overheard two Americans and an Englishman having the queerest guesses about who or what the monument commemorated (I doubt if many of the pupils in our unpatriotic schools would know either).»[401] For him, the NGA with its «first-class record among Irish patriotic bodies for its persistent and loving attention to such details of national commemoration (...) (should) rectify this glaring omission from the G. P. O. memorial to 1916.»[402]

72. «Design of 1916 Memorial GPO», 12 August 1935, DOT, S 6405, NAI.
73. «Cuchullain Monument», Irish Press, 21 January, 1955.
74. Ibid.

Outside Dublin where inactivity had predominated in 1916, some commemorative gestures emerged in the following years which were considerably at odds with the Cuchulainn monument. A memorial unveiled in Limerick city in 1938 figures as an example of a much more straightforward representation. Originally commemorating Viscount FitzGibbon killed in 1854 while in the Crimean War, the statue was blown to pieces by the IRA in 1930. Only the pedestal survived the attack and, in due course, served as the base for the 1916 monument. For local nationalists, glory had been imparted to them by the participation of Limerick men in the Dublin fights. Erected through public subscriptions, the monument included three portraits of native men executed in 1916: Edward Daly, signatory Tom Clarke and Con Colbert.

Fig. 3. The 1916 monument unveiled in 1938 on Sarsfield Bridge, Limerick city (Photo courtesy of Seabhcan)

The work of Albert Power, the most influential sculptor of the period alongside Sheppard, the monument also included the feminine presence of Éire (Ireland) whose

broken shackles were being loosened by Colbert. A rifle in hand, Clarke was pointing to the proclamation and the seven signatures, which included his own[403]. The sixteen executed leaders and the 59 men killed in action were listed while a torch would «for ever» illuminate the golden 1916 carved on the pedestal[404]. There would be no misunderstanding possible as to what and who were honoured by this monument.

A Monumental Diversion

Terence Brown tells us how, beginning in 1935, «de Valera began to move decisively against the IRA (...) therefore reducing support for the Blueshirts which had sprung up in part because of fear of de Valera's past association with extreme republicism.»[405] De Valera sounded ever more like Cosgrave when admitting «his disappointment at the failure of the IRA to accept peaceful government by majority rule.»[406] Easter 1935 was chosen by dissident republicans to display their opposition to Fianna Fáil's stricter stance against them. Led by the IRA, dissidents assembled on the slopes of the Knockmealdown mountains, Tipperary, to witness the unveiling of a competing memorial dedicated to former IRA Chief of Staff Liam Lynch, killed in the civil war. Present for the occasion, Lynch's brother hoped that the erection of a 60-foot-high round tower[407] would close the breach within the republican ranks. He regretted that it had been «an unpleasant feature of many such commemorations during the last few years that the gravesides of great patriots have been turned into platforms for bitter denunciations not only of fellow

75. Turpin, «Oliver Sheppard, Albert Power and State Sculptural Commissions»: 43.
76. «Limerick 1916 Memorial», Irish Press, 26 March, 1938.
77. Brown, Ireland, 163.
78. Keogh, Twentieth Century Ireland, 80.
79. «The Liam Lynch Memorial», Irish Times, 6 April, 1935.

Irishmen but of the Republican majority.»[408] In direct opposition to the government's GPO unveiling, this monument represented a threat as «circumstances provided 10,000 republicans (...) watching Moss (Maurice) Twomey, a man wanted by the police, a man who refused to recognise de Valera and his 'mongrel Free State', unveiling a monument to Liam Lynch.»[409]

Alongside the IRA and Cumann na mBan, the National Graves Association unveiled ever more markers dedicated to the dead republicans and their unfulfilled aspirations, as the association insisted. From 1934, numerous 1916 graves were adorned by memorial stones which often replaced nondescript crosses and funeral stones[410]. Like the characters of the 1949 Mártín Ó Cadhain's Irish language novel Cré na Cille[411] where the dead still do the talking from the graveyard, the 1916 fallen men could be heard from beyond the grave. Through their commemorative gestures, dissident republicans condemned the living political leaders who had persistently betrayed the 1916 ideals, while the credentials of dead heroes, such as Lynch, remained uncompromisingly true to the essence of Easter Week.

In 1936, the government banned all unofficial commemorations at Easter. In response to this attempt to stifle their public presence at Easter, the targeted dissidents instead undertook various commemorative diversions. They increasingly targeted alternative

80. «Commemoration», Irish Press, 6 April. 1935.
81. Dolan, Commemorating the Irish Civil War, 43.
82. See the site of the NGA; http://www.nga.ie.
83. Mártín Ó Cadhain, Cré na Cille (Inverin, Clo Iar-Chonnachta, 2009 (1949).

sites to the GPO and embraced other historical periods which highlighted the unfinished character of the Irish revolution.

On March 30th, 1936, Mrs. Cathal Brugha, widow of the civil war martyr and legendary Easter Week rebel, unveiled a memorial plaque in Enniscorthy (Wexford) dedicated to the memory of Patrick O'Brien and Maurice Spillane, killed by the Provisional Government forces during the civil war. In 1937, the Kilmicheal Ambush Committee erected a monument in Castletown (Cork) which further deflected the republican attention from 1916 to the 1918-23 period[412]. The Dripsey Ambush Commemoration Committee (Cork) acted similarly in 1938 when unveiling a memorial honouring the six men who had died during a 1921 ambush[413]. In March that year, a plaque was unveiled in Tralee (Kerry) where Percy Hannafin had been killed in the civil war by pro-Treaty forces[414]. Later in May, Maurice Twomey dedicated a plaque to the memory of Joseph Bergin[415] also killed during the civil war in Milltown (Kildare). Dozens more examples could be given here to exemplify this commemorative trend, largely prompted by the efforts of the NGA, which steadily increased in scope. It sought to mobilize dissidents in their pursuit of an island-wide Republic.

In 1950, 10 000 people attended the unveiling of a monument remembering the 1919 Soloheadbeg ambush on RIC men. This tribute to violent traditions and uncompromising republicanism was, however, not condoned by all who professed republican allegiances.

84. «Anniversary of Ambush at Kilmichael», Southern Star, 4 December, 1937.
85. «Sport & Play, Matches at Coachford in aid of Ambush Commemoration», Southern Star, 15 August, 1936.
86. «In Memory of Tralee Volunteer», Irish Independent, 28 March, 1938.
87. «Plaque Unveiled at County Kildare», Weekly Irish Times, 28 May, 1938.

Reacting to the Soloheadbeg gesture, an Irish Times reader denied that the men honoured had been more republican than he was: «in this ambush two R.I.C. men were slain while engaged in peaceful work. To me this killing was an un-Christian act. Will some able apologist give a reasonable justification? I am an Irish Catholic and am opposed to partition. (...) I do not believe in ends justifying means.»[416] Still, dissidents persistently praised fallen heroes for their refusal to compromise on the 1916 Proclamation. They promoted their ongoing and unyielding dedication to a 32-county Republic through persistent commemorative gestures. The intensity and the resilience of dissident gestures however failed to compensate for their numerical minority or for their lack of financial, political and organizational means. While dissidents were heard at Easter, they often lacked the agency to translate their vision into tangible markers beyond the relatively inexpensive and symbolic commemorative plaques.

Shifting the focus to episodes above and beyond the Rising, dissidents never entirely abandoned 1916 commemorations to constitutional parties. Their strategy became to deconstruct national narratives to reclaim the spirit of 1916 for themselves. They co-opted specific events or individuals to their cause. In 1937, members of the Old Fianna Éireann and Old IRA organized a dance at Dublin's Mansion House in honour of Seán Heuston and Con Colbert. The program distributed to patrons stressed that:

> the men of Easter did not die that Ireland should be mutilated, nor that their Motherland should be commercialised in the interests of West British capitalism. Heuston and his comrades faced England's guns for the redemption of Ireland's soul and for the uplifting of the Irish race. There can be no rest till their task is

88. «Soloheadbeg», Irish Times, 25 January, 1950.

> completed and till the Flag of Freedom floats proudly over the four corners of the land. This is our aim! (...) We have not forgotten and we may not forgive![417]

The following year, the Seán Heuston Memorial Committee held a visit of Kilmainham Jail to garner the funds necessary to erect a memorial honouring this Dublin youth. As usual, the NGA was active behind the scenes[418]. On Sunday, March 20th, 7 000 visitors were said to have visited «Dublin's Bastille»[419]. Hundreds more had been refused admission and organizers secured the opening of the jail for a second Sunday[420]. In 1962, Joseph Brennan (Gifford Czira) recalled with great fondness this 1938 visit to the «spot sacred to all our race, where the leaders of the 1916 Rising gave up their lives. (...) joining in a prayer for the dead; now I was kneeling where Pearse died with others; with the pain-racked Connolly, with Heuston, McDiarmada and the rest.»[421]

Helping the Heuston Committee, the NGA unveiled two plaques in the vicinity of the GPO in 1936. The first one was installed on Moore Street where The O'Rahilly had been killed during the daring evacuation of the GPO and the second was affixed to the wall of the Hibernian Bank on O'Connell Street where Captain Thomas Weafer, a Wexford Volunteer, had been «shot and burned in these premises» as the plaque revealed[422]. Who allowed for these plaques to be installed on privately-owned buildings and why they did so remains unclear. Yet, such gestures expanded the sites and the participants remembered and stressed the Association's beliefs that the government was lacking in

89. «Clár cuimhneacháin, Céilidhe Cuimhneacháin Heuston-Colbáird, Teach an Árd-Mhaoir», 8 May, 1937, Cumann na Sean Fhianna, Cumann Náisiúnta sean-Ógláigh, EC, NLI.
90. «Souvenir of Your Visit to Kilmainham Jail», 27 March 1938, Sean Heuston Memorial Committee, MRR, Ir 94109 p49, NLI.
91. «Dublin's Bastille», Irish Press, 25 March, 1938.
92. «Thousands Join in Pilgrimage to Kilmainham», Irish Press, 21 March, 1938.
93. Joseph Brennan, «I was there», Easter Commemoration Digest 4 (1962): 26.
94. «Memorial Plaques Unveiled», Irish Times, 26 April, 1937.

commitment to remember all the 1916 patriots. These gestures allowed dissidents to further challenge the notion of a unified narrative purported by FF's commemoration. For the NGA and other such organizations, the state initiatives did not speak to their version of the Rising.

In November 1940, the NGA unveiled yet another plaque, this time on the wall of Dublin City Hall to honour the four ICA men who had perished there in 1916. A parade marked the occasion and went from St. Stephen's Green to the City Hall, via Liberty Hall. Police forces kept a close watch on the 600-strong procession[423]. The route chosen and orations delivered emphasized class struggle as an integral motivation of the 1916 rebels, whose struggle had yet to be properly addressed. Dublin's Lord Mayor since 1939, Tom Clarke's widow Kathleen Clarke proceeded to unveil the plaque. Her presence was a symbolic boost for dissident republicans since she had always refused to participate in any official commemorative events. She claimed with pride that «while Fianna Fáil remained in government, and the graves were kept locked up, neither I nor my family attended the ceremonies.»[424] She regretted that de Valera's government had chosen to punish IRA men just as Cumann na nGaedheal had previously done[425]. Still, resistance and opposition to dominant political forces had the potential to backfire on their advocates. As Clarke herself discovered, maintaining principles and values often came with a commemorative price to pay.

95. «Report of Garda Siochana regarding unveiling of Plaque to Easter Week Heroes at City Hall on 24-11-40 by T. Murphy, Cigire, 10 886, leas commissioner Dublin Metropolitan Division to An Ceannphort Ceanntar B», November 24 1940, Department for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, JUS8/873 (S 1093/49), NAI.
96. Clarke, Revolutionary Woman, 215.
97. «Memorial Plaque on City Hall», Irish Times, 25 November, 1940.

In the early years of the Free State, Clarke had refused a projected memorial to be erected to honour her dead husband. By the 1940s, she was left with regrets as not even a lane or a street had been renamed after Tom Clarke. This, she argued, despite the fact that «all the men alive who worked with him will admit freely, when talking privately, that he made the Rising possible; in public they are silent, with a few exceptions.»[426] Refusal to compromise on one's conscience and form allegiances with dominant movements often resulted in commemorative absence. Dissidents were constantly faced with a difficult balancing act. They rued silence and absence, but criticized just as vehemently the gestures conceived by other groups which threatened «wrongful» appropriations. For example, Charlie McGuire's account of the life of Sean McLoughlin, the man who was apparently made Commandant-General of the rebels at the end of Easter Week, exemplifies such fears surrounding improper remembrance. McGuire concludes his narrative by claiming that, ultimately, «McLoughlin was fortunate that he became Ireland's forgotten revolutionary; at least this prevented him from being conscripted posthumously, like so many other dead revolutionaries, to serve causes and interests that he opposed in life.»[427]

Further commemorations focusing on class struggle were fostered within the Labour movement. Immediately after the Rising, labour forces had shown their propensity to commemorate James Connolly through pragmatic initiatives. From 1919 to 1921, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and the Socialist Party of Ireland ran the

98. Clarke, Revolutionary Woman, 138
99. Charlie McGuire, Sean McLoughlin, Ireland's Forgotten Revolutionary (Pontypool: Merlin Press, 2011), 157.

James Connolly Labour College which pursued their dead leader's educational ideals. By 1921, the chaos caused by the War of Independence forced the college to close down and attempts to revive it in the 1920s failed[428]. Internal fights also dented the movement's strength as membership dropped from 67 000 to 18 800 between 1923 and 1928.

In 1933, leaders of the DCTU pushed for the re-establishment of the Connolly College[429], but efforts failed once more. The People's College reopened in 1948 and a further decade was required for an educational structure to spread across Ireland. Yet, as Norman Croke and Francis Devine argue, this relative success had come too late as the different Connolly Labour Colleges had not proven «'more permanent than bronze, more enduring than stone'» as Labour forces had hoped. «What would Connolly have made of the educational experiments in his memory?», ask Croke and Devine, «sadly, the bronze had tarnished and the stone long crumbled»[430].

This preference for pragmatic endeavours nonetheless remained a feature of Labour commemorative gestures. In 1939, the DCTU promoted the construction of a Connolly playground combined with a child welfare centre which would include a nursery and a crèche. The costs were expected to be between £ 1 500 and £ 2 000 and would be capitalized over a decade through the various unions' contributions[431]. Designed by DCTU leaders, this scheme came undone through a lack of financial support and unity

100. Norman Croke and Francis Devine, James Connolly Labour College, 1919-1921 (Dublin: Irish Labour History Society in association with SIPTU College, 2007).
101. Executive meeting of DCTU, 12 June 1933, MSS 21 DCTU, Minutes 1/12-13 Council Minutes, LMA.
102. Croke and Devine, James Connolly Labour College, 77.
103. Executive meeting of DCTU, 8 September 1939, MSS 21 DCTU, Minutes 1/12-13 Council Minutes, LMA.

among the members. Conceived of in 1933, a Connolly playground[432] was still awaiting completion two decades later.

This customary commemoration of specific moments and individuals to expand and/or challenge official narratives continued to motivate various groups up to the mid-1950s. In December 1943, after eight years of fund raising and preparations, the Dublin «D» Company Committee, First Battalion of the Dublin Brigade, unveiled the Seán Heuston memorial in the People's Gardens of Phoenix Park. Turpin tells us that the «Heuston memorial began with a local commission that the state took over in view of the importance of the monument's siting in the Phoenix Park, Dublin. Like many other stone carved depictions of republican volunteers, this monument focused on determination rather than on gesture and action.»[433] In this case, this unwavering determination was depicted through over-emphasized hands and face.[434] All the names of the Company's fallen men were inscribed on the memorial[435], but just like with the Cuchulainn statue, a single man was made to stand for all. As Roisín Higgins notes, Heuston epitomized «the sacrifice and service through which he (...) (became) an embodiment of the nation.»[436] This initiative emulated previous nationalist constructions where «heroes of the past must continue to live in the afterlife of the nation and it is through the monument that the living might commune with the dead.»[437]

104. Ibid., 12 June 1933.
105. John Turpin, «Monumental Commemoration of the Fallen in Ireland, North and South, 1920-60», New Hibernia Review 11, no. 4 (Winter, 2007): 109.
106. Breathnach-Lynch, «The Rising 1916»: 37-42.
107. «Sean Heuston Memorial Unveiling Ceremony», 5 December 1943, Coiste Sheáin Mhic Aodha (Sean Heuston Memorial Committee), EC, NLI.
108. Roisín Higgins, «Sites of Memory and Memorial», in 1916 in 1966, 276.
109. Ibid.

Fig. 4. The Seán Heuston memorial was unveiled in 1943 in the People's Garden, Phoenix Park, Dublin city, a work of Laurence Campbell (Photo courtesy of Domer48).

