

Archived thesis/research paper/faculty publication from the University of North Carolina at Asheville's NC DOCKS Institutional Repository: <http://libres.uncg.edu/ir/unca/>

University of North Carolina at Asheville

“Who is Ireland’s Enemy?”
Irish Nationalism and Identity in the First World War

A Senior Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Department of History
in Candidacy for the Degree of
Bachelor of Arts in History

Submitted by:
Garrett M Griffin
April 12, 2018

Abstract

The Irish Revolutionary Period (1911-1927) includes the period of the First World War, one of, if not the most monumental event of the twentieth century. One of the major catalysts of the period, the Easter Rising, occurred in 1916, in the midst of war. Despite this, study of this time period often overlooks the First World War and the influence it had on Irish nationalism of the time period. The Irish republican movement entered the war led by the Irish Parliamentary Party, and advocating for Home Rule. By the end of the war, dissatisfaction with the status quo and the current position of the Irish republican movement and culminated in the landslide victory for the radical Sinn Fein party in the 1918 elections. A combination of the discrimination Irish soldiers on the front received, British cruelty in dealing with the aftermath of the Easter Rising and the failure of the Irish Parliamentary Party to effectively deal with the political crises of the Easter Rising and the Conscription Crisis were the primary causes of this shift.

*“Who is Ireland’s enemy?...
Not Germany nor Austria,
Not Russia, France nor Spain
That robbed and reaved this land of ours,
And forged her heavy chains;
But England of the wily words –
A crafty, treacherous foe –
’Twas England scourged our Motherland,
’Twas England laid her low!”¹*

On Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, around 400 armed members of the Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army waited patiently outside the General Post Office on O’Connell Street near the center of Dublin. Throughout the day, they and around 800 of their fellow militiamen had seized various governmental buildings and other important sites in the city center of Dublin, barricading themselves at Liberty Hall, telegraph offices, and sites along the Grand Canal, preparing to face off against the British force they knew was coming to attempt to dislodge them.² Around one o’clock in the afternoon, Padraig Pearse, an Irish-language author and school headmaster and Commander-in-Chief of the rebel forces came outside and addressed the crowd.³ “Poblacht na h Eireann,” he began, “to the Irish public.”⁴ From memory, he recited the Proclamation of the Irish Republic, and at the end, announced that he had been elected President of the new state. The crowd cheered, newsboys ran throughout the city posting copies on walls and handing them out on street corners, and the telegraph office sent the Proclamation across the world.

¹ Brian O’Higgins, “Who is Ireland’s Enemy?” *Irish Freedom*, September 1914.

² Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland. Report of Commission* (London: House of Commons, 1916), 3,

³ “Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook,” *Weekly Irish Times* (Dublin), April 20, 1917, February 17, 2010, accessed February 12, 2018.

⁴ Ireland, Provisional Government, *The Proclamation of the Irish Republic*, by Thomas Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Padraig Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly, and Joseph Plunkett, 1916.

Around a thousand kilometers away, in Hulluch, France, the men of the 16th Irish Division sat in their trenches. It was the third month that they had spent on the front, and they had already suffered greatly. On Thursday, the 27th, a German gas attack would kill 385 of them.⁵ Throughout May and July they would suffer 3491 more casualties, with 1496 of those being deaths.⁶ In July they would be moved to the slaughterhouse that was the Battle of the Somme, where they would suffer another 4090 casualties.⁷ Out of the 10,845 men originally brought to the front with the division, barely 3000 remained that had never been out of the fight, and the war would go on for another two years.⁸

The Easter Rising, as it has become known, would fail. The leaders of the rebellion would be executed at Kilmainham Gaol by a British firing squad, without a trial.⁹ Ireland would remain a nominal part of the British Empire until 1937, and the northern six counties would remain a part of the United Kingdom until the present day. The Great War would end in 1918 and be followed by the Anglo-Irish War, and then the Irish Civil War, with the island not seeing peace until 1923.

Only 82 people would be killed during the Rising, including the 16 leaders. 30,000 Irishmen in the British Army would be killed throughout the Great War between the three volunteer divisions and the eight regiments of the Regular Army. And yet, today in Ireland, the

⁵ James Edmonds, *Military Operations France and Belgium, 1916: Sir Douglas Haig's Command to the 1st July: Battle of the Somme*, 1st ed., vol. 1, 4 vols., History of the great war based on official documents, by direction of the Historical section of the Committee of imperial defence, (London: MacMillian & Co., 1932), 243.

⁶ Timothy Bowman, *Irish Regiments in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 127.

⁷ "How the Irish took Ginchy - Splendid Daring of the Irish Troops," *Daily Express London*, September 12, 1916.

⁸ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Army. Report on Recruiting in Ireland* (London: House of Commons, 1914), 14.

⁹ Great Britain, Royal Commission, House of Commons, *Report of Commission: Royal Commission on the arrest and subsequent treatment of Mr. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, Mr. Thomas Dickson, and Mr. Patrick James McInytyre*, by John Simon (London: H.M.S.O., 1916).

Great War is barely remembered, and even more rarely commemorated. There is but one major memorial to these 30,000 brave men in Dublin, and it did not see an official commemoration of the dead until 2006.¹⁰ The Rising, on the other hand, has been celebrated annually since the first decade of its occurrence.¹¹ The events of the First World War seem to be completely disconnected from the rest of the Irish Revolutionary period, which lasted from about 1912 to 1923, despite the fact that culminating moment of the period—the Rising—occurred in the midst of the war, and in many ways, was influenced and inspired by the war. Furthermore, anti-British sentiment was not high before or immediately after the Rising, and it was certainly not in the mainstream politically until the 1918 elections. The war continued for two years after the Rising, and only a few months after the armistice, the Irish were overwhelmingly electing Sinn Feiners to Parliament, a group that had numbered in the dozens before the war.

This election victory triggered widespread change in Ireland, and resulted in the second Irish declaration of independence, the Anglo-Irish War, and eventually the creation of the Irish Free State, the first independent Irish nation in nearly 800 years. The effect of the First World War on Irish nationalism cannot be overstated, and its influence on the 1918 elections is clear. In particular, widespread mistreatment of Irish troops by the British, prevalent British commanders' personal attitudes of colonial authority over and religious prejudice against the Irish during the war, as well as brutality and overreaction in the aftermath of the Rising and the looming specter of conscription on the Home Front and the failure of the Irish Parliamentary Party to effectively deal with those crises helped to catalyze Irish nationalism of the period, culminating in the watershed victory for Sinn Fein in the post-war elections of December 1918.

¹⁰ Ronan McGreevy, "'Heroic dead of Ireland' recalled at Somme commemoration," *Irish Times*, July 9, 2016, accessed February 14, 2018.

¹¹ "Honouring the Dead," *Irish Independent* (Dublin), May 5, 1924.

Historiography

Scholarship on the role of Ireland and Irish troops in the First World War is as dichotomous as the island—divided on the same ethnic, religious, political, and economic lines that separate the Republic from the Northern Six Counties that remain an integral part of the United Kingdom to the modern day. A “collective amnesia” amongst Irish historians regarding the Great War was seen up until the latter half of the twentieth century, and it is easy to understand why.¹² Those who had fought in the war had done so as members of the British Army—the same army that had illegally (in the mainstream Republican view) executed the leaders of the Easter Rising and fought a war nearly as long as the Great War against the people of Ireland. It was not until the 1980s that the Great War began to be looked at in a critical manner, in a way that directly related to the rest of the Irish Revolutionary Period.

David Fitzgerald’s 1986 work *Ireland and the First World War* was the first major piece to break the wall of silence surrounding Ireland’s participation in the First World War. The central point that Fitzgerald makes is that the First World War helps to contextualize Irish nationalism in the period, saying that the war “destabilized Irish politics and helped create the conditions for the revolution which followed.”¹³ This idea is key to understanding the rest of the scholarship on the subject as it began the train of thought that the majority of historians still focus on and expand upon. Rather than simply documenting the events of the war involving the Irish, Fitzgerald instead focuses on the ways in which the war shaped all strands of Irish political thought, from dedicated nationalists, republicans, socialists, to even unionists. This mode of thinking would dominate scholarship on the war for the next several decades.