Beyond Turpin's interpretation of a monument republican in nature, the statue's location in the People's Gardens, with the Kingsbridge railway station close by where Heuston had worked, appears to have alluded to a working-class dimension to 1916. This potentially discordant message originally contemplated by the project's initiators might well have encouraged state authorities to take over the project and orient it towards a narrative more favourable to their own aspirations. In the Free State, Heuston's class allegiances had recurrently been downplayed by clergy and political leaders in favour of his fervent Catholic devotion. Alongside his former battalion comrades, the NGA confronted these readings in following years. In 1956, the Association unveiled a bronze plaque on the bridge renamed after Heuston in 1941[438] and another one at the Kingsbridge station[439]. For some republicans and Labour forces, there was more to 1916 than what official gestures had promoted so far.

110. «Kingsbridge re-named», Irish Independent, 30 August, 1941.
111. «Memorial to Irish Patriot», Irish Times, 7 November, 1956.

A Need to Move On?

In 1937, a lecturer told members of the Old Dublin Society that, despite all the political feuding surrounding memorials, citizens appeared to care very little for the historical markers surrounding them. The lecturer insisted that «we look with unseeing eyes at a monument here, a public building there, and have no time to pause and think why it should be so. What did this man do that he should be commemorated in statue or plaque? What do these figures mean that adorn our churches and public buildings?»[440] Yet, constant battles over projects in later years seem to suggest that many, outside the circle of high politics, did in fact care deeply about them.

Numerous «decommemorative» incidents from the mid-1930s onward allowed for the debate over the Rising legacy to be given renewed vibrancy. One such spectacular «decommemorative» event occurred in St. Stephen's Green on the morning of May 13th 1937. The day after George VI's coronation, an explosion damaged a statue of King George II. By October 1937, a government memorandum formulated three options regarding the monument: complete restoration, repair of the pedestal for other purposes or removal of the structure[441]. Some organizations like the Old IRA had their eyes on the location and wanted the site to be turned into a memorial for ICA leader Michael Mallin and his comrades who had been posted there in 1916. Through this project, a foreign King would be replaced by a tribute to authentic patriots. However, with Markievicz's bust already standing in the Green, this suggestion likely to focus on working-class

112. «Statues and Buildings», Irish Independent, 2 March, 1937.
113. «Memorandum for Executive Council», 9 October 1937, DOT, S 10257, NAI.

aspirations generated little enthusiasm among the government. In the end, the monument was removed and replaced by a floral ornamentation[442].

In that specific case, the government favoured fewer rather than more commemorative markers to be erected. Yet, in the next few decades, many more state-sponsored memorials appeared and, by 1956, a reader of the Irish Times insisted that incessant commemorations and erections of memorials had amounted to an unfortunate obsession with the past which «commonly expressed itself in a crude distaste for the dangerous symptoms of modernism.»[443] C. M. MacCarthy wrote further:

> Sir, - I write as one of the young people who, knowing little of 1916 and bored to tears by the talk of the necessity for a national language (...) are more concerned with the possibilities of working and of living out their lives in their own country. Must we always look to the past? I would implore those politicians who are giving a disproportionate amount of their time to memorials, to our national heritage, to the Irish language, to give some thought to the fact that just as, in their contention, a country without a distinctive tongue is dead, so, too, a country without young people is dead. While politicians may have a duty to the past, they have to serve the living. If they forget this, they may soon find themselves alone with their monuments and memories in a country from which the young have vanished.[444]

This malaise towards a nation obsessed with its past, happy to divert attention from a dire present and a gloomy future, was felt by other citizens. When the prospects of Kilmainham being turned into a national memorial gained momentum in 1953, some residents of the area voiced their reservations. One of them was Boer War veteran, Thomas McGovern, who claimed that «it's ugly, and should be pulled down. Let there be

114. «Memorandum for the Government», 24 February 1939, Department of Finance, DOT, S 8 114A, NAI.
115. Brown, Ireland, 148.
116. C. M. MacCarthy, «Gone Abroad», Irish Times, 14 May, 1957.

a small monument erected to show where our (1916) leaders died. Then build a factory on the site and give employment to the men around.»[445]

McGovern's outlook would not prevail as many nationalist and republican organizations would never allow for the destruction of such a national gem. Already in 1934, the Associated Easter Week Men had seen the protection of 1916 sites as part of its mission. That year, the Irish Amateur Boxing Association had made a formal request to the Dublin County Council to be allowed to convert a portion of the derelict Kilmainham jail into a 3000 seat boxing stadium[446]. Months later, the Associated Easter Week Men sided with the Old IRA and protested against the idea[447]: «we consider that this building, having such historic associations with the national fight for independence, should be preserved by any government claiming to be Republican as a monument to the separatist movement, and as a reminder of British misrule in Ireland.»[448] Numerous nationally inclined organizations soon passed similar resolutions.

Members of the NGA and Irish nationalists such as Helena Molony and Maude Gonne MacBride had corresponding views for Kilmainham. After twenty years of agitation, they were delighted that the government had finally committed itself to turn the jail into a protected national memorial. Estimates suggested that the restoration would cost at least £ 20 000, a budget which many, such as McGovern and MacCarthy, would have

117. «Monument to 1916 in Jail?», Times Pictorial, 7 February, 1953.
118. «Kilmainham Jail, Proposed National Boxing Stadium», Irish Independent, 19 November, 1934.
119. Minute book of the 1916 Associated Easter Week Men, 26 November 1934, 21 Ms 1B32 19, KJA.
120. «Kilmainham Prison Proposal», Irish Independent, 21 November, 1934.

preferred seen spent on creating a better future for its citizens rather than safeguarding the past.

Behind all the commemorative debates of the period, economic, political, and social visions for Ireland continuously collided over how, if at all, 1916 and other historical episodes were to be remembered through permanent markers. Beyond ideological viewpoints, practical views were also heard against the moulding of the past in stone and bronze. For some, monuments were simply out of place as they represented a misuse of public space. In 1938, Dr. de Burgh Daly, president of the Royal Irish Automobile Club, told the members that «the streets of the (Dublin) City should be reserved for the living and not for the dead (...) If, for example, the statue of the great Liberator were to be removed from O'Connell Bridge, traffic would be liberated.»[449] It was time for Ireland to move on, embrace new ways of life. In 1945 , J. B. D. Cotter ventured to say:

> that statues in streets are a source of actual danger. (...) Who wants to see a statue? (...) How many Dubliners could tell you half the statues in their city? (...) They are like nobs which are stuck into a table for ornament and merely get in one's way. (...) Great men will always be commemorated, and rightly so, but the best way in which they will be commemorated and remembered is in their own works. (...) So now, instead of erecting a statue, there is a tendency to erect a monument of practical use to a famous man (...) in this hurrying, modern world, when a thing becomes redundant, it must go.[450]

Despite voices championing a forward-looking nation which would hopefully create a prosperous and modern society, ever more 1916 memorials found their way into public space. In 1949, the Fourth Battalion of the Dublin Brigade unveiled plaques on each building they had occupied during the Rising. 300 men and women walked to each post of this nationalist «pilgrimage» and 1916 veteran Jimmy Butler was praised for having

121. «Are Dublin's Statues in the Way?», Irish Press, 29 April, 1938.
122. «Do People Want More Statues?», Irish Times, 24 November, 1945.

attended every commemoration to date, even if in a wheelchair[451]. In 1953, an Irish Independent reader appealed for Old IRA members to mobilize themselves once more:

> Sir - Monuments and plaques commemorating the valour of soldiers of Ireland through the years adorn the countryside. Military barracks, bridges, parks, playing-fields and streets have been named after our heroic dead. Ceremonial parades are held annually and wreaths reverently laid on the graves of men - and women - who lived and died for Ireland. (...) Now a golden opportunity presents itself to the comrades of the noble dead to enshrine for ever the gallantry and perpetuate their ideals by raising a Fund towards the restoration of the House of Retreats, Milltown, Dublin. (...) Let us help to build a monument of prayer in Milltown in memory of our glorious dead.[452]

There was always more to preserve, remember and safeguard from oblivion.

The Pearsean Show

From the 1930s onwards, frequent debates arose as to which individuals were to be the object of memorials and how these men (and only rarely women) were to be commemorated. Overall, memorials predominantly appraised the 1916 leaders to the detriment of the rank and file. In the 1950s, a quick succession of initiatives honouring the Pearse brothers exemplified this tendency for a commemoration from above. In 1952, Taoiseach de Valera unveiled a plaque at a house situated at 27, Pearse Street (replacing Great Brunswick Street in 1923) in Dublin, where Patrick and William Pearse had spent their childhood. Opening his address in Irish, de Valera dedicated the plaque to the «beirt a mbeidh a n-ainmeacha fuaite le chéile i stair ár dtíre go deireadh an domhain». Highlighting the poor state of the language among the population, de Valera later provided a translation of the passage: «two whose names will forever be linked together in some of the most glorious pages of our history». De Valera hoped that the plaque

123. «Plaques Unveiled», Irish Times, 3 October, 1949.
124. «Appeal to Old I.R.A. Organisations», Irish Independent, 13 July, 1953.

would allow for «the memories which it evokes of the noble men and women who lived here (to) be forever a source of inspiration for our people.»[453]

Two years later, in the presence of Patrick and William's sister, senator Margaret Pearse, de Valera unveiled another plaque honouring the Pearses on Dodder Bridge in Rathfarnham, Dublin, renamed Droichead na bPiarsach (Pearse Bridge) for the occasion[454]. The Pearse brothers were the object of further commemorative gestures in 1955 when a plaque was unveiled at Rosmuc Vocational School, Galway, by the opposition leader de Valera while senator Pearse was also present for the occasion[455]. Situated among the Gaeltacht (areas officially populated by 80 % or more of Irish-speakers), the school situated in Rosmuc was renamed Scoil na bPiarsach (Pearse school) and recalled how Patrick had been linked to the place during his lifetime. He had owned a house and perfected his Irish among the local population. In 1955, political animosity between old civil war foes was once more replayed and, a week later, Richard Mulcahy, Minister for Education, rededicated the school to the Pearse brothers in a distinct ceremony[456].

Some evidence however suggests that a certain malaise existed among the nationalist rank and file towards this predominance of executed leaders amid commemorations. In 1956, President Seán T. O'Kelly echoed this uneasiness when unveiling a plaque to the

125. «Taoiseach's Speech at Unveiling of Plaque of Pearse Brothers at 27 Pearse Street», 4 May 1952, DOT, S 15 312, NAI.
126. «Unveiling of plaque for Pearse Brothers», Irish Times, 31 May, 1954.
127. Coiste Oideachais Ghairme Beatha Chonndae na Gaillimhe (County Galway Vocational Education Committee), 18 July 1955, p150/483, Archives of Éamon de Valera, UCD.
128. «Plaque to Pearse Brothers», Irish Times, 25 July, 1955.

memory of Lieutenant Michael Malone at 25 Northumberland Road, where he had been killed 40 years earlier. The President warned the crowd against the growing signs of a pervading complacency. For O'Kelly, commemoration from above would not suffice if a real tribute was to be paid to 1916 heroes: «they (Irish) all knew the names of the leaders who fought and died in 1916 - Connolly, Pearse, MacDonagh, MacBride and the rest - but they should never forget there were many others who played a part, scarcely less heroic, whose names lived only in memory of men and women who were their friends or who fought with them side by side.»[457]

Such fears to see the rank and file increasingly forgotten to the profit of the few leaders were not new. More than 20 years earlier, the Connacht Tribune had for instance reported that 1934 Easter orations had urged people to devote more attention to lesser-known but just as heroic figures: «no matter how we may admire them (leaders) on an occasion like this, we must think more of Ireland's unknown soldiers, and remember that these nameless and forgotten boys have done as much as Pearse or Connolly.»[458] Despite these calls for a more generous remembrance beyond the realm of leaders, fears of a narrowing 1916 story persisted. In 1952, a series of talks on Radió Éireann supported the notion of a broadening trend for commemoration of the few leaders. Broadcast on consecutive days, seven programmes were prepared by Donagh MacDonagh, son of signatory Thomas MacDonagh, and each appraised a signatory of the 1916 Proclamation[459].

129. «Plaque in memory of 1916 officer», Pictorial, 5 May, 1956.
130. «Commemoration Ceremony», Connacht Tribune, 7 April, 1934.
131. «The Men of Easter Week», Tuam Herald, 12 April, 1952.

Twenty-four years after the unveiling of the Markievicz bust in St. Stephen's Green, the gesture was renewed. A look behind the scenes however suggests that the commemorative context had greatly changed in the meantime. Inaugurated in 1932, the bust had been disfigured in 1945 and damaged beyond repair in 1947, forcing the Office of Public Works to remove it. The perpetrators of the damage would remain unknown. As a 1952 Department of Finance memorandum revealed, the government felt no urgency to replace the bust: «in the absence of evidence of public interest in the matter the question of the replacement of the memorial was left in abeyance.»[460]

Visibly annoyed by this lengthy absence, republican women were once again the ones who insisted that a new bust be installed in the Green. After months of efforts, Helena Molony told President O'Kelly how overjoyed she was with the news that the Markievicz Memorial would be restored at the expenses of the state[461]. The government had only reluctantly agreed to restore and reinstall the bust, but President O'Kelly's speech at its Easter Monday unveiling omitted this part of the story. O'Kelly merely remarked that it was fitting that 40 years earlier the Countess «reached the culmination of her pilgrimage from the Big House to a dwelling in hearts of the Irish people, where she and her memory have since abided.»[462]

For those who believed that Irish leaders were living too much in the past, the lead up to the 1966 golden jubilee would be a frustrating one. Plenty of resources continued to be devoted to commemorate the Rising. What the detractors of the government's public

132. «Untitled», 12 September 1952 Department of Finance, DOT, S 15 368A/B, NAI.
133. Letter from Helena Molony to President Seán T. O'Kelly, 4 January 1953, DOT, S 15 368A/B, NAI.
134. «President's Tribute to 'A Valiant Woman'», Irish Independent, 3 April, 1956.

initiatives probably did not know at the time was that many more projects were or had recently been contemplated. In 1945, the government had notably planned the erection of a 1916 Memorial in St. Stephen's Green which consisted of a structure adorned by a multitude of statues and plaques dedicated to the memory of persons associated with the Rising[463]. From 1950, an Irish National Memorial Advisory Committee had worked towards the erection of a monument which would entail the acquisition of the space between Upper Abbey Street and Lower Liffey Street, including the frontage on the river on Lower Ormond Quay. This space would link the Custom House to the Four Courts, cost around £ 700 000, and emulate the Lincoln Memorial in Washington or the Florentian Loggia dei Lanzi[464].

Despite this desire for grand commemorative projects to solemnly celebrate the Rising, politicians and civil servants however had to contend with tight financial means and a general context which was a far cry from the utopian independent state predicted by the 1916 signatories. In the lead up to the fiftieth anniversary in 1966, the Rising continued to generate a great level of interest, trigger intense debates and reflect ongoing conflicts within the Irish Republic.

135. Letter from Department of Defence to Mr. Walsh, 9 October 1954 Department of Finance, DOT, S 9 815C, NAI.
136. Irish National Memorial Advisory Committee, undated, DOT, S 14 861, NAI.

Chapter 5 - A Provincial «Rising Complex» in a Post-Second World War Ireland?

In 1950, Dubliner Kitty O'Doherty, quartermaster of Cumann na mBan in 1916, told the Bureau of Military History (BOMH) how in the aftermath of the Rising:

> lot of unfair comment was reported from various places against the leaders of those Volunteer Brigades - such as Cork and Kerry - which had taken no part in the Rising. My husband (Seumas O'Doherty), as head of the Supreme Council, attended an inquiry into the matter which resulted in a complete exoneration of the leaders in question.[465]

All the same, no official exoneration proved sufficient to silence the allegations surrounding inactivity in the provinces and recriminations were still pervasive in post-Second World War Ireland. This was vividly illustrated by scores of statements deposited before the Bureau between 1947 and 1957 by former provincial Volunteers. In August 1956, Seán Healy, captain of the A Company, First Battalion of the Cork Brigade, claimed that:

> an amount of adverse criticism and unfavourable comments were frequently thrown at us for not having taken our stand during the Easter Week Rising in Dublin, but subsequent events proved that the Corkmen were not afraid to fight. This failure was due to the orders and counter-orders which were received from Headquarters in Dublin, and the Cork brigades were completely exonerated at the inquiries which followed.[466]

A year later, the leaders of the 1916 Cork Men's Association once more condemned the persistent accusations against them. Founded in 1946, the Cork association was still actively working in 1957 to clear the name of their provincial colleagues. The association's leaders remained adamant that:

> glancing through the pages of Irish History we find no matter how gallant and unselfish were the efforts and sacrifices made by the men who led the struggle for Freedom against the British Invaders in bygone days, indecent attempts were made to besmirch their character and belittle their efforts. Unfortunately, the

1. Kitty O'Doherty, «Untitled», 17 February 1950, WS 355, BOMH.
2. Seán Healy, «Untitled», 10 August 1956, WS 1479, BOMH, 5.

> men who led the Irish Volunteer movement in Cork City during the fateful days of the 1916 Rising were subjected to the same type of unfounded accusation.[467]

Former Volunteers from other «inactive counties» similarly rejected charges that they had, in any way, failed their Dublin counterparts during Easter Week.

These commemorative rivalries meant that while national leaders promoted official Easter events that were Dublin-centric and in English as representative of the entire nation's heroic contribution in 1916, some sections of the nation evidently felt that these narratives were too exclusive. Many regretted that official events were consistently and unjustly confining them to the periphery of the Rising story. Accordingly, this chapter aims to explore how particular sensitivities in provincial Ireland were never quite subsumed in national commemorations and how these prompted challenges or expansions on the official narratives in the post-Second World War period up to the 1966 jubilee. The survey proposed will be twofold. I will first consider dynamics prevailing in counties Cork and Galway before examining how Irish speakers engaged with Easter Week. This primary focus on the post-Second World War context will help to showcase how the notion of a strengthened national cohesion, supposedly stemming from Ireland's defence of its neutrality during the war, was significantly challenged in many quarters.

As we will see, Easter time became the opportunity for provincial communities to contrast the 1916 national promises with the rather more mundane realities that existed following the creation of the Irish Free State. This nation envisioned in the rebels' Proclamation had been one declaring «the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership

3. Sean Murphy, Thomas Barry, Patrick Canton and James Wickham, «Untitled», 27 March 1957, WS 1598, BOMH.

of Ireland». It enshrined «national freedom and sovereignty», guaranteed «religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens». It was to embody a «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»[468]. This nation would signify a return to an authentic Irish-Ireland founded on ancestral Gaelic customs and values. However, this promise of a thriving nation largely failed to come to life. Instead, Irish citizens had to cope with the scars of a bitter civil war, endemic economic frailties, a mass exodus, an ongoing partition and a persistent «degaelicization» of the sovereign nation.

What About Us? Commemorations in Cork and Galway

Regarding the accounts deposited before the BOMH, Fearghal McGarry suggests that while these «statements do not (...) fundamentally alter our knowledge of what occurred, they enhance our understanding of the mentality, and experiences of the revolutionary generation, preserving something of the texture and complexity of the past rarely recorded.»[469] «To the dismay of the historians who had cooperated with the project»[470], the statements were only released in the public domain in March 2003 with the last military pensioner passing away. In retrospect, these sources revealed as much about post-Second World War Ireland as they preserved «the texture and complexity of the past». Participants offered their recollections of the Rising, but many veterans, especially those who had not fought in the capital, had their mind set on the future. They saw in

4. The text of the 1916 Proclamation is available on the site of the Department of the Taoiseach, http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/eng/Historical_Information/1916_Commemorations/Proclamation_of_Independence.html.
5. McGarry, The Rising, 4-5.
6. Ibid., 5.

their statement the opportunity to «put the record straight» and ensure that future generations would understand what had «really» happened in 1916.

Captain of the Athenry IVF Company (Galway), Frank Hynes believed «that the purpose (of his statement) is to supply data for future historians.»[471] John C. King, from the West Connemara Brigade, left a formal message to historians, stating that «it was an honour and privilege to be numbered among such gallant, loyal and devoted comrades. Modern military strategists may dispute the methods of combat used by the I.R.A., but I doubt if history will duplicate such a Herculean task performed by any army, with such armament, under such conditions and such great odds.»[472] ICA sergeant Frank Robbins commented that «when facts such as I have quoted are written by historians, then, and only then, will the people of Ireland and the world be treated to the real history of that Glorious Easter Week.»[473]

For others, the historians themselves had obscured what was popularly known about the Rising. Seumas Robinson suggested that «some 'facts' of history told by some historians (are) lie, I think, mostly somewhere between half-a-lie- and a lie-and-a-half. They never present the whole absolute truth - and that is about the only constant truth or fact in the records of all mundane history. Only an angel can record the truth-absolute.»[474] His statement would help correct a «history (that) is neither subjectively nor objectively

7. Frank Hynes, 19 October 1950, BOMH, WS 446.
8. John C. King, undated, BOMH, WS 1731.
9. Frank Robbins, 10 September 1951, BOMH, WS 585, 163.
10. Seumas Robinson, «'A Soldier of Ireland' Reflects», 16 December 1957, BOMH, WS 1721.

truthful.» Overall, BOMH statements revealed how Rising recollections still played a mobilizing role in the construction of identities in a post-1945 Ireland.

After FF rose to power in 1932, state commemorations increasingly celebrated the Rising as a defining moment of national liberation. Yet, some communities failed to appreciate the Rising in such a straightforward and positive manner. Proposing a case study of Cork and Galway commemorations after 1945, I do not suggest that discrepancies between provincial and national readings of Easter Week simply materialized after the Second World War. Divergent views were regularly featured in the 1916-1945 period. Thus, while the discussion will not be strictly confined to post-1945 Ireland, the primary focus on those years will illustrate an ongoing commemorative nationalization of 1916 which was never entirely satisfying in provincial Ireland. Citizens outside the capital always sought to be appraised on par with Dubliners in terms of 1916 remembrance.

The approach I propose is not dissimilar to the one employed by Guy Beiner in his study of the memory of the 1798 Rising[475]. Beiner departs from a more traditional assessment based on national outlooks to delve into the vibrant, and somewhat distinct, folk history and social memory prevailing in the West of Ireland. In doing so, he rejects the notion that commemorative agendas could ever be merely dictated by national leaders. Insisting that centre and peripheries are not fixed categories, Beiner mirrors the work of other commentators of Irish historical developments. For instance, Kevin Whelan's work promotes the construction of a hybrid narrative situated «between 'the meta-narratives by

11. Beiner, Remembering the Year.

which intellectuals structure their thoughts' and 'the micro-narratives by which people understand their lives'»[476].

Already in 1941, the Corkonian Sean O'Faolain could be heard alluding to this forever evolving relationship between centre and peripheries:

> in Cork it (provincialism) was a favourite subject of discussion, and we used to argue there ingeniously, in self-defence, as follows. Dublin, we said, apes London, and is therefore a province of London. (...) Cork on the other hand, apes nobody, and compares itself with nobody. Ergo, Dublin is provincial, but Cork is not provincial. (...) It was typical Cork esprit. It was also, probably, an involved Self Defence complex.[477]

Decades later, Beiner concludes in similar fashion that experiences:

> which are not always in the limelight of national history, can challenge and even overturn the understanding of historical events and their popular reception. By interrogating how provincial communities narrated, interpreted, reconstructed, and commemorated their pasts, it is possible to uncover traces of vernacular historiographies and discover practices of popular remembrance, which are distinct, though not entirely independent of national historiography and commemoration.[478]

Beiner's narrative builds on the perpetual «reinvention of tradition», a «creative process involving renewal, reinterpretation and revision»[479], and questions the more static notion of «invention of tradition» previously championed by the likes of Eric Hobsbawm[480].

The choice of Cork and Galway for this case study has been based on the contrasting Easter Week experiences they offer. Galway was the county in which most activities occurred outside Dublin, even if local Volunteers rued the clashes with widespread

12. Kevin Whelan, «The Region and the Intellectuals», in On Intellectuals and Intellectual Life in Ireland, Liam Dowd, ed. (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 1996), 130.
13. Sean O'Faolain, «The Gaelic and the Good», The Bell 3, no. 2 (November 1941): 103
14. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 5.
15. Ibid., 272.
16. Hobsbawm, «Introduction: Inventing Traditions».

«shoneenism» (a pejorative expression describing individuals keen to emulate English ways)[481]. Cork was dominated by inactivity, a reality which would soon be at odds with the reputation as «Rebel County» acquired from the Corkonians' contribution in the War of Independence. These divergent insights into 1916 should reinforce Beiner's conclusion that «the formation of provincial social memory (...) (is) a two-way commemorative process that facilitated negotiations between the metropolitan agenda of high-politics and local traditions embedded in folk history.»[482]

On paper, the Rising was meant to be of a national dimension. Setbacks, countermanding orders, arrests, distrust, a lack of arms and communication failures thwarted hopes for such an offensive. John Callaghan has concluded that «the almost absolute secrecy maintained by an elite cabal who were relying on the unquestioning obedience of a nationwide revolutionary organization that they kept in ignorance undermined their objective of staging a nationwide rebellion everywhere except in Dublin».[483] Had the rebel leaders underestimated the tensions existing between the centre and peripheries of their movement or was a national rising simply beyond their means?

Outside Dublin, skirmishes occurred in Meath, Wexford, and Galway, but very little was accomplished through them. The counties with substantial resources like Cork, Kerry and Limerick remained largely inert. So did the six north-east counties dominated by Unionists. Callaghan has claimed further that «there is a strong impression that, as is the

17. Conor McNamara, «'The most «shoneen» town in Ireland': Galway in 1916», History Ireland 19, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 2011): 34.
18. Beiner, Remembering the Year, 275.
19. John Callaghan, «The Limerick Volunteers and 1916», in The Impact of the 1916 Rising: Among the Nations, Ruán O'Donnell, ed. (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2008), 2.

case for many historians, the provincial rebellion was something of an afterthought for the military council.»[484] This vision has often been challenged. In 1966, Maurine Wall noted that, considering Ireland's colonial status, it «would be pompous and foolish to criticise the plans for the Rising (...) The leaders of a submerged nation or people are never in a position to control events or to make plans which cannot go awry.»[485] Four decades later, Fergus Campbell reiterated that «if all that was intended by the leaders of the Rising was a gesture to provoke British violence and therefore Irish republicanism (as some historians have suggested), it is unclear why 20,000 German rifles were imported and why arrangements were made for an insurrection throughout the provinces.»[486]

For our purposes, Charles Townshend's emphasis on the Rising's long-term repercussions represents a useful starting point. He notes that a provincial dimension to 1916 has so far been excessively relegated to footnotes or anecdotal references. As Townshend suggests, «the provincial rising may not have amounted to an emergency, but it was enough to justify the extension of martial law across the whole country, and ensured that the suppression of the rebellion would eventually reach far beyond Dublin.»[487] Fights were circumscribed, but its repression and commemoration spread to every county.

20. Idem., 1.
21. Maurine Wall, «The Plans and the Countermand: the Country and Dublin», in The Making of 1916, 235.
22. Fergus Campbell, «The Easter Rising in Galway», History Ireland, 14, no. 2 (March/April 2006): 25, available online; http://www.historyireland.com/volumes/volume14/issue2/features/?id=317.
23. Townshend, Easter 1916, 242.

From the onset, Dublin forces recounted stories of their heroics (greatly inflated at time), while Volunteers elsewhere rued Easter Week as a missed opportunity. Reaping heroism from inactivity would not be easy. Emerging SF leaders immediately presented the Rising as a struggle fought for the whole nation, but this nationalization would be paved with difficulties. Participation in 1916 quickly gave access to the highest political roles: «deputies were chosen as much for their national record as their political skills. This was inevitable, given the public pillorying of those who had not had the opportunity to be 'out' in 1916, or - worse - had not taken the opportunity. The taunting of political opponents with versions of 'Where were you in 1916?' was so well honed it became a national joke.»[488] Non-involvement consequently left a resilient legacy of splits, jealousy and distrust towards national leaders in Cork and Galway[489].

After the War of Independence, provincial Volunteers attempted to compensate for 1916 inactivity by emphasizing the recent struggle through which they shone in a better light. Some republicans went further by ignoring 1916 altogether from the narrative of the revolution[490]. Ironically, initiatives keen on disregarding Easter Week almost invariably alluded to the Rising, if only implicitly, by celebrating heroes who had refused to compromise on the «hallowed» terms proclaimed on Easter Monday 1916. The exclusion of 1916 reflected beliefs that while Dublin forces had fought the first battle, it was provincial forces which had won the definitive victory in the War of Independence, only to be later betrayed by national figures when they ratified the Treaty.

24. Wills, Dublin 1916, 137.
25. Callaghan, «The Limerick Volunteers and 1916», The Impact of the 1916 Rising, 1-23.
26. «Men of Easter Week», Cork Examiner, 17 April, 1933.

Dead before the Treaty debacle and the ensuing civil war, Terence MacSwiney's account of the 1916-20 period in Cork remained for a long time a defensive rampart for his county followers. In his 1945 tribute to MacSwiney, Oliver Murphy notably claimed that «none san (sic) deny that the 'Boys of the County Cork' bore the brunt of the fighting in the years 1920-21 (...) (while) he (MacSwiney) never forgot the disappointment of Easter Week.»[491] Despite Corkonians' emphasis on the the War of Independence, this episode failed to supersede the Rising as the pivotal moment of the Irish revolution. Easter Week continued to act as the gold standard against which ensuing struggles were weighed. In provincial Ireland, the Rising remained the elephant in the room.

For decades, communities outside the capital sought to reinterpret 1916 events in a way which would fit better with local needs and realities. The tendency to shed new light on Easter Week however kept clashing with Dublin-based narratives which emphasized the disparity of experiences. On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary, at the request of the Easter Week Memorial Committee, a compilation of a 1916 roll of honour presented to Taoiseach de Valera revealed the tense commemorative legacy bequeathed to the nation by Easter Week . Participants from the Ashbourne garrison (Meath)[492], the only non-Dublin garrison included, prevented this gesture from offering an exclusive focus on the capital.

27. Murphy, One True Man, 6-7.
28. The 1916 roll of honour is now part of a permanent exhibition of the National Museum of Ireland. See the description on the Museum's Website; http://www.museum.ie/en/exhibition/list/exhibition-details-1916.aspx?article=2494607b-e1d0-4533-8fcb-eb74cf694a21. See also Labhras Joye and Brenda Malone, «The Roll of Honour of 1916», History Ireland, 14, no. 2 (March/April 2006): 10-11, available online; http://www.historyireland.com/volumes/volume14/issue2/news/?id=114020.

Behind the scenes, resilient tensions were reignited and the roll was immediately undermined by far-reaching criticism[493]. Some 1 100 names figured, but high-profile absentees attracted considerable attention[494] and judicial cases were brought against Old IRA officials for having wrongly and wilfully prevented participants from signing the roll[495]. As Labhras Joye and Brenda Malone note, «the signing of the roll was overshadowed by the same Civil War divisions that have dominated Irish politics until recently.»[496] Close to 300 names were gradually added to the roll. This reassessment of a 1916 «participation» found a tangible expression during 25th anniversary events when 1916 medals were awarded to some 2 500 individuals, most of whom had not fought in Dublin[497]. The medals glorified a collective effort during Easter Week extending geographically beyond the confines of the roll. The roll had rewarded actions while the medals also recognized a readiness to act.

Such actions attempted to entrench the notion that the Rising was a moment of national «resurrection», but continued to pose inherent difficulties. Since 1924, Easter Sunday figured as the nationwide remembrance day. This importance granted to Easter Week encouraged individuals to retrospectively stake their claims in the episode. Successive Army Pensions Acts saw 86 608 individuals submit applications, but only 17 849 successfully proved services between April 1916 and September 1923[498]. A general suspicion towards overblown heroics during the Rising became widespread thereafter. In

29. Joye and Malone, «The Roll of Honour of 1916»: 10-11.
30. Ibid.
31. «Names on an Easter Week Memorial: Action Against Officials, Libel and Slander Alleged, 1916 Rising facts revealed», Irish Times, 18 November, 1937.
32. Joye and Malone, «The Roll of Honour of 1916»: 10-11.
33. Ibid.
34. Ibid.

1966, the Galway Observer recalled how «a crude joke once went the rounds about the tens of thousands who were awarded pensions for their part while only a handful of men fought the British Empire in Easter Week, 1916», yet «one should never forget that 1916 was no joke.»[499]

In Galway, hundreds of Volunteers answered Liam Mellows's call to rise in 1916. Their leader's death to a Free State firing squad during the civil war subsequently complicated his commemoration. Furthermore, as Úna Newell suggests, local Volunteers who gathered on Easter Monday had been motivated by reasons largely foreign to Dubliners. There was a «correlation between agrarian unrest and a support for the Volunteers that also saw the manipulation of the movement to further the desires of the land hungry farmers of the West.»[500] Volunteers were supposed to have controlled over 600 square miles from Galway city to Ballinasloe and from Tuam to Gort[501]. The West Galway county inspector corroborated after the surrender that «if it (rebellion) had been deferred until later when all was ready it would not have been confined to the districts of Galway and Gort but would have embraced the whole county and we could not have held it.»[502] Internal divisions among Volunteers would also hinder the emergence of a consensual nationalist memory.

The confrontation between Tom Kenny, local IRB leader, and Liam Mellows is a prime example of early Galway divisions. Campbell tells us how Kenny was «so influential in

35. «Fifty Years Ago», Galway Observer, 9 April, 1966.
36. Úna Newell, «The Rising of the Moon: Galway 1916», Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society 58 (2006): 114.
37. Ailbhe O Monachain, 30 September 1949, BOMH, WS 298.
38. F. Campbell, «The Easter Rising in Galway»: 25.

south-east Galway that the police described him as a 'local monarch'.»[503] Yet, after 1916, Kenny became a largely forgotten man. Kenny's bone of contention with Mellows was the former's support for a Rising which would radically transform Irish society through a redistribution of land. Sent by national leaders, Mellows believed that Easter Week would serve to defeat British rule. This left Kenny «infuriated and later (he) characterised Mellows as a coward and an inept political leader, (...) 'good for nothing only drinking tea at Walshes of Killeeneen'.»[504]

In Cork, violence was all but non-existent. The only disruption was a gunfight between the well-known Kent brothers and Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) forces at their Castlelyons house. RIC officer William Rowe and Richard Kent were killed. David Kent was seriously wounded and his brother Thomas became the only Corkonian executed for his involvement. This isolated story of heroics would quickly be buried under local narratives defending inactivity as the only possible outcome[505]. Until their untimely deaths in 1920, Cork IVF leaders Terence MacSwiney and Tomás MacCurtain were known to have been tormented by their troops' inactivity in 1916 and the descriptions of local events as «absolutely farcical»[506].