¹² Neil Richardson, *A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall: Stories of Irishmen in World War I* (Dublin: O’Brien, 2010), 15.

¹³ David Fitzpatrick, ed., *Ireland and the First World War* (Dublin: Lilliput, 1986), vii.

The most important work on the subject in terms of expanding upon Fitzgerald's scholarship was the work of Keith Jeffrey, upon whose shoulders much of modern scholarship of the topic rests. Jeffrey, in his 2000 book, creatively titled *Ireland and the Great War*, states conclusively that "[t]he First World War provided both the opportunity and the timing for the Irish republican rising of Easter 1916. It presented a suitably violent model for political action and defined the moment when that action was likely to occur."¹⁴ This builds upon Fitzgerald's thesis: it states that not only is it useful to see the First World War as a context for the Easter Rising and the subsequent events, it is integral to the telling of that story; indeed, it is a *pretext* for those events.

The narrative started by Fitzgerald continued into the 21st century, with the release of John Horne's *Our War: Ireland and the Great War*, a collection of essays similar to Fitzgerald's. The title itself reflects Horne's attempt to finally reclaim Ireland's participation in WWI. Horne terms it "our war" because it contributed heavily to the "polarisation and realignment of national and political identities" that defined the Revolutionary Period.¹⁵ He argues that one cannot understand the revolution without understanding how the Great War and the 300,000 soldiers that Ireland sent to the Western Front and other theatres of war helped forge the Irish identity. This piece is the culmination of the work started by Fitzgerald, and of the changing perception of the First World War for the Irish people.

The second major theme—and the more classically understood one—that emerges when studying Ireland and World War I is the sense of division between Ireland's north and south, and by extension, the Protestants and Catholics on the island. The legacy of the Ulster Plantation and Oliver Cromwell's Irish campaign, the Penal Laws, and the Protestant Ascendancy, religious

¹⁴ Keith Jeffery, *Ireland and the Great War* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2000), 47.

¹⁵ John Horne, *Our War: Ireland and the Great War* (Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008), 14.

animosity and sectarian violence have plagued Ireland from the English Reformation to the present day. Ireland was England's first colony, and it is important to note this when discussing the First World War in Ireland. Ulster, where the proportion of Protestants and people of English or Scottish descent was and is highest, filled the ranks of the 36th (Ulster) Division and was markedly Unionist. The 10th and 16th (Irish) Divisions were Catholic and nationalist in nature, and that difference was reflected in the treatment, motivations, and expectations of the men who joined these units compared to those who joined the Ulster Division. This divide is incredibly important to understanding these events and has been written on by a number of authors.

David Fitzgerald, who has already been mentioned as the author of the seminal work *Ireland and the First World War*, also wrote a monograph that has influenced many authors focusing on the division of Ireland, *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939*.¹⁶ In this volume, Fitzgerald focuses on the parallels found on both sides of the boundary, from the economic differences between Belfast and Dublin, to the recruitment of the unionist paramilitary Ulster Volunteer Force and the republican National Volunteers, and the en masse enlistment of both of these groups into the 36th and 16th Divisions, respectively. Fitzgerald's work touches on all the issues causing friction between the "two Irelands" that were already mentioned, but also draws upon issues of citizenship, education, and tradition within both communities.

The other major work discussing the division of Ireland is the aptly named 1998 book *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition* by Thomas Hennessey. Hennessey's work focuses on the emerging identities of those on either side of the (as of yet, non-existent) border, and posits that the First World War was the catalyst that crystallized those identities: those in North saw themselves as firmly British, and those living in the South saw themselves as firmly Irish.

¹⁶ David Fitzpatrick, *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

Hennessey points out the growing chasm between unionists and loyalists: Home Rule had been a compromise, but those in unionist circles began to “[refuse] any ... concept of an Irish nation which might have a separate existence from the United Kingdom, even if it was within the British Empire,”¹⁷ and nationalists began to believe that “England was a foreign country.”¹⁸

The third major vein of historical scholarship concerning the First World War and Ireland is the comparatively simple classic military histories. These works are focused on the events of the war, and merely focus on the perspective of the Irish soldiers that fought in it. While these are less exploratory and have less conjecture, they are nonetheless incredibly useful as sources for the experiences of the Irish soldiers on the front, which is the most important aspect to be interpreted.

Timothy Bowman’s *Irish Regiments in the Great War* is a prime example of this genre of military history. Bowman is an impartial author, who seeks not to connect the experiences of these men to any agenda or event on the home front. He merely wants to understand their experiences, and share them. Bowman focuses on the discipline and morale of the Irish regiments, measuring them on the basis of court-martial records, and comparing those records to “English, Scots, Welsh and Australian troops’ court martial records.”¹⁹ This work allows for an analysis of the treatment of Irish troops compared to troops of other nationalities, namely, whether or not they were any more likely to be court-martialed.

A less formal and systematic take on the experience of Irish troops comes from Neil Richardson’s *A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall: Stories of Irishmen in World War I*.²⁰

¹⁷ Thomas Hennessey, *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition* (London: Routledge, 1998), 195.

¹⁸ Hennessey, 143

¹⁹ Timothy Bowman, *The Irish Regiments in the Great War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 11.

²⁰ Neil Richardson, *A Coward if I Return, A Hero if I Fall: Stories of Irishmen in World War I* (Dublin: O’Brien, 2010).

Richardson focuses on the reasons why men would go to war, why men from all different walks of life and regions of Ireland chose to go to the Western Front, and how the war affected them, especially once they returned to a changed country, one that was all too willing to forget their sacrifice. He tells stories taken from a multitude of primary sources and takes the reader through the personal experiences of several men, adding a personal touch to a story that can at times seem larger than life, with human aspects that can be easy to ignore.

Finally, *They Shall Not Grow Old: Irish Soldiers and the Great War* by Myles Dungan seamlessly integrates both sides of the spectrum in this thread of historical work.²¹ Drawing upon both the systematic, big picture of Bowman and the personal narratives of Richardson. Dungan juxtaposes British, Unionist and Nationalist reactions to the outbreak of war, follows them through the enlistment period, the assignment to units, and finally to the experience of the horrors of trench warfare and the aftermath of a calamity on a world scale. Dungan appears at times to be a bridge between the works of Fitzgerald and the works of military historians, writing with an eye towards contextualizing the Revolutionary Period, but focusing on the effects of war on those who actually fought in it and returned—or did not—to Ireland, following a revolution led by men who had stayed behind. Dungan's work manages to add to the conversation started by Fitzgerald, by diving deep into the experiences of the soldiers of the war, while remaining pulled back far enough to see the effects the war had on Irish society as a whole.

What is missing from the historiography is a perspective on the issue analyzes and compiles the arguments of various sources regarding both statistical and anecdotal evidence of anti-Irish sentiment amongst the British commanders of Irish military units as well as the reactions of the Irish public to political events and crises on the homefront. This aspect is key to

²¹Myles Dungan, *They Shall Not Grow Old: Irish Soldiers and the Great War* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997).

understanding the watershed 1918 elections as it directly pertains to the political shift of the younger generation to more radical Republicanism, as embodied by Sinn Fein and their landslide victory across all of modern Ireland and much of Northern Ireland. This is the major piece missing from the historiography—connecting the Great War and the Irish experience of it to the Irish nationalist movement of the Revolutionary Period and its shift from the moderate Irish Parliamentary Party to the radical, independence-minded Sinn Fein.

Treatment of Irish Troops

In particular, there are three major ways in which Irish troops were discriminated against—first, the 10th and 16th Divisions were not allowed to recruit their own officers, instead being given Anglo-Irish (almost all of whom were Unionists) or British officers. Secondly, they were personally disparaged by British commanders and put into the worst positions on the battlefield, often without support and finally, they were disproportionately targeted for executions via court martial.