Moreover, many Corkonians were later said to have considered their efforts in the War of Independence as the moment when they had unburdened themselves from a «Rising complex». In 1949, Rising veteran Desmond Ryan remained adamant that «the lessons of

39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ryan, «The Rising in the Country», The Rising.
42. Boyle, The Irish Rebellion of 1916,145.

the 1916 Rising burned deeply into the hearts and minds of the (Cork) Volunteers as was proved less than two years later in many an area where force of circumstances had broken or thwarted any move during Easter Week.»[507] Yet, evidence strongly suggests that such a complex continued to linger in the lead up to the golden jubilee.

A Long History of Divergence

In her autobiography, Kathleen Clarke recalled Mary MacSwiney's reaction to the news of a Dublin rising. Aware of the Corkonians' helplessness, national leaders had acted as outright murderers by ordering Cork forces to rise alongside them[508]. Antagonistic to the extreme, this judgement was accompanied by less hostile reactions which underlined beliefs that the Rising had not been fought for the whole nation[509].

A sense of shame emanating from non-involvement dominates Cork IVF leaders MacSwiney and MacCurtain's accounts. The former's narrative became the «go-to» narrative to cleanse Corkonians' reputation. In 1941, in the midst of the Second World War, Brian O'Higgins aimed to redress the harm done to Cork's reputation at the time of Easter Week:

> a week of hopeless agony for the fighting men of Cork. Such an effect had it on the heart and mind of Terence MacSwiney that the thought of it must have been with him every moment afterwards, until consolation came in the gloom of Brixton Prison in 1920 (...). In a farewell letter to a comrade he wrote these words: «Oh, the pain of Easter Week is properly dead at last!»[510]

Commentaire [1]:
Ronald Rudin 12-10-23 14:36
This is largely the same quote, so why repeat?

43. Ryan, The Rising, 250.
44. Clarke, Revolutionary Woman, 124.
45. See for example «Dublin Revolution Anniversary», Cork Examiner, 9 April, 1917.
46. O'Higgins, Easter, 1916, 6.

MacSwiney's last words symbolized Corkonians' readiness to die for Ireland in 1916. In 1945, Oliver Murphy's pamphlet notably reaffirmed that «in 1916 he (MacSwiney) had been ready to do his part», but with British forces ready to destroy Cork city, «Mac Suibhne had to watch and wait whilst the men of Ath Cliath (Dublin) fought and died.»[511] Similar stories relating to MacCurtain proved popular. Tom Hales's statement claimed that «MacCurtain said to me later, 'If I live I will redeem 1916'.»[512] This need by Corkonians, and more generally by provincial Irelanders, for redemption recurred in witness statements to the BOMH. In 1953, the Macroom IVF Charles Browne claimed that while exiled in Frongoch prison, Corkonians «recognised that Easter Week was not the finish of that generation's effort for freedom but the commencement and those who had been prevented by misleading instructions from taking an active part in the fight were determined to redeem themselves during the coming years.»[513]

Galwegians fought a battle of a different nature as they aimed to obtain a proper recognition of their 1916 contribution. They needed to retrieve local heroics from the dustbin of history. However, as Conor McNamara writes, these aspirations would need to be tempered as «an excess of forgetting can often be as important as an excess of remembering, and Galway nationalists' cooperation with the Crown forces during Easter Week raised awkward questions for many prominent people in the town in the years that followed the Rising.»[514] It remains that a minority of participants refused to forgive and forget. In 1949, Ailbhe O Monachain insisted that in 1916 «British soldiers, marines and

47. Murphy, One True Man, 6-7.
48. Tom Hales, undated, BOMH, WS 20.
49. Charles Browne, 19 June 1953, BOMH, WS 873, 6.
50. McNamara, «'The most «shoneen» town in Ireland': Galway in 1916»: 37.

navymen landed in Galway City, and - something that Galway City has tried to forget since - a British civilian Volunteer force was formed.»[515] Be that as it may, such a take on local events remained the exception as countywide commemorations mainly silenced the divisive nature of the Rising in Galway.

Already in the 1930s and during World War II, an «excess of forgetting» or selective remembrance was largely championed in Easter orations[516] and newspaper accounts by the orator Father Crawley. The priest told the crowd that «Galway's roll of honour in this respect is one to be proud of.»[517] Covering the 1941 commemorations in Dublin, a Connacht Sentinel correspondent recalled that despite being poorly armed, Galwegians' efforts had been heroic and the 1916 medals awarded to local men were the ultimate proof[518].

Contrasts and Struggles

Despite divergent contexts in Cork and Galway, citizens in both counties persistently strove to have national leaders recognize their vital contribution to the success of the national emancipation. Local commemorations were marked by an emphasis on martyrdom and this focus on death brought a vivid contrast between the Easter commemorative context and the nature of events organized. A nationalist veneration for the dead had a long tradition prior to 1916 and would continue to be vibrant in its wake. The dead were romanticized. Their unselfish behaviours formed a debt and a promise. It

51. Ailbhe O Monachain, 30 September 1949, BOMH, WS 298, 15.
52. «Remarkable Speech», Connacht Sentinel, 7 April, 1931.
53. «Easter Week Commemoration», Connacht Sentinel, 3 April, 1934.
54. «From Dublin Town: Commemoration Parade Most Impressive Ever Seen», Connacht Sentinel, 15 April, 1941.

remains that, in Galway, no casualty had marked the county's participation in 1916. Countywide republican plots did not contain the remains of 1916 martyrs like they did in Arbour Hill, Glasnevin and other Dublin cemeteries.

At the Donaghpatrick plot, people gathered around the remains of 14 IRA North Galway Brigade men executed during the War of Independence[519]. The republican plot in Tuam honoured three War of Independence martyrs. A further IRA memorial unveiled in Donaghpatrick in 1952 celebrated, among others, Lieutenant D. McCormack and John Higgins, both killed in the civil war by Free State forces[520]. In South Galway, commemorations were held at the graves of brothers Patrick and Harry Loughnane, assassinated by the Black & Tans[521].

As a result, orations delivered around Galway cemeteries at Easter praised the 1916 local events as glorious ones, but the heroism conferred by death, so prominent in Dublin, remained absent. At times, Galwegians assembled in environments which implicitly undermined the Rising's importance. As with Lieutenant McCormack and Higgins, the commemoration of civil war victims even celebrated the ongoing cause of dissident republicans. Initiatives supposed to pay tribute to the 1916 moment when «all the nation and the county» had stood together, often entertained internal quarrelling. To see themselves in a positive light, Galwegians would generally use an Easter mirror casting a reflection beyond 1916.

55. «Easter Commemoration Parades in the West» Connacht Tribune, 11 April, 1931.
56. «Funeral of John Higgins», Tuam Herald, 14 April, 1923, available online on the site of the Galway Library; http://places.galwaylibrary.ie/history/chapter316.html.
57. «Lackagh IRA Commemoration», Connacht Tribune, 26 April,1952.

This association of death and heroism resulted in the local dimension of 1916 to be eulogized year round. Obituaries became a channel for Easter Week aspects to be publicly recalled. The unpredictable timing of the death of local 1916 veterans prompted such stories to be narrated year round. Days before Easter 1947, Tom Kenny's death prompted the Connacht Tribune to depict this Craughwell man as the «Colorful Figure who paved the way for the Easter Rising.»[522] Death allowed him to come out of the shadows, but his appraisal resembled the fate of a shooting star. Men like Kenny gathered at Easter around the county. Wearing their uniforms, they marched in parades, held flags, and formed guards of honour. Yet, they largely remained an anonymous collective presence in the backdrop. Orations were rarely delivered by these men (and even more seldom by women). Expressions of admiration were uttered as they passed away, but their public presence quickly receded. Their names had scarcely been echoed since 1916 and exceptionally reappeared beyond their obituaries.

While Kenny's socialist beliefs might account for his relative anonymity, other local heroes who were not «guilty» of purporting such unpopular views were reserved similar treatment. Months later, the Connacht Tribune announced John Howley's death, the son of William Howley who had led five sons and a daughter into the Rising. His coffin was draped with the tricolour and his funeral granted full military honours. All the same, his public presence quickly subsided[523]. In 1950, the same short-term presence was granted to Cumann na mBan Mary Malone when the Connacht Sentinel recalled the 1916 events

58. «Death of Mr. Tom Kenny», Connacht Tribune, 5 April, 1947.
59. «1916 Man's Death», Connacht Tribune, 21 February, 1948.

in which the deceased had played a prominent role[524]. As years went by, obituaries multiplied, but their long-term impact on commemorations remained dim. As at the national level, local rank and file were overshadowed by their leaders as the main object of commemorative tussles.

In Galway, tussles materialized around Liam Mellows. After the civil war, the Galway leader swiftly became a symbol for dissident republicans of unjust repression by an illegitimate government. The manner of his death rendered delicate his commemoration by local officials. So when the Liam Mellows Memorial Committee, chaired by M. Niland of the Old Comrades of the IRA, announced in September 1946 its intent to raise a monument on the Killeeneen site where Mellows had launched the Rising, it was Dr. Browne, Bishop of Galway, rather than local political leaders, who was thanked for granting them the site. No shape had been decided for the monument, but the committee gave «a guarantee that it would never be used for unworthy or pecuniary purposes.»[525] In the end, no such guarantee was ever needed as no monument would be erected for reasons that remain blurred.

Other initiatives surrounding Mellows were later contemplated. In 1951, Galway city's Eyre Square was to be renamed Faiche Maoil Iosa (Mellows Green). A stone statue would accompany the new name. Six years later, the statue was unveiled and blessed by Dr. Browne. The Tuam Herald claimed that the monument's erection proved the enduring impression Mellows had made locally. Many civil war opponents had attended the

60. «Historic Easter Week», Connacht Tribune, 15 April, 1950.
61. «Liam Mellowes Memorial Committee», Connacht Sentinel, 24 September, 1946.

unveiling, validating the idea that «thanks to the noble Christian spirit of the (Irish) people, they had agreed to forgive and forget.»[526]

The voluntary character behind the project may well support a tale of disunity. Successive governments had stayed clear of the Killeeneen and Eyre Square projects as they were aware that Mellows's actions and fate had continuously warranted attacks on the «treacherous» state. It was Dr. Browne who had allowed the erection of the Eyre Square statue as he saw in Mellows a powerful example of the «Faith and Fatherland» impetus. Mellows's actions, rather than profiting from a noble Christian spirit of forgiveness, remained a rather divisive presence. This tale of disunity appears supported by the fact that while Mellows statue was erected, the Killeeneen spot was left unmarked. What's more, Galwegians failed to adopt the new name of Mellow's Green and rather kept Eyre Square in common usage.

The quest for a proper recognition of the Galwegians' contribution in 1916 always appeared unfulfilled. During 40th anniversary events held at Moyode Castle, Father Fahy[527], who had been among the local Volunteers in 1916, reminded the crowd that «the name of Irishmen would always be associated with their great struggle down the years for Faith and Fatherland.»[528] God had supplied a wonderful leader in Pearse and Galwegians, through their willing sacrifice, had showed that the hearts of Connacht men were in the right place. Five years later, Father Fahy declared once more that «Galway (...) played a great part in the 1916 Rising. If Dublin only had risen in rebellion it would have been

62. «Liam Mellowes Memorial Unveiled in Galway», Tuam Herald, 24 August, 1957.
63. «Open Air Mass at Limepark», Connacht Tribune, 1 April, 1961.
64. «40th Anniversary of Rising: Ceremony at Moyode Castle», Connacht Sentinel, 24 April, 1956.

said that the Rising was local and not national. Though the Galwaymen took part in no major engagement their action gave the Rising a national character which impressed the world.»[529]

The persistence of such messages showed that some «outsiders» still had to be convinced of the existence of a Galwegian dimension to 1916 heroics. These local narratives, as purported by Father Fahy, were battling against negative perspectives which, for decades, had questioned or invalidated claims of Galway successes during Easter Week. Early on, Unionists Warren B. Wells and N. Marlowe rejected the narrative presenting the Galway Rising as a moment of general union. The priests' opinion had thumped the views of secular leaders and forced a premature disbandment of the Volunteer forces as in 1798[530]. For his part, F. X. Martin judged that a Galway rising had never left its paper dimension[531] .

The Cork commemorative field offers contrasting snapshots from the Galway portrait. Within the «Rebel County», accounts of the Rising appeared diluted within a more diversified commemorative calendar. The Manchester Martyrs, with William Philip Allen and Michael O'Brien born in the county, attracted a great deal of attention. The same applies to Fenian Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, born in Rosscarbery[532], whose fame was conferred during his 1915 Glasnevin burial when Patrick Pearse uttered the iconic words

65. «Co. Galway's Part in 1916 Rising», Connacht Tribune, 8 April, 1961.
66. Warren B. Wells and N. Marlowe, «The Rebellion in the Provinces», in A History of the Irish Rebellion (Dublin and London: Maunsel & Company, 1916).
67. F. X. Martin, «The 1916 Rising - a 'Coup d'Etat' or a 'Bloody Protest'», Studia Hibernica 8 (1968):106-137.
68. «O'Donovan Rossa Memorial», Southern Star, 1 December, 1945.

of «the fools, the fools! - They have left us our Fenian dead, and while Ireland holds these graves, Ireland unfree shall never be at peace.»[533] Corkonians also massively attended events honouring the men who had fought during the War of Independence at Kilmichael, Dripsey, Clonmult or Crossbarry.

On November 22nd 1946, Manchester Martyrs commemorations incorporated tributes to Rossa. These testimonials stressed Cork's perennial contribution to the revolutionary struggle. The Southern Star praised this quartet as the product of the Fenian ideal. Without them, the newspaper conjectured, 1916 would have never happened. Without Rossa, there would have been no Pearse[534]. Deflecting attention to prior revolutionary phases when Corkonians led the way, local commemorations underlined the notion of a national debt towards present-day Corkonians. Numerous initiatives of this nature multiplied thereafter and revealed the Corkonians' desire to go above and beyond 1916.

When the Irish Republic was proclaimed at Easter 1949, twenty thousand were present for the ceremonies at Cork Town Hall. The «historic scenes» saw MacCurtain and MacSwiney share the spotlight with Pearse's «deathless words» spoken at the GPO in 1916. Amid jubilant scenes when Corkonians «came together», other accounts highlighted the apparent difficulties for some local citizens to reconcile 1916 actions with their 1949 unfolding. The Cork Examiner once more felt the need to vindicate the 1916 inactivity in the county: «deprived as the great majority were through no fault of their own, of the honour of fighting in 1916, they (Corkonians) seized the later opportunity

69. Patrick Pearse, «The fools, the fools!», in Great Irish Speeches, 53-56.
70. «Manchester Martyrs», Southern Star, 30 November, 1946.

with both hands and helped write a glorious page of Irish history in 1920-1921.»[535] Many Corkonians evidently felt that redemption had not been achieved just yet.

As in Galway, the deaths of 1916 veterans were used to praise the county's contribution to the Rising. For example, while Diarmuid Lynch had not been previously praised in the county of his birthplace, the Southern Star told its readers, as he passed away in 1950, that Lynch had been one of the last surviving members of the IRB Supreme Council who had planned 1916. The newspaper account[536] magnified Lynch's role. Death was the ideal shroud allowing for the glorification of the county in regard to 1916. It remains that other initiatives surrounding Easter Week in Cork, such as the commemoration of the sole executed participant in the person of Thomas Kent, confirm the ambiguous relationship with the Rising which prevailed for decades in the county.

Just as the 14 men buried at Arbour Hill provided a site for Rising stories to be projected, people were invited to pay their tribute at Kent's grave each Easter. Thousands appeared to have gladly done so[537]. While Thomas Kent was not ignored at Easter time, he never acquired the status associated with Arbour Hill leaders. Kent even appeared as a second-grade martyr in Cork county itself. His fame never rivalled that of MacCurtain or MacSwiney. None of his brothers profited from a substantial recognition locally or nationally. Could this be explained by the nature of their actions in 1916? In contrast with the forthright compliance of Cork Volunteers to lay down their arms, the Kent's last-ditch

71. «Guns, Salute, Trumpets Herald the Republic of Ireland», Cork Examiner, 18 April, 1949.
72. «Diarmuid Lynch, Death of a Well-Known Tracton Man», Southern Star, 18 November, 1950.
73. See for example «Commemoration of Easter Week», Irish Times, 8 April, 1944.

defiance probably acted as a deterrent and a difficult reminder of the nature of Easter events in the county.