Irish troops were first and foremost divided into two distinct categories, the Irish regiments of the Regular Army, and the three volunteer divisions formed at the beginning of the war. The Irish units of the Regular Army consisted of eight regiments, linked to recruiting areas and headquartered at Phoenix Park, Dublin under the Irish Command, which operated directly under the War Office.²² Most of these would serve under British Divisions, as they were members of the standing Army of the United Kingdom, and were generally more professional and experienced soldiers. The three Irish Divisions, on the other hand, were recruited at the outbreak of war, and consisted almost entirely of volunteers at the beginning, though their ranks

²² Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Correspondence Relating to Recent Events in the Irish Command* (London: House of Commons, 1914).

would later be filled with conscripts, many from Scotland and England. Generally speaking, the 10th Irish Division was the most mixed in terms of political and religious makeup, the 16th Irish was mostly nationalist and Catholic, and the 36th Ulster was almost entirely a Protestant, Unionist unit. These units, being volunteers, offer the best view into the lives of the average Irishman in the war, as they volunteered from all walks of life, across a myriad of economic, political and religious backgrounds, and had vastly different experiences during the war. The difference in treatment, tactical utilization, and media representation between just these units as well as these units and other British units show a distinct lack of respect for Irish Catholics, a fact which was utilized and exploited to draw support for the Easter Rising and Irish nationalism.

Of these three divisions, the first to see the field of war was the 10th. The 10th was formed from the “first hundred thousand” volunteers, and as such, was the most evenly mixed in terms of politics and religion.²³ This aspect has led to it being called the “least politicized” of the three divisions.²⁴ Authorized on August 21st, 1914, less than a month after the outbreak of war, its first commander was Bryan Mahon, a Unionist and Boer War veteran, who in 1915 would order one of his men to be executed by firing squad for refusing to put on his cap.²⁵ After initial training, the unit was assigned to the XI Corps of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force and sent to Gallipoli, where it was involved in the landings and subsequent battle of Suvla Bay.²⁶ The Irish presence at this battle was famously eulogized in Charles O’Neill’s 1919 ballad, “Foggy Dew,” which laments the Irish dead buried in “lonely graves by Suvla’s waves,” rather than home in

²³ Herbert Kitchener, *Minutes of the Meeting of the Military Members of the Army Council*, August 12, 1914, War Office, London.

²⁴ Bowman, 74.

²⁵ "Court Martial of Pte Downey, Patrick," Bryan Mahon to GHQ, Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, December 1, 1914, in *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War* (London: Cassell, 2005).

²⁶ "Letters From the Front, At Suvla Bay," *The Times* (London), August 11, 1915.

Ireland.²⁷ In September of that year, the unit was moved to Salonika,²⁸ where it participated in the Battle of Kosturino, before being moved once again to Egypt, where it was placed under the command of the XX Corps. After the 1918 Spring Offensive, the unit was moved to the Western Front, where it would remain until war's end.²⁹

The 16th Irish Division, derided as “Johnnie Redmond’s pets” (a jab at the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, John Redmond, MP) by Henry Wilson, their commander until March 1916, were recruited from a core of Irish National Volunteers in September 1914 after the ranks of the 10th were filled.³⁰ The 16th would spend most of the war on the Western Front in France, taking part in such major battles as the Somme, Passchendaele, Third Ypres, and the German Spring Offensive. By August of 1917, they had lost over 50% of their original numbers, the highest of any division’s casualties in the BEF, and were being utilized primarily as shock troops.³¹ Despite this, they were derided as being “not so full of fight” and the Field Commander of the BEF said they “did very badly.”³² By June 1918, the 16th was only made up of two-thirds Irishmen, and its units were eventually dispersed throughout the BEF a few months before war’s end.³³

The differences between the previous two divisions and the 36th Ulster Division are apparent from the start, with the Division’s nomenclature being that of Ulster, the part of Ireland that today remains within the United Kingdom, rather than of Ireland. Similarly, this Division was almost entirely recruited from that region, with the most homogenous makeup of the three

²⁷ Charles O'Neill, writer, "The Foggy Dew," in *Breathe, The Young Dubliners*, Michael Blum, 1995, CD.

²⁸ Modern Thessaloniki.

²⁹ Bowman, 174-75.

³⁰ "Report of Command," Henry Wilson to Advanced 1st Army, January 6, 1916, in *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

³¹ Robin Prior and Trevor Wilson, *Passchendaele: The Untold Story* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), 102-105.

³² Douglas Haig, *Douglas Haig: War Diaries and Letters, 1914-18* (London: Phoenix, 2006), 418-420.

³³ Martin Kitchen, *The German Offensives of 1918* (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 68.

units in terms of political and religious ideology, with the 36th being almost entirely Protestant and Unionist. This was the result of their numbers being lifted virtually wholesale from the Ulster Volunteers, a Unionist militia founded in 1912 to oppose the Home Rule movement.³⁴ The 36th saw major action at the Battle of the Somme, where they were one of only a few units to achieve their objectives on the first day of the battle.³⁵ The unit would also see action at Cambrai, Messines, Third and Fourth Ypres, and Courtrai. Similarly to the 16th, by the end of the war, the unit had lost much of its character, having been reinforced by English conscripts.³⁶

As previously mentioned, the character and ethnic/religious makeup of these units differed greatly, and therefore serves as a good lens through which to view the effect of the outbreak of war on different sections of Irish society, and the political ramifications that the war had on them. The total population of Ireland in 1911 was 3,139,688, of which 36% was from the province of Ulster, the northern nine counties of the island and the most heavily Protestant section of the country.³⁷ As shown in Figure A, these correlate with the 27th, 83rd and Belfast Recruiting Areas, excluding County Armagh, which have, at the outset of war, the largest number of enlistments, totaling 61% of District 11's numbers, and 44% of the total number of troops recruited in Ireland from the outbreak of war until January 1916, an over-representation of nearly 10%. This suggests more hesitation on the part of Southern Irishmen to voluntarily enlist—although Catholics in the North enlisted at a similar rate to Protestants, this can partly be explained due to the enlistment in large numbers of Irish National Volunteers at the outset of war, particularly in Belfast City.³⁸ Further supporting this claim is a comparison of the

³⁴ Jonathan Bardon, *A History of Ulster* (Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1994), 402-405.

³⁵ "Somme Association," 36th (Ulster) Division History, accessed February 16, 2018, <http://www.irishsoldier.org>.

³⁶ Fitzpatrick, 392.

³⁷ Ireland, Census Office, *Census of Ireland, 1911: Area, Houses, and Population* (London: H.M.S.O., 1912).

³⁸ Horne, 45.

recruitment rates in Ireland and England—the rates of Ulster men volunteering very closely matched that of England, around 5% of all males, whereas the rest of Ireland enlisted at a rate of close to 3%.³⁹ The numbers between north and south even out when looking only at the statistics from October 1915-January 1916, which suggests that following the initial outbreak of war and the development of trench warfare, Irishmen from both areas enlisted at similar rates and likely for more economic or other considerations rather than the patriotism and zealously that marked the early recruits.

	From 2nd August, 1914, to 8th January, 1916.	From 10th October, 1915, to 8th January, 1916.
REGIMENTAL AREAS AND COUNTIES.		
No. 11 DISTRICT.		
27th Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Donegal, Derry, Fermanagh and Tyrone.	5,311	871
83rd Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Antrim and Down (exclusive of Belfast City).	5,441	962
87th Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Armagh, Cavan, Louth and Monaghan.	3,825	559
102nd Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Carlow, Kildare and Wicklow.	2,574	585
Belfast Recruiting Area	26,883	2,345
Dublin Recruiting Area (City and County)	16,726	2,090
Total for No. 11 District	60,760	7,412
No. 12 DISTRICT.		
18th Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Kilkenny, Tipperary, Waterford and Wexford.	7,040	950
88th Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Galway, Leitrim, Mayo, Roscommon and Sligo.	3,678	531
100th Regimental Recruiting Area comprising the counties of King's County, Longford, Meath, Queen's County and Westmeath.	4,308	847
101st Regimental Recruiting Area, comprising the counties of Clare, Cork (south-west portion), Kerry and Limerick.	3,972	525
Cork Recruiting Area (the City and the part of the County not included in the 101st Area).	6,519	719
Total for No. 12 District	25,517	3,572

Figure A⁴⁰

³⁹ Great Britain, War Office, *Statistical Abstract of Information Regarding the British Armies at home and abroad 1914-1920*. (London: H.M.S.O., 1920).