All in all, the most striking feature of the post-Second World War years in Cork is that many had yet to make their peace with the local 1916 events. The Cork 1916 Men's Association's statement to the BOMH in 1957 gave prominence to a powerful feeling that 1916 injustices still demanded resolution. The four founding members reminded that the association had been created in 1946 for «the purpose of placing an authentic account of the true facts concerning Easter Week (1916) in Cork.»[538] A certificate was produced in 1948. Signed by Cork Battalion's sole surviving officer Seán Murphy, it was distributed to local veterans to «help future historians to assess more accurately the part played by the men of Cork on that historic occasion.»[539] Their statement claimed further that close to 1200 Volunteers had mobilized on Easter Sunday, but «in view of the fact that nine separate dispatches arrived in Cork during those fateful days, some contradicting or countermanding, others affirming previous orders, it can be well understood how bewildering the confusion was, and how unenviable the position of the Cork Command.»[540]

The association's leaders concluded that the «considerable dissatisfaction with the inactivity of the IVF in Cork, Limerick and Tralee during the Rising» still prevailing was unwarranted[541]. It was not only Corkonians who suffered from a repeated humiliation

74. Murphy, Barry, Canton and Wickham, BOMH, WS 1598, 21.
75. Ibid., 22.
76. Ibid., 7.
77. Ibid., 15.

each Easter, but large sections of the nation. A commission had exonerated all leaders from provincial Ireland and, yet, the unfair blame refused to die. As with the 1916 medals, the Cork 1916 Men's Association attempted to revise Rising narratives. In 1959, Seán Murphy was chosen to unveil a plaque at St. Francis Hall in Cork city. In front of a large crowd, the orator Liam Russell said that through the «designs of Providence it was not to be for us (to fight in 1916) (...) I am sure every man here remembers the disappointment, the bitterness of heart, the feeling of utter failure. Some felt it a disgrace. But it was not. It was the intention and the purpose that counted. We were ready and willing to sacrifice ourselves if it were called for. That was what counted.»[542] No one could be blamed for the «designs of Providence».

Overall, Easter commemorations after 1945 were seized by Corkonians and Galwegians to challenge national narratives. They persistently appeared to ask a rather simple question to the national leaders and Dubliners alike: why were they expected to celebrate the Rising as a national triumph when national leaders and Dubliners continuously failed to recognize their local contribution in it? Citizens of these counties tenaciously insisted that 1916 local heroes and events fully deserved to be integrated into the national gospel. Irish-speakers seemed to be in a similar confrontational frame of mind which led them to recurrently challenge the national narratives referring to the Rising and its legacy.

«1916 agus na Gaeilgoirí» (1916 and the Irish Speakers)

In 2006, a series entitled Macallaí na Cásca (Echoes of Easter) reassessed the legacy of the Rising. For the occasion, Tomás Mac Síomóin portrayed its impact as a «leath-

78. «They Too Shall Be Remembered...», Cork Examiner, 30 March, 1959.

réabhlóid, paradacsa ait na Gaeilge» (half-revolution, odd Irish (language) paradox). He addressed the enduring malaise within Irish-speaking circles when comparing the 1916 promises to their eventual disappointing consequences for the Gaelic culture and language. Mac Síomóin found it difficult to reconcile the signatories' championing of the language to its conspicuous absence from their Proclamation beyond the title words of Poblacht na hÉireann (Republic of Ireland). He concluded: «is beag aird a bhí ag náisiúnaithe polaitiúla 1916 ar náisiúnachas cultúrtha seo a gceannaire. I mBéarla a bhí téacs Fhorógra 1916»[543]. (Little attention was devoted by political nationalists to this cultural nationalism they were leading. It is in English that the text of the 1916 Proclamation appeared)

For all the frequent Easter appeals in favour of the revival, scant research has explored how gaelgoirí (Irish speakers) have remembered the Rising. From the early days of the Free State, abundant lip-service was paid by national leaders to a revival, especially at Easter, but this always clashed with the language's persistent decline in the sovereign state. In 1911, 17.6% of the Irish population declared its proficiency in Irish (3.5% in Leinster and 31.7% in Connacht). It later reached 19.3% by 1926, 23.7% in 1936, 21.2% in 1946 and 27.2% by 1961[544]. This overall rise always remained superficial. The frequency and the context in which Irish was used revealed a grim portrait. In 1926, the Gaeltachtaí population (areas populated by 80 % or more of Irish-speakers) amounted to only 165 000. By 1956, the Gaeltacht was home to 86 000 people and, two decades later,

79. Tomás Mac Síomóin, 1916: Leath-réabhlóid, Paradacsa ait na Gaeilge (Baile Átha Cliath: Coiscéim, 2006), 5.
80. An access to Irish censuses is available online through the site of the Central Statistics Office; http://www.cso.ie/en/media/csoie/census/census1961results/volume9/C%201961%20VOL%209%20T1,2.pdf

as little as 29 000 were known to be using Irish as their primary language. In 1981, writer Desmond Fennell inferred that «long before the Gaeltacht was christened it had begun to die. Exister c'est mourir un peu was always its motto.»[545] The seemingly inexorable decline made Reg Hindley conclude a decade later that there was «no room for honest doubt that the Irish language is now dying.»[546] Gaelgoirí such as Mac Síomóin have rejected such claims since «not only is (...) the death of Irish, inevitable - but it is the democratic choice of the Irish people themselves. (...) Hindley not only neatly exculpates his own nation (...) of the oppression of Ireland and the destruction of Irish culture but denies its very legitimacy to the Irish revival project.»[547]

Despite clear shortfalls under their guidance, for decades after gaining independence, political leaders nonetheless persistently pledged themselves to come good on the 1916 promises. A most potent illustration of this unwavering commitment, in theory at least, pervaded Eamon de Valera's long career. One of his best-known, and later derided, pledges to the nation heralded in 1916 came in the form of a 1943 St. Patrick's Day radio broadcast. In the midst of the Second World War, de Valera described the Ireland he dreamed of as:

> the home of people who valued material wealth only as the basis of right living (...) satisfied with frugal living (...) a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads - whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry (...) the home of a people living the life that God desires that man should live. (...) cultivating the things of the mind, and in particular those which mark us out as a distinct nation. The first of these latter is the national language. It is for us what no other language can be. It is our very own. It is more than a symbol; it is an essential

81. Desmond Fennell, «The Last Years of the Gaeltacht», The Crane Bag 5, no. 2 (1981): 8.
82. Reg Hindley, The Death of the Irish Language: A Qualified Obituary (London: Routledge, 1990), 248.
83. Tomás Mac Síomóin, «Foreword», in Eamonn Ó Ciosáin, Buried Alive: A Reply to Reg Hindley's The Death of the Irish Language (Rath Eanaigh: Dáil Uí Chadhain, 1991), 3.

> part of our nationhood. (...) As a vehicle of 3000 years of our history, the language is for us precious beyond measure.[548]

Ideological testimonies of loyalty to the 1916 ideals as this one continuously clashed with the constraints of realpolitik. Consequently, Easter time allowed a space for many citizens, whose identities and aspirations lay beyond the Dublin-based and English-language commemorations of the Rising, to stress their attachment to the 1916 dream and to demand the recognition of their own heroic contribution to the story of national emancipation.

To be sure, the revival's failure has always been criticized by gaelgoirí in independent Ireland. Among them, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, writer and republican activist, used his frequent role as «speaker at republican parades and commemorations»[549] to condemn the failure of the state's linguistic schemes. Gaelic militants made use of the Easter commemorative environment to castigate the rhetoric of political leaders like de Valera who routinely maintained that «to part with it (language) would be to abandon a great part of ourselves, to lose the key to our past (...) (and we) we could never aspire again to being more than half a nation.»[550] The decline of Irish was a tragedy as «the neglected people of the Gaeltacht (...) (were) the true inheritors of the nation's soul.»[551]

84. Eamon de Valera, «The Ireland which we dreamed of», in Great Irish Speeches, 79-80.
85. Cian Ó hÉigeartaigh, «Máirtín Ó Cadhain: Politics and Literature», The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies 34, no.1 (Spring 2008): 29
86. Eamon de Valera, «The Ireland which we dreamed of», in Great Irish Speeches, 80-81.
87. Aindrias Ó Cathasaigh, «A Vision to Realise: Ó Cadhain's Politics», The Canadian Journal of Irish Studies 34, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 18.

All his life, Ó Cadhain denounced the «paradox aisteach náisiúnta»[552] (odd national paradox) which made Ireland an unfortunate exception in Europe as the only nation where the indigenous language did not figure as the vernacular, a view corroborated by Mac Síomóin in 2006: «áfach, buaine 'paradox aisteach náisiunta' 1916 atá beo beathach, faoi chrotanna éagsúla, nócha bliain i ndiaidh an Éirí Amach.»[553] (unfortunately, the odd national paradox still exists in different forms ninety years after the Rising) Pearse's words of «not free merely, but Gaelic as well; not Gaelic merely, but free as well»[554] had remained a haunting but broken promise as realities reflected a proliferating alienation of gaelgoirí. In his later days, Ó Cadhain was gripped by despair when saying: «is deacair do dhuine a dhícheall a dhéanamh i dteanga arb é a cosúlacht go mbeidh sí básaithe roimhe féin, má fhaigheann sé cupla bliain eile saoil.»[555] (it is hard for a writer to do his best in a language which seems set to die before he does, if he lives a few years longer).

Still, as the Free State was founded, there existed a confident mood that Irish would be revived in a sovereign Ireland. It would be made a rampart against cultural assimilation into neighbouring Britain. In the 1920s, Daniel Corkery, for instance, jousted with historian W. E. Lecky whom he criticized for neglecting the «enduring soul of the Gael». Corkery believed in the presence of a Hidden Ireland, a «nationality that has been toughened in whole centuries of foul fortune (...) (through a) tongue in which alone the desires of its heart have been uttered in their truest, deepest, and most beautiful forms.»[556] Corkery's views however largely failed to identify the large-scale resistance to the

88. Mac Síomóin, 1916: Leath-réabhlóid, 11.
89. Ibid.
90. Patrick Pearse, «The fools, the fools!», in Great Irish Speeches, 55.
91. Ó Cadhain, Pápéir Bhána agus Pápéir Bhreaca, 40, in Ó hÉigeartaigh, «Máirtín Ó Cadhain»: 31.
92. Daniel Corkery, The Hidden Ireland (Dublin: M. H. Gill and Son, 1925), xii.

language which prodded Douglas Hyde, Gaelic League's co-founder in 1893, to declare as early as 1890 that «in most circles in Ireland it is a disgrace to be known to talk Irish.»[557]

With the creation of the Free State came the «repackage (of) British institutions as Irish ones and (...) the illusion of continuity with an ancient past. Parliament became the oireachtas, the Commons became the dáil, the head of the government became the taoiseach.»[558] Yet, as political independence was achieved, speaking Irish in public was a conscious statement rather than a reflection of its prominence in the self-governed nation[559]. During 1921 Treaty debates, Padraic O Maille made this obvious by telling the Dáil: «anois a cháirde tá a lán daoine sa Dáil seo ná tuigeann an Ghaedhilg agus dá bhrí sin caithfe mé labhairt i dteanga an tSasanaigh.»[560] (Now my friends there is a lot of people in this Dáil who do not understand Irish and because of that I have to speak in the language of the British)

The Revival Is Still (Maybe) on the Way...

The first decades of the Free State saw revivalists promote 1916 as presaging a golden age. This rhetoric proved resilient and at Easter 1951, Liam Ó Briain, Rising veteran, Professor of Languages at the National University of Ireland Galway and director of the Galway based Gaelic theatre company An Taibhdearc, was still commending his former

93. Mac Síomóin, 1916: Leath-réabhlóid, 29.
94. Comerford, Inventing the Nation,144.
95. Brian Ó Cuív, «The Gaelic Cultural Movements and the New Nationalism», in The Making of 1916, 1-27.
96. «Debate on Treaty», 22 December 1921, AHO, DED 7, no. 9; http://debates.oireachtas.ie/dail/1921/12/22/00003.asp.

colleagues for having stirred Gaelic Ireland from its long slumber[561]. Easter Week had reignited «an tine bheo» (the live flame) as «nár mhuscailt ar anam na tíre riamh go muscailt na Cásca.»[562] (the soul of the country had never been aroused like it was aroused at Easter) Ó Briain wrote further: «bíodh a bhuíochas sin ar na daoine a thug an nóiméad sin chun cinn agus a d'íoc as lena mbeatha shaolta, ar Phádraic Mac Piarais agus ar a chompánaigh.»[563] (thanks are due to the people who took that opportunity for us and which paid for it with their lives, to Pearse and his comrades).

Meanwhile, the Gaelic League's journal Feasta (first published in 1948 in the commemorative context of Easter) suggested: «thug Pádraig Mac Piarais a bheo le saoirse a bhaint amach do Éirinn. Ar feadh a shaoil ba oibrí gníomhach é le anam an náisiúin a shábháil ón mbás. Níl an tsaoirse a theastaigh uaidh againn go fóill (...) Réitigh siad an bealach dúinn a tháinig ina ndiaidh.»[564] (Patrick Pearse gave his life so Ireland would reap its freedom. All his life he did active work to save the soul of the nation from death. We do not have yet the freedom they wanted (...) They prepared the way for us to follow after them). Pearse was acclaimed as the «Gaelic Christ». An authentic independence could not be dissociated from a proper revival, but this was easier said than done and, in 1958, Feasta was used at Easter to express the Gaelic League's fears for the survival of Ireland's Gaelic soul: «tá dhá bhliain ceathrachad caite ó tharla Éirí Amach na Cásca, ach féach, tá neamh-iontas againn á dhéanamh i gcónaí atáina ghnáth faoi seo»[565]

97. Liam Ó Briain, Cuimhní Cinn (Baile Átha Cliath: Sáirséal agus Dill, 1974 (1951)), 191-202.
98. Idem., 50.
99. Idem., 77.
100. «An Ard-Fheis», Feasta 4, no. 2 (Bealtaine 1951): 12.
101. «Ní Creideamh Go hÍbirt», Feasta 9, no. 1 (Aibreán 1958): 12.

(Forty-two years have passed since the Easter Rising occurred. But alas, we are not surprised that we have yet to achieve [its objectives] up to now)

Opinions were however polarized concerning the revival. Many observers resolutely condemned the energy exerted attempting an «intrinsically retrograde» revival and partially blamed it for the dire social and economic realities prevailing in the country. Others like Seán O'Faolain, editor of The Bell, challenged such a vision. In the 1940s, O'Faolain deplored that a counter-revolution had taken place in independent Ireland and enshrined «Gaelic Revivalism, stark Isolationism, timid and therefore savage Puritanism, crazy Censorship, all originally adumbrated on the highest moral motives, but alas, on the lowest intellectual level.»[566] Nevertheless, he rejected the notion that the revival was even remotely responsible for the drifts towards isolationism or puritanism. Instead, O'Faolain encouraged all to learn their forefathers' language to inform «themselves about themselves». In the language, he suggested, resided the promise of a pluralistic and tolerant nation[567]. As the revival struggled to get off the starting block, it became frequent to hear that complete independence over the 32 counties would secure a return to a genuine Gaelic society.

The revival's failure was often predicated on factors external to Ireland rather than internal ones. Determination and patience were preached at Easter and leaders pleaded for a rededication to the «noble» language. All the same, Easter appeals were increasingly filled with irony. At the conclusion of the Second World War, English was

102. Sean O'Faolain, «The Gaelic and the Good», The Bell 3, no. 2 (November 1941): 103.
103. Sean O'Faolain, «Gaelic - The Truth», The Bell 5, no. 5 (February 1943): 337 and 340.

overwhelmingly used to advocate the revival of the «indigenous» language. Orations delivered in Irish at Easter represented by then exceptions within an expanding English environment. Orators usually spoke of the language rather than through it.

Ireland's emancipation had not stemmed gaeltachtaí conditions from lagging behind national ones. Convinced that the rest of the nation was holding them in contempt, gaelgoirí sought to pressure the government. The organization of Muintir na Gaeltachta (People of the Gaeltacht) was founded in the 1930s and sought to secure «trí riachtanaisí na Gaeltachta a bhaint amach: saothrú iomlán, tithe, saol iomlán na fichiú aoise i nGaeilge.»[568] (three necessities to achieve in the Gaeltachtaí: full employment, homes, a twentieth-century life fully in Irish) The movement became «an energetic grassroots campaign of Gaeltacht people trying to win social justice by their own action.»[569] Its members paraded and attended diverse commemorative events at Easter. Still good intentions rarely translated into tangible achievements. As far back as 1936, the republican journal An Phoblacht already acknowledged the sad incongruity that «I mBéarla atá ár Marbhadh» (Our killing is in English). The publication lambasted the population's custom to proclaim its Irishness and its pride in 1916 heroes «le teanga gall ina mbéal.»[570] (with a foreign language in their mouth). Such disenchantment increasingly dominated Easter initiatives led through Irish in post-Second World War Ireland

104. «Muintir na Gaeltachta», Comhar, 13, no. 3 (Márta 1954): 13.
105. Ó Cathasaigh, «A Vision to Realise: Ó Cadhain's Politics»: 19.
106. Mannanán, «I mBéarla atá ár Marbhadh», An Phoblacht, 11 April, 1936.