⁴⁰ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Army. Report on Recruiting in Ireland* (London: House of Commons, 1914), 3.

This early period, specifically August 1914 until April 1915, is the most important to look at in terms of voluntary enlistments, as it gives us the largest number of men volunteering for the war effort, and has more examples of sentimental enlistments—meaning enlistments that were due in large part to patriotic, political, religious or emotional reasons, rather than economic or social ones. Unionists, of course, volunteered for many of the same reasons that Englishmen enlisted, but also to demonstrate their loyalty to the United Kingdom and the British government after nearly causing a civil war in Ireland after the passage of the Third Home Rule Bill.⁴¹ Nationalists, on the other hand, enlisted for a more diverse variety of reasons. After the creation of the 36th Division for the Ulster Volunteers, John Redmond, Irish Parliamentary Party and Irish Volunteers leader urged the enlistment of Irishmen into his new 16th Division, which he had personally campaigned the War Office for. On September 20th, 1914, he made an incredibly influential speech at Woodenbridge, in County Wicklow in which he declared that it would be “a disgrace” if Irish nationalists did not aid in the war effort, and that it would be the end of Home Rule if they failed to enlist.⁴² The vast majority of the Volunteers agreed and followed him, nearly 142,000 of the 150,000 members of the organization forming the National Volunteers, and around 24,000 of them filling the ranks of the 10th and later 16th Divisions.⁴³ The poet and National Volunteer Francis Ledwidge, who would later be killed in action at Third Ypres, summed up the sentiment of many who followed Redmond: “I joined the British Army because she stood between Ireland and an enemy common to our civilization, and I would not have her say that she defended us while we did nothing at home but pass resolutions.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Catriona Pennell, *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014) 127-128.

⁴² John Redmond, "Woodenbridge Speech" (speech, Irish Volunteers Meeting, County Wicklow, Woodenbridge, September 20, 1914), *History Ireland*, Sept. & Oct. 2014, accessed February 16, 2018.

⁴³ Pennell, 99.

⁴⁴ "Letter to Professor," Francis Ledwidge to Lewis Chase, June 6, 1917, in *The Cornhill Magazine*, 288th ed., New (London: John Murray, 1917), 9-11.

In addition, because so many Nationalists were also Catholic, it is significant that, before July 1915, the Irish clergy explicitly supported the war and aided enlistment.⁴⁵ The Bishops of Ireland at the outset of war urged enlistment to “save Catholic Belgium,” which resonated with many Irishmen who sympathized with the plight of Belgium, a small country caught between Great Powers.⁴⁶ Unlike many other areas of the British Empire, conscription was never successfully implemented in Ireland, although it was attempted in 1918, which will be discussed later.

Recruitment also reveals the first major example of anti-Irish prejudice by the British high command. The 36th Division, being recruited from a paramilitary militia, was able to retain officers that had been officers in the Ulster Volunteers, whereas the 10th and 16th Divisions were given British or Unionist officers, and Irishmen were not able to commission as officers, something common amongst colonial troops, but not British or even Ulster units.⁴⁷ These officers were often harsh and dismissive of Irish troops, with Lieutenant General Sir Henry Wilson saying of the 16th that they were “quite useless, old whiskey-sodden militiamen,” thus echoing old and enduring Irish stereotypes of drunkenness.⁴⁸ Others simply divided regiments of their division in response to growing fears of insurrection after the Rising, such as happened with the 10th Division early in 1918.⁴⁹ Being the most ardently nationalist of the three divisions, the 16th often got the worst treatment, being used as essentially cannon fodder and thrown at fortified German positions with no reinforcement. The worst of these occasions was at the Battle of

⁴⁵ Benedict XV, *Humani generis redemptionem* [Encyclical on Redemption of the Human Race], Vatican Website, June 15, 1915, accessed February 16, 2018, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xv/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xv_enc_15061917_humani-generis-redemptionem.html.

⁴⁶ Pennell, 161-162.

⁴⁷ Jeffrey, 156-158.

⁴⁸ Henry Wilson and Keith Jeffery, *The Military Correspondence of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, 1918-1922* (London: Bodley Head for the Army Records Society, 1985), Entry January 5, 1915.

⁴⁹ Charles Townshend, *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion* (London: Penguin Books, 2015) 74.

Passchendaele, where the 16th fell under the command of the Anglo-Irish Hubert Gough, another staunch Unionist, who ordered them to march through deep mud to a fortified ridge that had been untouched by artillery fire after they had already lost 50% of the men that they entered the battle with.⁵⁰ Field Marshal Douglas Haig, Gough's superior, criticized him for "playing the Irish card," though he would also use derogatory language about Irish troops.⁵¹

Haig, who was by this time Commander of the entire BEF, would accuse the Irish troops under his command during the 1918 Spring Offensive of cowardice, claiming that they were "not to be so [courageous] as the others," and that they "gave way immediately [when] the enemy showed."⁵² Even several years after the war, Corps Commander Walter Congreve said of the 16th during the Spring Offensive that "the real truth is that their reserve brigade did not fight at all and their right brigade very indifferently."⁵³ On the contrary, records of the German 18th and 50th Reserve Divisions which faced off against the 16th show that they considered the enemy to have fought well.⁵⁴ This anti-Irish sentiment of the British Army did not stop with general officers, but extended down to even the common men. During the British retreat during Operation Michael, members of the 16th Division were taunted by Scottish and Canadian battalions, "There go the Sinn Feiners!" as they moved to the rear of the battle lines.⁵⁵ While much of this animosity likely stems from the Easter Rising, the 1918 Irish General Election and the Conscription Crisis, it also represents a deep seated prejudice within the British public that followed soldiers to the front lines, where one would think that ethnicity and religion mattered the least.

⁵⁰ Prior and Wilson, 102-105.

⁵¹ Haig, August 17, 1917.

⁵² Haig, March 22, 1918.

⁵³ Walter Congreve to James Edward Edmonds, January 6, 1927.

⁵⁴ Kitchen, 290.

⁵⁵ "Letter to Family," Guy Nightingale to Susan Nightingale, April 1918, in *The Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline and Morale* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

However, of course, these are all simply quotes, and may reflect a personal prejudice on the part of the officers and men mentioned, rather than a systemic issue pervading all levels of British command. In order to find statistical and distinct evidence of this, one needs not to look further than court martial and military execution records of the First World War. The British Army condemned nearly 3500 men to death (excepting Indian troops, who were tried under the provisions of the Indian Army Act of 1911, whose records have not survived)⁵⁶ of which, 346 were actually carried out.⁵⁷

<u>Country</u>	<u>% of Army</u>	<u>% of Condemnations</u>
England	67	65
Scotland	9	11
Canada	8	8
Australia	6	4
Wales	5	3
New Zealand	2	1
Ireland	2	8
South Africa	1	0

As shown in Figure B, the rates of enlistments and the rates of death sentences correspond within the margin of error for every country except for Ireland, which is

⁵⁶ Great Britain, India Office, Governor-General, *Indian Army Act*, by Charles Hardinge (London: India Office, 1911).