While despair was spreading, some observers continued to envisage a happy ending. In a 1942 pamphlet published by Glún na Buaidhe, a continuation of the conservative movement Craobh na hAiséirghe (Branch of the Resurrection) founded in 1940 to restore Irish as the national vernacular[571], Oliver Murphy reasserted Pearse's vision and declared that this generation would save the language: «Glún na Buaidhe says that we must and we will (...) That we will is undoubted if, we have in us the spirit of Traolach Mac Suibhne (Terence MacSwiney, a leader of the Cork IVF in 1916 and Lord Mayor of Cork from March 1920 up to his tragic death in October of that year as the result of a 74-days hunger strike).»[572] A year later, Annraoi Ó Liatháin proclaimed again that «'Glún na Buaidhe' is the new popular national movement which will show the way»[573], a claim which would never be backed by evidence.

Not only were the masses failing to support the revival, but newspapers were also repeatedly condemned by Indiu, an Irish-language publication founded in 1943 by Ciarán Ó Nualláin and Proinsias Mac an Bheatha, for lacking enthusiasm for the revival. At Easter 1943, the publication attacked the Picture Post for declaring that a single national language constituted a blessing, as proven by the example of the United States. It also condemned, neither for the first nor the last time, the Irish Times which had recently condemned as absurd a situation where many citizens were forced to go hungry and still had to learn a language now foreign to 9/10th of the population[574].

107. R. M. Douglas, «The Pro-Axis Underground in Ireland, 1939-1942», The Historical Journal 49, no. 4 (December 2006): 1169.
108. Oliver Murphy, One True Man (Dublin: Glún na Buaidhe, 1945), 4.
109. Annraoi Ó Liatháin, Five Glorious Days in the GPO (Baile Átha Cliath: Glún na Buaidhe, 1943), 2.
110. «Níos Measa ná an 'Picture Post» and «An Dearcadh Domhanda», Indiu, April, 1943.

Pierre Nora claimed that «we speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left.»[575] This outlook applies neatly to the situation in independent Ireland. Faced with a steady decline, voices denounced public organizations for giving up on the national mission to «regaelicize» Ireland. During its 1948 annual congress held on Easter Monday, the Gaelic League complained against the national broadcaster Radió Éireann. The latter was acting in the most unpatriotic manner by operating almost exclusively in English, a criticism to which the broadcaster's leaders retorted that they were doing so because English was the first language of the vast majority. A year later, as the Republic Act was to come into operation at Easter, Indiu revisited the meaning of Fogairt na Poblachta (1916 Proclamation of the Republic). It contended that the three words of Poblacht na hÉireann had never ceased to represent a formal promise of a free and Gaelic republic[576]. Parallel gestures however revealed that Irish was now facing an uphill task to merely be granted a status on par with English.

In 1950, a tablet was unveiled in Dublin Castle to honour James Connolly. Concerned by the prospect of a unilingual English inscription, Maurice Moynihan, secretary for the Department of the Taoiseach, encouraged the private secretary of the Tánaiste (Deputy Prime Minister) to instead replace it with an Irish one. Moynihan failed to convince his colleague who, after consulting the project's initiator, Labour TD and James Connolly's son R. J. Connolly who had served under his father's command in the GPO, confirmed

111. Nora, «Between Memory and History», 7.
112. «Eagran: Fogairt Na Poblachta», Indiu, 16 April, 1949.

that only English would be used. The reason stated was that insufficient space prevented a bilingual inscription from being carved on the tablet[577].

The language issue was increasingly given a symbolic role amid commemorations. The emblematic rather than organic use of Irish became part of well-established routines celebrating tradition and continuity. Yet, it rarely went beyond tokenism. The Proclamation was read in both languages, with many organizers giving precedence to the Irish version to manifest their dedication to the revival. This could not wash away the fact that the original proclamation had been published in English and that orations were almost invariably conducted through English.

Some developments in Arbour Hill in the 1950s, part of a large-scale refurbishment meant to enhance the site's significance[578], characterize the shift in language prominence at official commemorations. The 14 Arbour Hill martyrs had been enthusiastically designated through an irishisized version of their names in the decades following their deaths. This version was printed on prayer cards, pamphlets, posters and mementos; it was uttered during anniversary eulogies or chiseled on permanent markers. But the association between the leaders' names and their support for the revival was far from self-evident in the 1950s. In 1953, the government asked signatories' relatives which language they wanted the names to appear in on the Arbour Hill memorial. Relatives of Thomas Clarke and James Connolly chose the English version while those of Seán Mac Diarmada, Éamonn Ceannt, Joseph Plunkett and Patrick Pearse went for the Irish one.

113. Connolly Memorial, 1949-50, Archives of William Norton, 10/WN Box 2/36, LMA.
114. «Memorandum from Minister for Defence», 18 December 1953, DOT, S 9815 B, NAI.

Thomas MacDonagh's son, Donagh MacDonagh chose English, unless all the other names were in Irish, « in such circumstances he would agree to the Irish version.»[579] The government eventually chose a compromise and both versions appeared.

By 1956, Gearóid S. Mac Eoin commented that this ambivalence manifested at the official level was matched at the popular level. Citizens were increasingly finding a Gaelic version of their names cumbersome, especially since so many lived solely through English. The «regaelicization» of names, a custom originally made integral to the revival, had proven artificial and inefficient. Mac Eoin concluded: «ní tír dhá-theangach i Éire ná ní theastaíonn uainn go mb'ea í. Is brionglóid é an dá-theangachas nár tháinig isteach riamh i dtír ar bith.»[580] (Still Ireland is not a bilingual country and we do not want it to be one. Bilingualism is a dream and it has never come in operation in any country). In December 1958[581], government members struggled to decide whether they should prioritize an Irish version (official language) of the 1916 Proclamation or the English one (original document) on the Arbour Hill memorial. Such a struggle to favour Irish revealed the ambivalence regarding the role the language was to play in the Republic.

There was a growing divide between English and Irish-speaking communities. In November 1954, commemorative events were organized in Dublin to mark the 75th anniversary of Patrick Pearse's birth. Máirtín Ó Cadhain was left infuriated by the proceedings. He was disappointed that «ní raibh an comóradh seo mór na náisiúnta go

115. «Memorandum for the Government», 9 December 1953, DOT, S 9815 B, NAI.
116. Gearóid S. Mac Eoin, «What's in a Name?», Comhar 15, no. 10 (Oct. 1956): 25.
117. Letter from Michael Biggs to Éamon de Valera, 5 December 1958, DOT, S 9815 C, NAI.

leor.»[582] (this commemoration was not a big one across the nation) If organizers had truly wanted to commemorate Pearse, every part of the nation should have been enrolled for the occasion. Yet, not only had the general public remained uninformed, but staunch nationalists like himself had been left in the dark: «níorbh eolas dom aon ní faoin gComoradh seo nó go raibh sé thart.»[583] (I did not get any information about this commemoration until it was over) His exclusion showed that aspects of the 1916 vision, such as building a nation on the pillars of gaelgoirí, were increasingly muted.

Easter 1956 prompted more criticism of the government. The winning entry for the 40th anniversary essay competition was published in the pages of Indiu. Tomás Ó Tuathail, from Cill Rónáin on Inishmore (Galway Gaeltacht), praised the courageous Gaels who had risen in 1916: «thuig na daoine an uair sin tábhacht na Gaeilge, agus rinne siad a ndícheall an Ghaeilge a chur dá labhairt ar fud na tíre agus gan ba Gaeil a bheith fághta «gan tír, gan teanga.»[584] (At that time the people understood the importance of Irish, and they did their utmost for Irish to be spoken across the country because without any Irish remaining «no country, without language») His celebration of the past was soon overshadowed by present-day realities. The situation of Irish had not improved since independence. Very few now cared about the fate of gaelgoirí as proven by the failure to stem the Gaeltacht exodus. Ó Tuathail concluded: «tá na slaite daoine in ainm a bheith ag taobhú leis an nGaeilge ach ní thuigeann siad céard tá ar siúil acu.»[585] (There are a lot of

118. Máirtín Ó Cadhain, «Caiscin», Irish Times, 24 November, 1954.
119. Ibid.
120. Tomás Ó Tuathail, «Duais-Aiste: Cáisc 1916, Cáisc 1956», Indiu, 6 April, 1956.
121. Ibid.

people in favour of the Irish language in name but they do not understand what is happening to them (gaelgoirí))

From the late 1950s, signs suggested that a widespread shift was in process. For decades, the revival ideal had been for the nation to operate primarily through Irish. Yet, a 1959 Easter appeal from Tráth na Gaeilge (Irish Time) showed how far the revival scheme had fallen short. The organization exhorted the population to speak the language on Easter Monday, downgrading the hope for a daily use of Irish by all citizens to a symbolic usage once a year in the commemorative context of Easter[586].

A year later, the Minister for the Gaeltacht Gerald Bartley urged the Irish youth to preserve the Gaelic ideals of previous generations. During a Galway address, Bartley told the present generation how lucky they were that they did not have to lay down their lives for the nation. Their main responsibility was to preserve the language[587]. This targeting of the youth was not a new appeal, but, yet again, the 1960s youth seemed set to ignore their elders' appeals and do as prior generations had increasingly done before them: live their lives in English.

Interestingly, under the growing influence of Seán Lemass in the 1950s, especially from 1959 when he became Taoiseach, the appeals for a revival started to clash with initiatives seeking to open Ireland to the world. Lemass's initiative, the Easter festival of An Tóstal (The Gathering) from 1953 to 1958 highlighted the growing dilemma between a

122. «Speak Irish at Easter Appeal», Irish Press, 27 March, 1959.
123. «Minister's Appeal to the Youth», Connacht Sentinel, 23 August, 1960.

protection of traditions and the aspirations for an Ireland welcoming tourism, foreign investments, technological innovations and social changes. In Galway, the 1954 Tóstal illustrated the exacerbated tension between commemorating the Rising and enticing tourists to visit the county. A military parade was reintroduced, a first since 1945, to boost the quality of the spectacle. Meanwhile, the Galway Observer blamed the emphasis put on Irish for a lack of visitors the previous year[588]. Proceedings in Irish were now clashing with new modern objectives. Not surprisingly, Indiu opposed the views of the Observer and remained unconvinced by the decision to bind Easter commemorations with An Tóstal: «Ní abhraimid nach maith an cuspóir sin. Ach is dóigh linn go gcaithfear bheith cúramach nach ndéanfaidh comóradh an Tóstail comóradh an Éiri-Amach a bháthadh.»[589] (We are not saying that it (An Tóstal) is a bad initiative. But we think that one should be careful so that the commemoration of An Tóstal does not drown the commemoration of the Rising). Entertainment was no guarantee of appropriate commemoration.

Clashing with Indiu's stance, a new publication embraced the modernization of Ireland as the perfect environment to reappraise a traditional Irishness to be found among Irish-speaking communities. Launched in 1959, the Easter Commemoration Digest (or Cómorú na Cásca Digest) aimed: «a) to give to our kinfolk abroad a realistic picture of progress being made at home and enthuse their interest in Irish Affairs, b) to further encourage tourist travel to Ireland and also to increase our export potential.»[590] The Digest highlighted the tension and contradiction underlying the nurture of heritage as a

124. «Tostal na Gaillimhe Will be Attractive», Galway Observer, 10 April. 1954.
125. «An tEiri Amach agus An Tostal», Indiu, 16 April, 1953.
126. «Letter to President Eamon de Valera from Patrick McBrinn», 9 October 1959, DOT, S 7 700, NAI.

consumer product. As Ruth McManus notes, key elements to the tourist experience such as an authentic sense of space led the publication to focus on an Irish identity based on the rural, Catholic and Irish-speaking population[591]. The Digest opted for a harmonious vision rooted in old stereotypes[592], a traditional Ireland frozen in time. Printed on the front page of its initial publication (and all subsequent ones) was the motto «Be Irish Buy Irish Speak Irish» while the opening text quoted Pearse's words: «we speak the Irish language not because it is a beautiful and venerable language (...) but because it is our own language.»[593]

In a further article entitled Éire Amarach (Tomorrow's Ireland), the Digest predicted a bright future for the nation along the lines of the Gaelic culture and traditions: «sna blianta romhainn, beidh oiread san spiroad sna daoine agus bród náisiúnta orthú go mbeidh an Ghaeilge le clos mar ghnáth-teanga ar gach taobh, san gcathair, san mbaile, faoin dtuath, san Dáil.»[594] (in the years ahead of us, much inspiration will come from the people and their national pride that Irish will be heard as the common language on every side, in the city, in the town, in the countryside, in the Dáil) This prediction duplicated the old strategy promising that the years ahead were bound to be golden ones.

However, by 1961, the Irish Press wondered if anything was even left of the 1916 aspirations: «an maireann an tine bheo i gcónaí, nó an bhfuiltear á caomhnadh mar is

127. Ruth McManus, «Identity Crisis? Haritage Construction, Tourism and Place Marketing Ireland», in Ireland's Heritages: Critical Perspectives on Memory and Identity (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 235.
128. Zulow, «The Tourism Nexus: National Identity and the Meaning of Tourism Since the Irish Civil War», in Ireland's Heritages, 189-204.
129.«The Hundred Celt», Easter Commemoration Digest 1 (1959): 5.
130. «Éire Amarach», Easter Commemoration Digest 1 (1959): 27.

dual?»[595] (Has the live fire (celebrating the Irish nation) been lit forever, or is it remembered as it suits?) For the newspaper, the relationship with the Rising was a utilitarian and wavering one. Yet, despite ever fewer gaelgoirí, Easter commemorative initiatives through Irish continued to serve as potent symbols of patriotism and a source of competition between nationalist strands. In April 1961, Tomás Ó Muircheartaigh commented on a difference in nature between commemorative gestures in Baile Átha Cliath (Dublin) and Cathair Chorcaí (Cork city). Permanent markers in Dublin were at best bilingual, while in Cork «is den teanga dhúchais amháin a dhéanaid úsáid ar phlaiceanna agus ar leacacha cuimhneacháin náisiúnta.»[596] (it is only the native language which is used on commemorative nationalist plaques and slabs)

By 1964, years after Ó Cadhain had spoken for the first time of the Irish paradox, the Lord Mayor of Dublin, Seán Moore, brought the issue back full circle. Moore was thrilled that national heroes had remained so revered in the Republic and publicly celebrated by the citizens each Easter. He was nonetheless filled with regret. While many still declared themselves ready to die for Ireland and for the achievement of the 1916 martyrs' dreams and ideals, most of them would never be heard trying to speak «our own tongue»[597]. The golden jubilee was fast approaching. What remained of the revival dream was to have gaelgoirí carve themselves a niche in the increasingly English world they inhabited. The hope lay in a promotion of bilingualism where non-native speakers would embrace Irish as an addition to their mother tongue. However, many Irish-speakers would continue to be heard at Easter forevermore condemning

131. «An Chaisc», Irish Press, 20 April, 1962.
132. «Sean Sheamais agus an Phlaic», Irish Press, 15 April, 1961.
133. Seán Moore, «The Pen is Mightier», Easter Commemoration Digest 6 (1964): 12.

their increasing alienation within the Irish state. When choosing their mother tongue to do so, gaelgoirí were less and less likely to reach a wide audience.

As I turn my attention to the 1966 jubilee in the concluding chapter, it should be evident by now that Rising commemorations were always used by diverse groups to voice various and, at times divergent, visions pertaining to Ireland's past, present and future. The commemorative context at Easter continuously represented as much a divisive influence as a source of pride and encouragement to keep the revolutionary dream alive in the hope of improving people's lives. While Easter time was indeed used by some to promote the threatening physical force tradition in order to bring about an elusive 32-county republic, others like gaelgoirí or provincial Irelanders simply sought the development of a nation in which they would feel more valued.

Chapter 6 - The 1966 Golden Jubilee: a Year Marked by Continuity

Introducing the collective work 1916 in 1966, Mary Daly and Margaret O'Callaghan quote Irish poet Michael O'Loughlin, born in 1958:

> it is, I believe, almost impossible for any one of my generation to think about 1916 as an actual event in history, discrete and autonomous. The way in which 1916 had been presented to us was an important process in our understanding of the nature of our society, and of ourselves. For my generation, the events of Easter 1966 were crucial, so much so that I think it is almost possible to speak of a generation of '66.[598]

Altogether, 1916 in 1966 demonstrates how «the battle for control of the representation of the history of modern Ireland and its profound connection with debates about the 'North' is incomprehensible if the commemoration of 1966 is ignored.»[599] That said, while jubilee events were unique in size and in the interest they stimulated, they echoed pre-existing commemorative dynamics. The 1966 jubilee can therefore be seen as a year of commemorative continuity with the previous five decades.

Hundreds of thousands of men, women and children became involved in widespread activities held across the Republic. Yet, fifty years after the «gallant» insurrection, not everyone found reasons to celebrate the Rising's legacy. Conor Cruise O'Brien, later to become Labour TD from 1969 and Minister for Posts and Telegraphs (1973- 1977), condemned the 1916 leaders for having been oblivious to the future[600]. With the invaluable advantage of knowing how history came to unfold, Cruise O'Brien judged that Ireland would have been better off if Easter Week had never occurred. Later faced by the ugly realities of the 'Northern Troubles', many observers undertook a historical

1. Michael O'Loughlin, Letters from the new island - 16 on 16: Irish writers on the Easter Rising, ed. in Dermot Bolger (Dublin: Raven Arts Press, 1988), 43, in 1916 in 1966, 1.
2. Ibid., 2.
3. Cruise O'Brien, «The Embers of Easter», 4.

revision, casting a retrospective glance at 1966 commemorations and identified the seeds of ongoing anarchy north of the border.

Intent on rectifying what they saw as simplistic nationalist readings stressing centuries of continuous struggle ultimately leading to liberation, revisionists insisted that the bellicose events of 1966 had contributed to plunge Northern Ireland into civil war. In Cruise O'Brien's words, the jubilee had radicalized nationalists as there was «no way of discouraging them (methods of violence applied by a determined minority) effectively within the framework of a cult of 1916.»[601] Throughout the 'Troubles', revisionists' objections to 1916 methods and aspirations spoke as much of their opposition to contemporary IRA tactics as of anything else.

With escalating bloodshed as a backdrop in 1972, journalist and radio correspondent P. K. Downey expressed his concerns over the disrupting power of commemoration:

> (it was) a legitimate, in some cases a necessary exercise, although in our present political situation, North and South, more and more people are questioning the wisdom of continuing, in their traditional forms, many of the old stances (...). It is arguable for instance, that the scale of the 1966 commemoration of the Easter Rising, acting as a spark on both sides, contributed more than we are yet prepared to admit to the bloody strife in which is now all about us.[602]

By 1992, David Trimble, the Unionist politician who was to be awarded the Noble Peace Prize alongside John Hume for securing the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, was still describing the 1966 commemorations as an «orgy of self-congratulation»[603]. Yet, the increasingly peaceful Northern Irish context gradually emerging after 1998 has allowed

4. Cruise O'Brien, States of Ireland, 143-144.
5. P. K. Downey, «Radio», Irish Times, 11 December, 1972.
6. Trimble, The Easter Rebellion of 1916, 33.

for a growing consensus to take form: 1916 commemorations in the Free State/Republic were always about much more than a mere veneration of a physical-force tradition in the pursuit of an unfinished revolution. This further proves how the relationship between past and present is of a forever evolving nature.

My assessment of the 1916-1966 period has substantiated the diversity which constantly characterized the interaction of Southern Irelanders with Easter Week. Either supportive or critical of the Rising's promises and legacy, it appeared almost impossible for anyone living in Ireland in those years to remain unaffected by the debates surrounding Easter Week. While it is true that the golden jubilee, and the 50-year period more generally, was marked by political conflicts and the presence of groups glorifying the physical-force tradition, others seized the Easter commemorative context across the 50 years to advocate tolerance, encourage dialogue and foster an equal cherishing of «all the children of the nation».

In short, while the past in itself is neither intolerant nor prejudiced, people's understanding and use of it can be. I contend that golden jubilee gestures promoted diverse collective allegiances, renewed claims over public space and saw the erection of new permanent markers. Commemorations continued to channel the lively dialogue between centre and peripheries, allowing for different groups to demand further recognition of their 1916 contribution and improved conditions.

We Are All in this Together...

Ever since the immediate aftermath of the Rising, Easter commemorations have been the occasion for people to come together and articulate collective identities. Rather than being hunted down by authorities for defying a commemorative ban as it was before 1921, Irish citizens were encouraged in 1966 to publicly celebrate what had been achieved during Easter Week and in following decades. Extensive official events narrated the story of a national triumph and focused on notions of democracy, individual rights, state solicitude, progress and modernity. Through massive participation in processions, unveilings, gatherings and other public manifestations, thousands of citizens voiced their pride in the nation and professed their hopes for a bright future for Ireland.

Yet, the 1966 context scarcely amounted to David Trimble's «orgy of self-congratulation». Instead, evidence sustains that «the shadow of Northern Ireland (...) had lain silent, if present, in Dublin in 1966. (...) Irish unity barely featured in the official speeches during the 1966 commemoration»[604]. Numerous observers not only appeared conscious of the explosive impact Rising commemorations could potentially have, but Daly and O'Callaghan judged it fair to say that:

> nineteen-sixteen had the potential to bring together those who were divided by the Anglo-Irish Treaty and civil war. By focusing on the ideals of 1916, and on the subsequent history of the Irish state, Lemass hoped to bring those who had not supported the Rising or war of independence into the celebrations, and the record shows that he was largely successful in this. (...) Indeed, 1966 (...) represent a determined effort by the Irish state to reclaim the memory/commemoration of the Rising from militant republicans and to establish the commemoration as an event that could unite all citizens and consolidate the state.[605]

7. Daly and O'Callaghan, 1916 in 1966, 4.
8. Idem., 7.

The jubilee was therefore marked by widespread expressions of moderate views. For instance, in January 1966, the Connacht Sentinel hoped that 1916 ceremonies would help foster unity within the Republic. The fear was not so much that an over-the-top incendiary triumphalism would materialize, but rather that old internal enemies would renew fights. The Sentinel noted that «most of us expect this commemoration year to be a unifying experience for the whole nation and not an occasion for strife and friction, for opening old wounds. (...) It would, in the opinion of many people, be much better to have no celebration than to set neighbour against neighbour, even for a day.»[606]

Further notions of restraint and open-mindedness had been previously promoted by other organizations. At Easter 1965, Muintir na Tíre (People of the Country), working for the development of communities across the Republic, had called for the golden jubilee to work in favour of national unity. The association wanted to renew the 1916 spirit of unity, nurture the Gaelic language and culture, offer leadership courses and community activities. That way, «through these commemorations, Muintir na Tíre may play a part in rekindling that spirit of unity and sense of common purpose so strong in Easter Week and the subsequent years, so that from Easter 1966 we may all be 'on one road-again'.»[607]

During Easter Week 1966 itself, a Connacht Tribune editorial claimed that citizens were justified to take pride in the 1916 struggle and the ways in which they had so far commemorated it. According to the newspaper, nothing had been prompted by bitterness and, for one day, all sorts of people had gathered together. The positive energy bolstered

9. «1916 Ceremonies Should Foster Unity», Connacht Sentinel, 11 January, 1966.
10. «Muintir na Tíre call for national unity», Irish Times, 29 April, 1965.

by jubilee events had encouraged dialogue and the Tribune was wondering «now that the public ceremonial is near an end, what can we do in our ordinary daily lives, in our work as well as our leisure, to make this Ireland for which they fought a better place.»[608] The future was unwritten. No one could have predicted the extent of the troubles which were to rock Northern Ireland in ensuing years. Consequently, replacing this editorial in its context, it is difficult to detect a Southern hostility to its Northern Unionist neighbours so often decried once the 'Troubles' erupted a few years later.

Jubilee gestures may even have encouraged national maturity by demonstrating that opposing factions could cohabit peacefully in the Republic. Similar messages were uttered in Irish. In the Connacht Tribune, one could read: «bhí Comóradh náisiúnta againn agus is mór mar a chuaigh sé i gciob ar mhuintir, bhí chuile rud ciuin ach amhain i mbaile beag in gCo. Corcaigh»[609] (We had a great national commemoration and much touched people's heart, everything was quiet apart from a small town in Co. Cork) The incident in question was a minor one where police forces had intervened against a few Easter lilies street vendors.

The Galway Observer also preached the need to recover Irish unity, without having recourse to violence. Would the present generation see a united Ireland? A positive outcome would only materialize if «concessions to the North»[610] were granted. The jubilee was therefore the chance to reinforce attachment to the collective, from the local community to broader national allegiances. Tricolours were brandished in processions,

11. «Fifty Years After», Connatcht Tribune, 16 April, 1966.
12. «Tagairt - thall's i bhfus», Connacht Tribune, 16 April, 1966.
13. «Unity?», Galway Observer, 16 April 1966.

displayed on public buildings and among crowds. Such symbols claimed an attachment to the national «imagined community» and acknowledged a continuity between 1916 and 1966. Orations preached values of collectiveness, respect and other positive social values. Beyond the military parades, which were later blamed for having exacerbated the situation up North by exalting violence, the commemorative calendar comprised a wide range of plays, concerts, exhibitions, artistic competitions and pageants. Special masses were also held around the state to allow people to show their attachment to their faith, just as the 1916 forefathers had done before them.

Antagonistic counter-actions by Northern authorities and figures such as evangelical fundamentalist Ian Paisley were feared in the Republic, but these fears were counteracted by some generous gestures in the South. The Taoiseach Seán Lemass notably acknowledged the heroic part played by Irishmen who had fought in World War I, a participation which had so far been mainly condemned or, minimally, silenced in the Republic. The Irish Times hoped that this groundbreaking recognition by state officials was the prelude to further improvements of the political climate across the island. Was Ireland on the road to reconciliation wondered clergymen of various confessions during their Easter sermons[611]. Later developments were at odds with these hopes, but they do not invalidate the fact that positive impacts were conceived as a possible outcome of 1966 commemorations.

In general, the use of national symbols such as tricolours, processions and cultural activities encouraged national unity. Since internal conflicts had been constantly replayed

14. «Church Ceremonies Mark Anniversary», Irish Times, 12 April 1966.

in previous decades, achieving unity in the Republic demanded increased tolerance. Commemorative gestures seemed much more oriented towards an internal Southern reconciliation than as a threat of a forceful integration of the North.

Projections into Space

Claims over public space through gatherings, processions and erection of new permanent markers punctuated the jubilee, but as Daly and O'Callaghan note:

> Easter Week saw the unveiling of memorials in Dublin to Robert Emmet and Thomas Davis; and the official openings of the Garden of Remembrance and Kilmainham Jail. Yet this apparent satiation of memorials in 1966 is rather deceptive: none was originally conceived to celebrate the Golden Jubilee - all had a much longer ancestry, and despite almost 30 years' gestation of the Garden of Remembrance, Oisin Kelly's statue of the Children of Lir - the centerpiece of the Garden - was not yet complete, and was only unveiled in 1971.[612]

The memorials unveiled were not merely celebrating the 1916 ideals and means to achieve them. In many ways, none of the physical markers unveiled in the commemorative context of 1966 was directly depicting or referring to the Easter Rising. The 1916 uprising was incorporated into a longer quest for freedom that was presented as achieved. The reopening of Kilmainham Jail, for instance, celebrated the contribution of Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen, of Charles Stewart Parnell and the Irish Parliamentary Party, as much as it commemorated the sacrifice of the 1916 martyrs within the story of Irish emancipation.

The tribute paid to Young Ireland leader, the Protestant Thomas Davis, whose death by tuberculosis occurred at the start of the Great Irish Famine in 1845, encouraged a union

15. Daly and O'Callaghan, «Introduction», in 1916 in 1966, 12.

rather than stoking the embers of the ongoing struggle between Protestants and Catholics, Unionists and nationalists. During the unveiling ceremony of the Davis memorial on Dublin's College Green, the site where a foundation stone had been laid 21 years earlier, President de Valera told the gathering that all the men of 1916 «were the spiritual children of Davis». Davis was celebrated as a unifying influence. De Valera added that «our nation is only too happy to have them (Protestants) without any consideration.»[613] That many Protestants, North and South, would have questioned de Valera's sincerity on the matter, there can be no doubt. Still, his rhetoric was hardly of a nature to worsen the pre-existing tense confessional relationship on the island.

Situated in the centre of Dublin in Parnell Square, the Garden of Remembrance, a commemorative scheme dating back to as far as 1935, was dedicated to all those who had lost their lives in the fight for Irish freedom. While it felt short of acknowledging the contribution of Irish soldiers in the First World War, it put on par the 1916 martyrs with the provincial Irelanders killed during the War of Independence, but also all the dead generations who preceded the 1916 rebels and had given their lives during uprisings in 1798, 1803, 1847 and 1867. Yvonne Whelan provided a good interpretation of the Garden's significance:

> The garden provided a very public platform for the commemoration of those who had been killed in the Independence struggle and as such contributed to the symbolic expression of nationhood. The emphasis on religious iconography and ancient Celtic motifs in Hanley's design, coupled with Kelly's bronze sculpture served not only to effectively commemorate the dead but also to draw a parallel between them and the ancient warriors of the heroic, Celtic and, significantly, pre-colonial past. This was reinforced during the theatre of the unveiling ceremony and in the speeches that were delivered not only at the Garden of Remembrance but also during the unveiling of many other monuments in the years leading up to

16. «Statue of Davis Unveiled, Spiritual Father of 1916 Men», Irish Times, 18 April, 1966.

> 1966 and especially during the commemorative events associated with the Golden Jubilee celebrations.[614]

If it was not for the fact that the unveiling of the Garden was held on Easter Sunday 1966, five decades after Easter Week, the link to the 1916 Rising could have easily been missed. In many ways, the form chosen by Oisin Kelly for his statue dominating the Garden of Remembrance is evocative of a process of expansion of the historical narrative of the Irish nation easily discernible in 1966. Fifty years after the Rising, 1916 appeared as an important episode belonging to a long and diversified Irish story. Kelly's sculpture was not of Patrick Pearse or James Connolly, but rather depicted the mythical story of the Children of Lir at the moment of their transformation into swans.

Fig. 5. An overview of the Garden of Remembrance, Parnell Square, Dublin city.
Fig. 6. The Children of Lir, Oisin Kelly's sculpture at the centre of the Garden of Remembrance (Photos by the author).

Already in 1966, architect Daithí P. Hanley in charge of the commemorative scheme had had a plaque installed on the curved marble wall reading:

> In the darkness of despair we saw a vision.
> We lit the light of hope and it was not extinguished
> In the desert of discouragement we saw a vision.
> We planted the tree of valour and it blossomed.

17. Yvonne Whelan, «Symbolising the State - the iconography of O'Connell Street and environs after Independence (1922)», Irish Geography 34, 2 (2001): 150.

In the winter of bondage we saw a vision.

We melted the snow of lethargy and the river of resurrection flowed from it. We sent our vision aswim like a swan on the river. The vision became a reality. Winter became summer. Bondage became freedom and this we left to you as your inheritance. O generations of freedom remember us, the generations of the vision.[615]

In many ways, the fifty years since the Easter Rising had allowed for a more abstract

than literal commemoration of the Easter Rising. The emphasis was less on the physical force tradition and more on a democratic ethos, the quest for human rights, tolerance and diversity which was meant to have always been at the core of the Irish national quest.

Debates over the modern state's origins and the legitimacy of the physical force tradition found additional representations in the public sphere. It would be difficult to discard the importance of spectacular actions taken by former IRA members who notably bombed

18. Idem., 146.

Nelson's pillar in March 1966 or of unknown assailants (with SF strongly denying any involvement) who unsuccessfully tried to blow up the Liam Mellows Memorial plaque at Limepark in Gort (Galway)[616]. Yet, the spectacular nature of such actions cannot hide the fact that they represented exceptions rather than the norm in 1966.

1966 was furthermore appreciated by authorities as a time to look forward to the days of a prosperous Republic. For instance, seven towers were erected in Ballymun (Dublin) and invested with a powerful Rising symbolism by being named after the seven signatories of the 1916 proclamation. Seven other IVF leaders had been executed in Dublin, while Thomas Kent and Roger Casement had suffered the same fate in Cork and London for their involvement in the Rising, but only the seven signatories were deemed worthy of being honoured by naming towers after them. Director of Kilmainham Jail, Pat Cooke suggested in 2005 that these towers were devised as the embodiment of «the spirit of the Proclamation's hope to cherish the children of the nation equally, writ in concrete.»[617]

The golden jubilee therefore had a tangible impact in the daily lives of citizens through such local gestures, though maybe not as positive as the towers' designers believed. As Sinéad Power writes, it was hoped that the Ballymun housing scheme would «usher in a 'brave new world'» and represent a viable answer to the housing crisis.[618] The authorities in charge of the Ballymun scheme mainly focused their energy on «the speedy provision

19. «Limepark Gate Pillar Blown Up», Galway Observer, 23 April 1966.
20. The National Memory Grove, National Memory Grove: past, present, future. (Dublin: The National Memory Grove, 2005).
21. Sinéad Power, «The Development of the Ballymun House Scheme, Dublin 1965-1969», Irish Geography 33, 2 (2000): 199

of housing»[619] and appeared to forget the needs of the residents. The towers would come to be a contentious presence in the Irish landscape and would eventually be dubbed the «State's worst planning disaster». As the Irish economy took a turn for the worse in the 1970s, the Ballymun towers became the emblems of far-reaching alienation, poverty, social issues and drug abuse; a far-cry from what the seven signatories, after whom the towers were named, had envisioned for Ireland. The towers' life-span came to an ignominious abrupt end when they were all successively demolished (apart from the Plunkett tower which is still standing) between 2004 and 2008.