⁵⁷ Great Britain, War Office, Judge Advocate Generals Office, *Field General Courts Martial and Military Courts, Registers* (Kew: National Archives) WO/213.

overrepresented at a rate of 6%.⁵⁸ In fact, besides Scotland, which has a +2% discrepancy, Ireland is the only country for which records exist that shows a percentage of death sentences higher than their own enlistment percentage. This table shows only the death sentences received—not executions carried out. However, Irish troops are overrepresented at a similar rate in terms of executions. 346 troops were executed by the British during the First World War; excluding the 40 executed for murder and mutiny, which would have carried the same sentence in the civilian world, leaves 306, 26 of which were Irishmen.⁵⁹ This equals out to a similar 8.5% of executions, compared to the aforementioned 2% of the British Army comprised of Irish soldiers. To emphasize this point, compare the number of Canadian executions to Irish executions: 23 Canadians were executed for crimes other than murder, three fewer than the Irish regiments.⁶⁰ However, the Canadian Expeditionary Force saw the enlistment of 619,646 soldiers during the war compared to the roughly 148,000 Irishmen who enlisted.⁶¹ Using these numbers, it can be determined that the average Irishman who enlisted to serve in the Great War was nearly five times as likely to be executed during his service. The only comparable chances of execution were amongst African and Caribbean units, as shown in Figure C. Similar to Irish units (besides the 36th Division), these units were commanded by British officers and suggests that amongst the British gentry (who tended to fill officer billets,) the Irish were seen more similarly to colonial subjects, despite Ireland's status as a non-autonomous, integral part of the insular United Kingdom.

⁵⁸ Ireland, Department of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Foreign Affairs, *Report into the Courts-Martial and Execution of Twenty-Six Irish Soldiers by the British Army During World War I*, by Dermot Ahern (Dublin: Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2004) 16-19.

⁵⁹ Judge Advocate General's Office, *Field General Courts Martial*, WO/213.

⁶⁰ James Purves, *The Book of Remembrance* (Ottawa, ON: Public Archives of Canada, 1927), 598.

⁶¹ Dominion of Canada, Department of Militia and Defence, *Regimental Numbers: Canadian Expeditionary Force* (Ottawa, ON: Public Archives of Canada, 2009).

<i>Figure C</i>	<u>Total Number of Troops</u>	<u>Total Executions⁶²</u>	<u>Executions per unit (rounded)</u>
Irish Regiments	~148,000 ⁶³	26	1 in 5692
Canadian Expeditionary Force	619,646	23	1 in 26,941
West Indies Regiment	15,601 ⁶⁴	2	1 in 7800
West African Frontier Force	~17,000 ⁶⁵	4	1 in 4250

Clearly there is an abundance of evidence to suggest that anti-Irish sentiment was widespread in the British Expeditionary Force during the First World War in terms of both personal animosity of British officers at all levels of command and systemic discrimination in the military courts that sentenced Irish soldiers to death at a much higher rate than any other ethnic group originating in the British Isles. First-hand accounts and reports of the proceedings support this as well, with the aforementioned Haig being particularly casual in his condemnations, authorizing the execution of Lance Corporal P. Sands of the Royal Irish Rifles in 1915 for desertion, despite evidence that Sands had lost his warrant and had asked for help from a Corporal to return to France after a period of leave in Belfast.⁶⁶ Many other trials show evidence of shoddy or lazy work on the part of prosecutors and the carrying out of verdicts that had been

⁶² Great Britain, War Office, Judge Advocate Generals Office, *Field General Courts Martial*, WO/213.
⁶³ David Fitzpatrick, "Militarism in Ireland 1900–1922," in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Thomas Bartlet and Keith Jeffrey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) 386-388.
⁶⁴ Richard Smith, "West Indians at War," *Caribbean Studies* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2008), accessed February 18, 2018, 224-229.
⁶⁵ Edmund Howard Gorges, *The Great War in West Africa* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1920) 209-213.
⁶⁶ Judge Advocate Generals Office, WO/223.

proven to be “not entirely the fault” of the accused, such as the case of Rifleman J.F. McCracken, also of the Royal Irish Rifles, who was convicted of desertion despite the fact that he had only been released from the hospital following an artillery injury less than a week before the alleged desertion, or the aforementioned Private Downey of the 6th Leinster Regiment, the man who was executed for the grave offense of refusing to put on his hat in deference to an officer.⁶⁷ But how did this affect the culture of nationalism in Ireland? How did the experience of Irish troops in the Great War influence the rise of Sinn Fein (English: *We Ourselves*) in the Irish General Election of 1918 and the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence only two months after the Armistice? The answer lies in two major crises of the period, the Easter Rising in April 1916 and the Conscription Crisis two years later in April 1918.

Response and Resistance on the Home Front

Francis Ledwidge, the poet and National Volunteer quoted earlier as an example of nationalist motivations for enlistment, wrote in 1917, just two months before he would be killed, “If someone were to tell me now that the Germans were coming in over our back wall, I wouldn’t lift a finger to stop them. They could come!”⁶⁸ His change in opinion is indicative of the way many nationalists who had joined the British Army felt tempered by their experiences of trench warfare, mistreatment by their officers, and a sense that the war was no closer to ending. 24,000 members of the Irish National Volunteers had joined the British Army during the war, and many felt that despite this show of loyalty, the British had continued to give preferential treatment to their rival paramilitary, the Ulster Volunteer Force, compounding the feeling of

⁶⁷ Ahern, 32.

⁶⁸ "Letter to Professor," Francis Ledwidge to Lewis Chase, June 6, 1917, in *The Cornhill Magazine*, 288th ed., New (London: John Murray, 1917).

alienation.⁶⁹ Further, the Home Rule Act, championed by their leader John Redmond, had been suspended until the end of the war, further angering nationalists that had joined in support of Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party.⁷⁰ Not only this, but they had left Ireland and the nationalist movement in the hands of the radical elements that had previously been the extreme minority of party members. Now that the bulk of the moderate members had gone to the green fields of France, the Irish Republican Brotherhood and the Irish Citizen Army had been able to usurp the mantle of Irish nationalism, and many feared what they were capable of.

The Easter Rising

In April 1916 they showed their hand. Padraig Pearse, director of military organization of the remaining Irish Volunteers and secretly a member of the Supreme Council of the IRB, along with several other members of the Volunteers leadership, and later on during the planning, the head of the socialist trade union the Irish Citizen Army, James Connolly, organized a coup within the Irish Volunteers that would force the hand of the Chief of Staff Eoin MacNeill and culminate in an armed rebellion against the British.⁷¹ The Rising had been planned as far back as 1914, within a month of England's declaration of war, with the intent that they would begin the rebellion when England was at its weakest. Early 1916, after the failure of the Gallipoli Campaign (in which scores of Irishmen, mostly in the 10th Division, had been killed) and the introduction of conscription in England, seemed to be the opportune moment.⁷² Following the Fenian adage, "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity," the events of the war became

⁶⁹ Fitzpatrick, "Militarism in Ireland," in *A Military History of Ireland*, ed. Bartlet and Jeffrey, 387.

⁷⁰ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Suspensory. A bill to suspend the operation of the Government of Ireland Act, 1914, and the Welsh Church Act, 1914* (London: House of Commons, 1914).

⁷¹ Hennessey, 116-121.

⁷² Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Military Service Act, 1916* (London: House of Commons, 1916).

intrinsically tied to the planning and orchestration of the Rising. In fact, the members of the IRB sought aid from the German Empire, attempting to land arms and ammunition at Banna Strand, in County Kerry, although the ship was scuttled and the arms lost.⁷³ The Rising would last until the 29th of April, ending with the shelling of central Dublin by British ships, and the unconditional surrender of the leaders of the Rising. On May 2nd, court martial hearings began, although they were not trials in any sense: they were held completely in secret, and the accused were given no chance to defend themselves. Furthermore, several of the judges were British military officers directly involved in subduing the rebellion, which was an illegal conflict of interest prohibited by the British Military Manual.⁷⁴ The first three executions were held the next day, and John Redmond said in Parliament that the Rising was “happily...over.”⁷⁵ This was, unfortunately, not true, as the tide of public opinion began to turn against the British as the executions continued, eventually resulting in 15 dead, not all of whom had been leaders or even involved at all in the Rising.⁷⁶ Others who had participated in the Rising were sentenced to penal servitude and sent to camps such as Frongoch, in Wales (which later became known as the “University of Revolution” due to the large number of Irish nationalist thinkers imprisoned there)⁷⁷ where they were treated as prisoners of war rather than political or criminal prisoners.⁷⁸ As the secret trials dragged on and more and more people began being sentenced with little to no evidence, the Irish public began to believe that the British intended to end all nationalists in Ireland, whether peaceful or otherwise.

⁷³ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland. Report of Commission* (London: House of Commons, 1916), 12.

⁷⁴ Townshend, 348-351.

⁷⁵ John Redmond, "Resignation of Mr. Birrell" (speech, House of Commons, London, May 3, 1916).

⁷⁶ Townshend, 355.

⁷⁷ Sean O. Mahony, *Frongoch: University of Revolution* (Dublin: FDR Teoranta, 1995), iii.

⁷⁸ W. J. Brennan-Whitmore, *With the Irish in Frongoch* (Dublin: Gill, 1917) 108.

The British argument, of course, was that these harsh measures were necessary during a time of war. In fact, use of courts-martial against mutinous or treasonous acts or statements had been authorized by the Defence of the Realm Act of 1914.⁷⁹ The continuance of martial law was meant to prevent further insurrection in Ireland while the trials went on.⁸⁰ These, however, did little to affect the public opinion, which noticed that the trials of those involved in the Rising all ended in conviction, while the court martials of British soldiers who committed atrocities against civilians ended in acquittals. Specifically, the North King Street massacre, which resulted in the verdict which stated that while British soldiers had attacked and killed “unarmed and unoffending” civilians, there was no specific soldier that could be held responsible, and the case was dismissed.⁸¹ Even more enraging than the North King Street massacre was the Portobello killings, which involved a British captain taking a pacifist nationalist activist hostage, using him as a human shield, and then killing him along with two journalists and a 17-year-old boy in the Portobello Barracks in Rathmines.⁸² General Maxwell, who was in command of the forces occupying Dublin and in charge of carrying out court martials, refused to indict the captain, and when another officer tried to indict him, that officer was removed of his post in the British Army.⁸³ These, along with the continuance of martial law and trials seen as unfair and illegal by many, turned many people in Ireland toward support for the rebels that they had so recently detested.

⁷⁹ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Defence of the realm acts and regulations passed and made to July 31st, 1915*, by Alexander Pulling (London: H.M.S.O., 1915).

⁸⁰ John Dillon, "Continuance of Martial Law" (speech, Parliament, London, May 11, 1916).

⁸¹ Townshend, 293-294.

⁸² Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Report of Commission: Royal Commission on the arrest and subsequent treatment of Mr. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, Mr. Thomas Dickson, and Mr. Patrick James McInytyre*, by John Simon (London: H.M.S.O., 1916), 2-4.

⁸³ House of Commons, *Royal Commission on the arrest and subsequent treatment*, 11.

Conscription Crisis of 1918

These events, combined with stories and personal anecdotes of those on the Western Front led to a sharp decrease in enlistments from Ireland, which renewed calls for the implementation of conscription leading to the second major crisis of the First World War that precipitated the electoral success of Sinn Fein in the Irish general elections. By 1918, Ireland and Australia were the only British subjects that had not instituted some form of compulsory service.⁸⁴ After the German Spring Offensive of that year, Prime Minister David Lloyd George made the decision to extend conscription to Ireland, and managed to alienate both Nationalists and Unionists by linking it with a new Home Rule Bill—essentially stating to the Nationalists that they would have to accept conscription, and stating to the Unionists that they would have to accept Home Rule, policies that were anathema to both.⁸⁵ Almost immediately, resistance plans were made, including efforts by the bishops of the Catholic Church to require a pledge of resistance before mass the following Sunday.⁸⁶ Almost exactly two years to the day after the beginning of the Easter Rising, on April 23, 1918, the labor movement of Ireland called a one-day general strike of the entire country, crippling every major industry that Ireland produced.⁸⁷ Despite this, the bill was passed in Westminster.

Due to this growing backlash, the government of the United Kingdom undertook two campaigns to attempt to calm the unrest in Ireland, both of which were ultimately unsuccessful in taking conscription progress any further than the passage of the bill. The first, and more subtle of

⁸⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, Governor-General's Office, *Conscription Referendum, 20 December 1917* (Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1987).

⁸⁵ Jeffery, 322.

⁸⁶ Jérôme Aan De Wiel, *The Catholic Church in Ireland, 1914-1918: War and Politics* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003).

⁸⁷ "Chapelizod," Timothy Michael Healy, May 1, 1918, in *Letters and Leaders of My Day* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1929).

the two, was known as the Hay Plan, after Captain Stuart Hay of the Ministry of Information.⁸⁸ This plan was aimed at convincing Irish nationalists to enlist in special battalions of the French Army, by manipulating their support for the Roman Catholic Church. A letter (written by Hay) was to be sent from the French Primate to the Bishops of Ireland, urging them to reconsider their anti-conscription position.⁸⁹ Ultimately, this plan was stymied by political pressure in Parliament by those who were concerned that the French might reciprocate any aid they received from the Irish after the war.⁹⁰

The other, bolder attempt was known as the German Plot, and it backfired spectacularly. The idea was to knock two birds out with one stone, by arresting top Sinn Fein leaders, who were seen as both the primary instigators of the Easter Rising and of the anti-conscription movement, and claiming that they were in league with the German Empire in an attempt to turn public outrage against the British into public outrage against Sinn Fein and the Germans.⁹¹ Of course, there was no evidence of any such collusion, and the arrest of 73 innocent Irishmen did little to ease the situation at hand, and actually inflamed tensions.⁹²

Conscription was never successfully implemented in Ireland, as by June it was clear that it was not needed, as the tide had turned against the Central Powers with the failure of the Spring Offensive and the entry of the Americans into the war. However, it was the failure of the government of Great Britain, as well as moderate nationalists, to effectively deal with the crisis that remains.

⁸⁸ Hennessey, 221.

⁸⁹ Hennessey, 225.

⁹⁰ Jérôme Aan De Wiel, "The "Hay Plan": An Account of Anglo-French Recruitment Efforts in Ireland, August 1918," *Études irlandaises* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2000), 125-140.

⁹¹ "British Still Searching Suspects in Ireland," *New York Times*, May 21, 1918.

⁹² Daniel Joesten, "A Declaration of War: The Press and the Irish Conscription Crisis of 1918," *Utah Historical Review* 3 (2013).

The Elections of 1918

The Irish Parliamentary Party had dominated nationalist politics since 1874, serving as the only recognized political organ for nationalists to work in, but it had failed at its central mission of securing Home Rule. Furthermore, under the leadership of John Redmond and subsequently John Dillon, the party had continually fallen short of expectations during the war, first by not creating a comparable unit for the National Volunteers that the Ulster Volunteer Force had in the 36th, then by failing to prevent the Easter Rising, by complicity in the harsh British response, and finally by not being able to prevent the passage of conscription in 1918, which included the ultimate insult of linking conscription with Home Rule, a veritable Devil's bargain. Instead, the movement that they had almost single-handedly created was co-opted and replaced by the radicalism of Sinn Fein, due in no small part to the fact that while the IPP had to focus on both their main cause of Irish autonomy and maintaining a level of Irish enlistment that was acceptable to the British, Sinn Fein could focus on their singular goal of an independent Irish Republic. In addition, the opportunity had presented itself with the war: Sinn Fein did not have to worry about losing its members or leaders on the battlefields of France, they had all stayed home while the more moderate nationalists had listened to John Redmond, and had been decimated by trench warfare. What had once been a radical minority had grown to the majority because of the war, through both recruitment boons such as the Rising and the Conscription Crisis, and the reduction of the majority to a shell of its former self by the Western Front. On December 14, 1918, the voters of Ireland (which for the first time included all men over the age of 21, and women, albeit only those over 30 who held £5 of property or had husbands who did),⁹³ voted overwhelmingly for Sinn Fein, which captured 73 seats in the first election that they

⁹³ Great Britain, Parliament, House of Commons, *Representation of the People Act, 1918* (London: House of Commons, 1918).

had ever ran in, including the seat formerly held by the IPP leader, John Dillon.⁹⁴ Influenced by Wilson's Fourteen Points and emphasizing self-determination, Sinn Fein issued their election manifesto, announcing that they would not take their seats in Westminster, and would form their own Parliament in Dublin known as the An Chéad Dáil Éireann (English: *The First Assembly of Ireland*.)⁹⁵ The first meeting of the Dáil on January 21, 1919 was symbolically conducted entirely in Gaelic, a language revived from near extinction by Irish nationalists only a few years prior, and resulted in the Faisnéis Neamhspleádhchuis (English: *Declaration of Independence*) which began the Anglo-Irish War, merely two months after Armistice in France.⁹⁶

The civil war that loomed over Ireland in 1914 over the Home Rule Bill was not prevented by the Great War, but merely delayed by it. The Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War that immediately succeeded the carnage of the First World War were simply a continuation the fight that had been occurring for seven hundred years prior between Ireland and England, twisted by the hellish experience of trench warfare. The Great War's effect on the Irish nation was to tribalize and radicalize it, forcing both unionists and nationalists further towards extremism of either position. The First World War created the opportunity for the nationalist movement to be co-opted by the minority that was the Sinn Féin movement in favor of independence, changing the nature of nationalism to that of republicanism and socialism, rather than the moderate autonomy of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The aftermath of the Great War and the expansion of the electorate to young people in 1918 was the perfect storm for Sinn Féin

⁹⁴ Michael Laffan, *The Resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Fein Party, 1916-1923* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 164.