We (Too) Were the Rising...

While the nation as a whole was meant to revel in the successes of 1916 and of a subsequenty independent Ireland, many residents outside the capital sought once more for local 1916 heroics to be properly recognized. If all were to rejoice in 1966, many provincial Irelanders contended that narratives of 1916 had to expand to integrate them. Introducing her essay on The Culture of War Commemoration, Jane Leonard writes that an aspect of «conflict commemoration is its honouring of materialism and preparations of war in addition to actual participation». Leonard gave the example of a plaque unveiled in Cookstown (Wicklow) in 1966 which commended local Volunteers' willingness to join the Rising had their orders not been countermanded[620]. As seen in chapter 5, initiatives of this nature had already been conceived in Cork and appraised the local Volunteers' readiness to play their part in the Rising, a readiness acclaimed as equally heroic as an actual participation in it.

22. Ibid., 210.
23. Jane Leonard, «Introduction», The Culture of Commemoration: The Culture of War Commemoration (Dublin: Cultures of Ireland, 1996).

Fifty years after Easter Week, local communities which had remained largely unaffected or inactive in 1916 still wanted to be incorporated into the narrative of Easter Week. They would not be happy to simply watch the commemorative parade pass them by and elaborated local initiatives enabling them to attach their local story to the larger national narrative concerning the Rising. Among the dozens of local unveilings held in 1966, a plaque was notably erected to honour the signatory Eamonn Ceannt in Ballymoe (Galway) where he was born, but had lived for only a few years. Another plaque was unveiled in Ballycahalan (Galway) to mark the spot of Mellows's headquarters. Mellows was also honoured in county Wexford where he had grown up.

A committee was formed in Loughrea (Galway) to commemorate IVF Brendan Donnellan, the only native to have died while fighting in the South Dublin Union in 1916[621]. A library was renamed after Thomas MacDonagh in Cloughjordan (Tipperary) were he was born, while Kilkenny train station bore his name to commemorate his St. Kieran's College teaching spell. The Kent brothers were celebrated in Cork City and Castlelyons[622]. Other monuments, statues and plaques were unveiled in places which had remained quiet in 1916. These initiatives were largely independent from official channels and conceived by local associations formed by former Volunteers and other nationalist followers. The physical markers unveiled formed add-ons to official initiatives and national narratives which predominantly honed in on the heroic lives of the executed leaders and the Dublin settings of the original events.

24. «To Commemorate Loughrea 1916 Only Fatality», Connacht Tribune, 12 June, 1965.
25. See Bateson, They Died By Pearse's Side for the different monuments inaugurated or improved for 1966.,

Local communities mobilized and would not miss the opportunity to have 1916 glory imparted on them, even if only through a 1966 commemorative enthusiasm. Beyond the unveiling of physical markers meant to secure remembrance forever, the Southern Star notably listed the places where events were to take place at Easter in county Cork: Cork City, Youghal, Macroom, Bandon, Midleton, Skibbereen, Dunmanway, Crossbarry, Castltemartyr, Coachford, Kinsale, Kilmurry, Newcestown, Carrigaline, Bantry, Enniskean, Ballineen, Drimoleague, Kilbrittain, Ballincollig, Ardfield, Rathbarry, Inchigeela, Clonakilty, Timoleague, Drinagh, Lislevane and Shanbally. Extensive lists like this one were duplicated in every county of the Republic. In an unprecedented way, the 1966 commemorations were truly national while clearly insisting on the local 1916 events.

This effort to include all in the celebrations did not however entirely eclipse pre-existing tensions between centre and peripheries or even within peripheries. In the lead up to 1966, there were fears that Dublin would once again act as a commemorative magnet. A correspondent of the Connacht Sentinel suggested in August 1965 that «the general impression at first glance is an over-concentration of the celebrations in Dublin»[623]. The erection of permanent markers in provincial Ireland communities would hopefully dissipate doubts prevailing around local heroic behaviours. Yet, a certain «Rising complex» remained detectable. In Cork, preparations for the jubilee saw renewed demands for a «proper recognition» of the local contribution. On February 14th, Seamus Fitzgerald, chairman of the Cork Irish Volunteers 1916 Association, voiced his concern

26. «Remembering the 1916 Rising», Connacht Sentinel, 10 August, 1965.

to the Taoiseach Seán Lemass that Cork Volunteers would miss out once again on 1916 awards. Fitzgerald noted that the majority of IRA officers, who had valiantly fought during the War of Independence and the civil war, had not had the occasion to be out in 1916 through no fault of their own. He emphasized that local Volunteers would have «fought if ordered to do so or if attacked». Acknowledging that «it would be very difficult now to accede to the request for some form of recognition», Fitzgerald hoped that Lemass would meet the Cork commemorative committee when visiting the city[624].

Fifty years after the original events had taken place, this resilient «Rising complex» led to an awkward commemorative initiative to be staged in Cork city. The Cork committee tried to compensate for the absence of iconic Easter Week buildings in the county's main city by erecting a replica of the GPO at Collins Barrack in Cork city, but as Clair Wills concludes:

> the television footage (...) shows this contrived ceremonial collapsing into bathos. A tiny group of onlookers gather as an even tinier group of soldiers march past the diminutive GPO - looking like nothing so much as a cardboard stage set in an under-resourced amateur dramatic production - where a lonely (Frank) Aiken (in his role of Tánaiste or Deputy Prime Minister) takes the salute. (...) Everything that was to make the Dublin commemorations impressive, even moving, was absent from this event: crowds of onlookers, noise, massed ranks of soldiers and arms, most of all the authentic granite facade of the GPO.[625]

The togetherness fostered in 1966 in celebrations of the Rising as a «national achievement» also met with resistance. Some 1916 veterans refused for the distinction to be bridged between real heroes who «had been out» and the many thousands who claimed a posteriori to have answered the national call of duty at the time.

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27. Seamus Fitzgerald, «Letter to Sean Lemass», 14 February 1966, in Riobárd Langford Papers, CCCA/U156, Cork City and County Archives, Cork city.
28. Wills, Dublin 1916, 173.

Commemorative amnesty was not to be granted. Signing his letter to the Connacht Tribune under a pseudonym, «Moyode Man» reminded readers that inhabitants of Clifden and Loughrea (Galway) had declared for John Redmond at the time of the Rising and further asked: «how can Loughrea have the cheek to hold 1916 celebrations? To do so would be worse than calling a row of Co. Council houses in Loughrea - 'Liam Mellowes Terrace' - after Loughrea and its men let Mellowes down»[626]. In a prescriptive tone, «Moyode Man» wrote that only a few places in Galway were worthy of celebrations: Oranmore, Clarenbridge, Kinnane, New Inn, Carnmorem, Killeeneen, Model Farm and Moyode. He signed off: «let the loyal (in bold in the text) citizens of Galway, Loughrea and Clifden and elsewhere keep out of it, as they did in 1916.» The dye had been cast in 1916 and the «guilt» of inactive or pro-British residents did not deserve forgiveness. For the generations which had grown up in the county since Easter Week, there apparently existed a guilt by association. The union of all citizens, even fifty years after the events, was unthinkable for «Moyode Man».

Another debate in Galway was provoked by a decision to have the No. 4 Army Band of the Western Command play in Dublin at Easter, rather than in Galway where the band was based. This situation revealed how the usually discreet but tense relationship between centre and peripheries could erupt into full-blown public condemnation. In March 1966, reacting to the government's decision, the Connacht Sentinel recognized that «it may be considered by some people to be a small matter, but it is significant.»[627] Galwegians had reasons to feel incensed since their county had been the only one outside

29. Moyode Man, «Letter to Editor about Loughrea and 1916», Connacht Tribune, 19 February, 1966.
30. «The Band», Connacht Sentinel, 29 March, 1966.

Dublin where armed hostilities had occurred in 1916 (Meath or Wexford citizens would have contested this). The article continued: «what makes the decision significant is that the Southern Command Band is not being called to the capital; Cork is not being denied its music (...). That is the way it has been down the years - the depriving of the West of the rights, concessions, advantages that are allowed to other parts of the country»[628]. Ultimately, the Sentinel concluded that «Galway should be singled out for special ceremonies because of its special role in Easter Week of 1916 and the Government should show its appreciation of its special position.»[629]

Tá Níos Mó le Déanamh... (There Is More to Be Done...)

The golden jubilee was also decisively seized by Irish speakers to draw attention to their increasingly precarious situation. In independent Ireland, state authorities and the general population had largely failed to support a proper revival of the language. Gaelgoirí blamed political, social, cultural and economic factors for having made them aliens in their own country. Various events were held across Connemara, but these overwhelmingly voiced concerns and feelings of disillusion rather than being celebratory in tone. The government made symbolic gestures by distributing bilingual copies of the Proclamation in every school while pupils were given a copy to take home. On Lá na nÓg (youth's day), a Connacht Tribune correspondent nonetheless recalled the paradox behind a bilingual Proclamation: «Níor leigh Padraic Mac Piarais i nGaeilge é; agus ba sa Bhéarla a cumadh i dtosach é.»[630] (Patrick Pearse did not read it (Proclamation) in Irish; and it was in English that it was conceived.) Reading the Proclamation in Irish on Easter

31. Ibid.
32. Ibid.
33. «Tagairt - thall's i bhfus», Connacht Tribune, 30 April, 1966.

Monday appeared to many gaelgoirí as a feeble attempt to hide a much more profound failure of the revival.

A further event held in Connemara depicted the symbolic value still attached to the Gaeltacht by Dublin nationalists. For the second year running, the Pearse Commemoration Committee led 140 people from the capital to Rosmuc so they could pay their tribute to Patrick Pearse at the cottage he had owned. This gesture nevertheless revealed how difficult it was for Irish speakers and other nationalists to unite in commemorating the Rising. The local population around Rosmuc seemed to have neither been invited nor been really keen on joining the visiting Dubliners for the occasion[631].

A week later, it was up to the Gaelic League, Gael-Linn and na Teaghlaigh Ghaelacha (the Irish families) to come together in Dublin as they paraded from Grafton Street to the GPO under the banner of the «Language Freedom Movement»[632]. On that day, an Inniu editorial asked if the golden jubilee was to be a moment of «Comóradh nó Díspeagadh?» (Celebration or Contempt?). The publication rejected the popular belief that all was lost and that Irish would never come back as the main language in Ireland. This could be reversed if everyone were to wholeheartedly support the Language Freedom Movement. Inniu condemned the notion that the government was being influenced or intimidated by a minority of Irish extremists who stubbornly refused to face the fact that English was now the national language[633]. With the Nelson Pillar recently blown up to pieces, Inniu

34. «Pay Tribute at Rosmuc», Connacht Sentinel, 20 September, 1966.
35. «Mion-Réabhoid i Staid na Gaeilge», Inniu, 8 April, 1966.
36. «Eagran: Comoradh nó Díspeagadh?», Inniu, 8 April, 1966.

encouraged the government to show its support of 1916 and the revival by renaming O'Connell street Sráid an Éirí Amach (Rising street)[634].

The most spectacular gesture of disaffection towards a lack of governmental and popular support for the revival came from a movement called Misneach (Courage). Formed by 12 men and a woman, all members went on hunger strike for Easter Week in order to express their anger at the nature of official commemorations, the decline of the Gaeltacht, the politics concerning Irish and its role in the educational system. During a press conference held at the end of their fast, the 13 members refused to answer questions in English from Irish reporters and claimed that they would not be shackled like all the other language organizations. Movements such as the Gaelic League were condemned for having failed to support Misneach and were accused of being intellectually and financially bound to anti-revival state institutions.

The Gaeltacht population had fallen by 30% in the previous 15 years and at this rate there might be no more Gaeltacht in 30 years time. The suggestion was, therefore, that not all Irish children were cherished equally. For Misneach, the Gaeltacht was now a place of death with the tourist office Bord Fáilte acting as a national vulture: «ní hí Éire Chaisc 1916 atá muid a chomóradh. Éire hi hé amhain saor ach Gaelach, ní hé amhain Gaelach ach saor. (...) Éire a dhíol í féin i mbliana go deireannach ar mheisin bheag phraisce (...) Níl Gaeltacht ar bith fanta. (...) Is é an Bord Fáilte an fiach dubh náisiúnta ag (?) ar an bhfod bais sin.»[635] (It is not Ireland of Easter 1916 which we are celebrating. This Ireland

37. «Anois Agus Nelson ar Lár- Tugaimis ainsm oiriunach ar 'O'Connell Street'», Inniu, 8 April, 1966.
38. «Publicity pleased hunger strikers», Irish Times, 18 April, 1966.

is not only free but Gaelic, not only Gaelic but free. (...) Ireland sold herself in the last few years at a small meagre price (...) There is no Gaeltacht remaining. (...) It is Bord Fáilte the national raven (present?) on the site of the death)

Irish speakers were not the only unhappy citizens with how 1916 promises had failed to come to fruition in independent Ireland. A year before the golden jubilee, Criostóir Mac Aonghusa, author and enthusiastic revivalist alongside Máirtín Ó Cadhain, had wondered what the 1916 leaders would say if they came back. For him, they would recognize that Irish lives had improved, but they would also be appalled by the lack of personal rights granted to citizens[636]. The golden jubilee was also seized upon by associations to stress the part played by women in the Rising. Inniu included an article on Mná na hÉireann (Ireland's women). Fifty years after the events, many had to be reminded that women had been much more than mothers, sisters or caretakers at home and in rebel quarters during Easter Week[637]. A commemoration committee was for instance active for some years after 1966 to honour Elizabeth O'Farrell, the nurse who had carried messages to the British forces and accompanied Patrick Pearse at the moment of the unconditional surrender[638].

Discontent was also echoed among Labour forces. Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, son of activist Hanna and brutally murdered Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, regretted that wealth and luxury had been wrongfully appropriated by the few national leaders who had

39. Criostóir Mac Aonghusa, «Cinnirí na Cásca - Dá dTagaidís ar Ais?», Irish Press, 19 April, 1965.
40. «Mná na hÉireann i 1916 i Trí Shúile na mBan», Inniu, 8 April, 1966.
41. Documents pertaining to the initiatives of the Elizabeth O'Farrell Commemoration Committee are available at the Archives of UCD, p106/1541 through to p106/1557.

reneged on the 1916 ideals . The classes were still greatly divided in 1966 and Sheehy-Skeffington wrote that «we have still a long way to go.»[639] In the meantime, the DCTU bemoaned the «scandal» of not having been invited to any of the official events. Its members should not have had to beg to get an invitation as the Council claimed: «we should at least have been recognised for the numbers of workers who made the sacrafice (sic) in 1916.»[640]

Other initiatives ended up being contentious. Honorary degrees were issued by University College Dublin in 1966, a gesture which Seán MacDiarmada's sister refused to accept in her late brother's name. She justified her refusal by the fact that 1916 men had died for an Ireland completely free. It would not be honouring their memory to accept such a degree before total freedom was achieved. Living in New Jersey, Seán MacDermott, nephew of the signatory, told de Valera that he would gladly accept the degree in his uncle's name, but the Senate of the National University stated that a refusal by the first representative made it impossible to proceed with anyone else[641].

In the End...

In the end, the past may be dead and gone, but it invariably lives on through us. The past interacts daily with who we are, who we want to be, who we refuse to be, how we perceive what is ours or what should be ours, how we perceive others, where we come from, where we are and where we want to go. For better or for worse, engaging with the

42. Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, «The Ideals» in 1916-1966 What Has Happened? (Dublin:TCD Publishing, 1966), 4.
43. Executive Meeting of DCTU, 12 April 1966, MSS 21 DCTU, 1/14-18, LMA.
44. «File about Sean Mac Diarmada», 1966, p150/477, UCD.

past, notably through public commemorations, will always remain our lot. We all need to feel like we are part of a continuum, that we belong to a world that goes beyond a mere «here and now». The question is therefore not so much to determine if we should or should not engage with the past, but rather how best to do so. Accordingly, Breandan O hEithir's advice seems a wise one to follow, as he states that the safest disposition towards the past is probably to refuse the temptation of «freagraí simpli ar cheisteanna staire»[642], the temptation of providing simple answers to historical questions. In the case of the Easter Rising, it seems crucial to remember that beyond a violent uprising against British authorities, an action which was hardly out of tune with the First World War ethos, were aspirations for an independent Ireland which would «cherish all its children equally, a quest which appears just as valid and necessary today.

45. Breandan O hEithir, «An Chaint sa tSraidbhaile», Irish Times, 19 August, 1975.

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University College Dublin Archives (UCD) (Dublin)

- Archives of Cumann na nGaedheal/Fine Gael (p39)
- Archives of Fianna Fáil (p176)

Archives relating to Terence MacSwiney (p48b)
Papers of Cearbhall Ó Dálaigh (p51)
Papers of Desmond FitzGerald (p80)
Papers of Éamon de Valera (p150)
Papers of Elgin O'Rahilly (p200)
Papers of James Ryan (p88)
Papers of John A. Costello (p190)
Papers of Máire Comerford (LA18)
Papers of Mary MacSwiney (p48a)
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