⁹⁵ Sinn Féin, Standing Committee, "Sinn Féin Manifesto 1918," news release, Dublin, 1918 (Dublin Castle Censor).

⁹⁶ Ireland, Dáil Éireann, *Faisnéis Neamhspleádhchuis* (Dublin: Dáil Éireann, 1919).

and republicanism to legitimize themselves and finally achieve their goal of an independent, republican Ireland.

Home Rule was snatched from beneath the feet of young Irish nationalists in 1914, and they were told that they needed to fight a British war in order to get it back. But British apathy and outright discrimination against Irish soldiers from the outset encouraged those who could not yet volunteer for the war not to, and by that same token, led them to assume that those Irish Volunteers who had stayed behind were perhaps right all along, and the British did not care whether the Irish were loyal or not, that they would be brutal and callous towards them regardless. The harsh response to the Easter Rising seemed to confirm this thinking. Using naval artillery to shell the British Empire's second city proved to them that the war was having a detrimental effect on the likelihood of a successful peaceful resolution to the issue, especially when the IPP continued to appease the British with nothing to show in return. By the time the Irish Convention had met and failed, the Conscription Crisis was in full effect, and the British were attempting to manipulate and coerce the Irish people to accept the one thing that was completely unacceptable in order to gain what had already been promised to them. At this point, it was clear that Home Rule was not the answer, because if its terms could be changed so easily during a time of war, there was no guarantee it would be permanent. They began to realize that perhaps autonomy and Parliamentary action was not the path to take. And in 1918, when those young people, who had come of age during the last four years of war, disappointment, discrimination and betrayal by the British government and the Irish Parliamentary Party were given the right to vote, they utilized it, and voted overwhelmingly for the only group that they had ever seen take action against British abuse and overreach: Sinn Féin, a miniscule, radical minority in 1914, and the new voice of Irish nationalism in 1918.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

“British Still Searching Suspects in Ireland.” *New York Times*, May 21, 1918.

This article gives a general overview of the German plot in Ireland as it progressed, and shows the general sense of skepticism amongst nationalists in Ireland and the US about the evidence of collusion.

“Chapelized.” Timothy Michael Healy to Personal. April 1, 1918. In *Letters and Leaders of My Day*. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company, 1929.

This personal letter by T.M. Healy, an IPP member and eventual Sinn Fein politician recounts his experience in Dublin on the day of the General Strike across the country in response to conscription.

“Court Martial of Pte Downey, Patrick.” Bryan Mahon to GHQ, Mediterranean Expeditionary Force. December 1, 1915. In *Blindfold and Alone: British Military Executions in the Great War*. London: Cassell, 2005.

This letter from Bryan Mahon, commander of the 10th Irish Division to the General Headquarters of the MEF specifically requests that the death sentence be carried out by firing squad in the case of Pte Downey, who refused to put on his hat.

“Honouring the Dead.” *Irish Independent* (Dublin), May 5, 1924.

This short article tells of the very first commemoration of the Easter Rising in Dublin, at the GPO in 1924. This was led by Eamon de Valera, and followed after the Anglo-Irish War and Treaty, and was meant to show Fianna Fail as the true successors to the rebels of 1916.

“How the Irish took Ginchy - Splendid daring of the Irish troops.” *Daily Express London*, September 12, 1916.

This article in the Daily Express is a report from the front lines of the Somme battlefield, telling of how the 16th Irish Division performed gallantly in battle on that day, taking a heavily fortified ridge and completing their objective, one of the few units to do so on the first day of the Somme.

“Letter to Family.” Guy Nightingale to Susan Nightingale. April 1918. In *The Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline and Morale*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003.

This letter, from an Englishman serving in an Irish regiment in 1918 to his wife and children tells of his frustration at the way his Irish comrades are treated and mocked by other British soldiers on the front.

“Letter to Professor.” Francis Ledwidge to Lewis Chase. June 6, 1917. In *The Cornhill Magazine*. 288th ed. New. London: John Murray, 1917.

This letter, from the poet and National Volunteer Francis Ledwidge to his mentor and professor Lewis Chase outlines both his reasons for volunteering to enlist in the British

Army in 1914 and the reasons that he has changed his opinion, and feels that the British have lied and betrayed the Irish.

“Letters From the Front, At Suvla Bay.” *The Times* (London), August 11, 1915.

This document lists the units assigned to the fighting at Suvla Bay during the Gallipoli Campaign, including, at this time, the 10th Irish Division under Sir Bryan Mahon.

“Report of Command.” Henry Wilson to Advanced 1st Army. January 6, 1916. In *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson: A Political Soldier*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006. 158.

This report to higher command outlines Sir Henry Wilson’s anti-Irish views and his distaste for his position as commander of the 16th Irish Division, which he considers to be worthless in terms of fighting capacity.

“Sinn Fein Rebellion Handbook.” *Weekly Irish Times* (Dublin), 1917. February 17, 2010. Accessed February 12, 2018.

This document, published by the *Weekly Irish Times* (a mostly Unionist paper) includes a copy of the document handed out to all rebels during the Easter Rising as well as firsthand accounts of the rebellion as reported by the *Times*’ Dublin correspondents that were present at the time.

Brennan-Whitmore, W. J. *With the Irish in Frongoch*. Dublin: Gill, 1917.

This memoir by a Sinn Fein associated reporter who was imprisoned following his involvement in the Easter Rising at Frongoch Prison Camp in Wales details the treatment, resistance and ideological training of rebels imprisoned alongside him.

Commonwealth of Australia. Governor-General's Office. *Conscription Referendum, 20 December 1917*. Canberra: National Archives of Australia, 1987.

This is the official results of the 1917 Conscription Referendum in Australia, which narrowly failed, thus ensuring that alongside Ireland, Australia would never see mandatory/compulsory military service during the First World War.

Dillon, John. “Continuance of Martial Law.” Speech, Parliament, London, May 11, 1916.

This speech, made in the House of Commons only weeks after the Rising outlines the British government’s position and rationale for continuing the occupation of Dublin by British forces and the extension of martial law across the whole of Ireland until the conclusion of the inquiries into the Rising.

Dominion of Canada. Department of Militia and Defence. *Regimental Numbers: Canadian Expeditionary Force*. Ottawa, ON: Public Archives of Canada, 2009.

This document is the recruiting records of the Canadian Expeditionary Force, which reads similarly to a census record, showing how many people enlisted in the CEF, where they were from, how old they were, and what they did before enlisting.

Gorges, Edmund Howard. *The Great War in West Africa*. London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1920.

This is the personal memoirs of the commanding officer of the West African Frontier Force, the major formation in West Africa of the British Army, which he started during the war and finished two years after its conclusion.

Great Britain. India Office. Governor-General. *Indian Army Act*. By Charles Hardinge. London: India Office, 1911.

This Act outlined the way in which the Indian Army would operate, giving it slightly more autonomy, and placing it under the Commonwealth/India Office, rather than directly under the War Office, as it had been.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Army. Report on Recruiting in Ireland*. London: House of Commons, 1915.

This report from right after the outbreak of war in 1914 until early 1915 is invaluable as a source of real numbers on the amount of Irishmen enlisted in the British Army, and even divides the numbers into geographic regions, which is fantastic in terms of looking at Ulster vs. the rest of Ireland.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Correspondence relating to recent events in the Irish Command*. London: House of Commons, 1914.

This document outlines the military organization and structure of the Irish Command within the British Army and the War Office, and shows the headquarters of the Irish Command in Phoenix Park, Dublin.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Defence of the realm acts and regulations passed and made to July 31st, 1915*. By Alexander Pulling. London: H.M.S.O., 1915.

Similar to the Alien and Sedition Acts in the United States, this act strictly reduces the freedom of speech in the United Kingdom during the duration of the First World War.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Military Service Act, 1916*. London: House of Commons, 1916.

This Act of Parliament initiated a draft in the United Kingdom, which would replace voluntary enlistment and eventually be extended to everywhere in the British Commonwealth except Ireland and Australia.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Report of Commission: Royal Commission on the arrest and subsequent treatment of Mr. Francis Sheehy Skeffington, Mr. Thomas Dickson, and Mr. Patrick James McInytyre*. By John Simon. London: H.M.S.O., 1916.

This is the report of the official inquiry into the so-called Portobello Killings, involving an Anglo-Irish captain who murdered two reporters, a youth, and a pacifist nationalist during the events of the Easter Rising. He was acquitted.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Representation of the People Act, 1918*. London: House of Commons, 1918.

This landmark bill of the United Kingdom granted universal suffrage to men aged 21 and over, or 19 if they served in the military, and all women over the age of 30 with a

property requirement. This expansion of the voting class to include young people helped to propel Sinn Fein to its position after the 1918 General Elections.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Royal Commission on the Rebellion in Ireland. Report of Commission*. London: House of Commons, 1916.

This is the official report of the Royal Commission's findings during their inquiry to the causes, events and lingering effects of the Easter Rising on Ireland.

Great Britain. Parliament. House of Commons. *Suspensory. A bill to suspend the operation of the Government of Ireland Act, 1914, and the Welsh Church Act, 1914*. London: House of Commons, 1914.

The Bill authorized the temporary suspension of the Government of Ireland Act, 1914, also known as the Third Home Rule Bill, until the end of the war in Europe. This was just as, if not more, controversial as the original bill itself.

Great Britain. War Office. Judge Advocate Generals Office. *Field General Courts Martial and Military Courts, Registers*. Kew: National Archives.

This is the list and records of the Field General Courts Martials held by the British Army in all theatres of war. This gives the list of those tried, their sentences, and the result of the proceedings. This is where most of the information regarding executions came from.

Great Britain. War Office. *Statistical Abstract of Information Regarding the British Armies at home and abroad 1914-1920*. London: H.M.S.O., 1920.

This chart, produced immediately after the war depicts the number and rates of enlistment in the British Army during the period of war and immediately after.

Haig, Douglas. *War Diaries and Letters of Sir Douglas Haig, 1914-18*. London: Phoenix, 2006.

These are the personal records of Sir Douglas Haig, who served as Field Marshal on the Western Front, and includes passages showing evidence of anti-Irish discrimination on his part.

Ireland. Census Office. *Census of Ireland, 1911: Area, Houses, and Population*. London: H.M.S.O., 1912.

This record was used to determine the number of people living in each area of Ireland, to especially highlight the differing rates of recruitment at the beginning of war.

Ireland. Dáil Éireann. *Faisnéis Neamhspleádhchuis*. Dublin: Dáil Éireann, 1919.

This is the Irish Declaration of Independence, 1919. This is separate and distinct from the Proclamation of the Irish Republic of 1916, which was issued by the organizers of the Rising. This document was issued by Sinn Fein's first Assembly in January 1919.

Ireland. Provisional Government. *The Proclamation of the Irish Republic*. By Thomas Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada, Thomas MacDonagh, Padraig Pearse, Eamonn Ceannt, James Connolly, and Joseph Plunkett.

This is the declaration written and issued by the organizers of the Easter Rising and the first document suggesting the existence of a fully independent Irish Republic in the 20th century.

Kitchener, Herbert. *Minutes of the Meeting of the Military Members of the Army Council*. August 12, 1914. War Office, London.

This document is a record of a meeting of the Army Council at the beginning of the war, and includes Kitchener's famous quote about the "first hundred thousand volunteers" being the core of the new British Expeditionary Force.

O'Higgins, Brian. "Who is Ireland's Enemy?" *Irish Freedom*, September 1914.

This poem was written by the ardent nationalist and later Sinn Féin politician Brian O'Higgins at the outset of war, to remind Irishmen who were joining up of British atrocities against them throughout history.

O'Neill, Charles, writer. "The Foggy Dew." In *Breathe*. The Young Dubliners. Michael Blum, 1995, CD.

This poem and later ballad was written in 1919 after Charles O'Neill attended the First meeting of the new Irish Assembly, and laments the fact that so many Irishmen were dead overseas fighting for the same army that had killed their brothers back home in Dublin during the Rising.

Purves, James. *The Book of Remembrance*. Ottawa, ON: Public Archives of Canada, 1927.

This book was began immediately after the war and only finished in 1927. It lists the dead of Canada from the First World War, and, as of 2006, includes the 23 Canadians executed for crimes other than murder during the Great War, following their posthumous acquittal by British courts.

Redmond, John. "Resignation of Mr. Birrell." Speech, House of Commons, London, May 3, 1916.

This is the official transcript of the resignation of Augustine Birrell, who had served as Chief Secretary for Ireland from 1907. This source is notable for its debate before and after Mr. Birrell's resignation, which shows the vehement contrast of opinions between Irishmen following the Rising through the arguments of Mr. John Redmond and Mr. Laurence Ginnell, as well as the failure of the British government to acknowledge the forces behind the Rising and what the Irish had risen at all for.

Redmond, John. "Woodenbridge Speech." Speech, Irish Volunteers Meeting, County Wicklow, Woodenbridge, September 20, 1914. Sept. & Oct. 2014. Accessed February 16, 2018.

This (in)famous speech by the leader of the Irish Volunteers and head of the Irish Parliamentary Party has been cited many times as one of the main reasons Nationalists joined the war effort, although in retrospect, the things promised by Redmond never came to fruition.

Sinn Féin. Standing Committee. "Sinn Féin Manifesto 1918." News release, Dublin, 1918. Dublin Castle Censor.

This document, written by the new leaders of Sinn Fein, outlines their political ideology and their goals and aims if they were elected in 1918, which included declaring the independence of a unified Irish republic.

Walter Congreve to James Edward Edmonds. January 6, 1927.

This letter, written by a Corps Commander in charge of Irish troops, continues the myth perpetuated by British command that the Irish troops were prone to cowardice and fought poorly.

Wilson, Henry, and Keith Jeffery. *The military correspondence of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, 1918-1922*. London: Bodley Head for the Army Records Society, 1985.

This is the personal records of Sir Henry Wilson, who commanded the 16th Irish Division despite his anti-Catholic, strongly Unionist sentiment, and includes passages proving his biases and discriminatory acts.

Secondary Sources

“Somme Association.” 36th (Ulster) Division History. Accessed February 16, 2018.

<http://www.irishsoldier.org>.

This website is dedicated to Irish soldiers who fought on the Western Front in the three divisions of the BEF created for them, and specifically pays tribute to those who fell at the Battle of the Somme, being the caretakers of the Irish memorials at that site.

Aan de Wiel, Jérôme. “The ‘Hay Plan’: An Account of Anglo-French Recruitment Efforts in Ireland, August 1918.” *Études irlandaises* 25, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 125-40.

This article focuses on the Hay Plan, a recruitment effort aimed at Irish Catholics during the Conscription Crisis of 1918 involving the French Catholic clergy and the British Intelligence Office.

Aan de Wiel, Jérôme. *The Catholic Church in Ireland, 1914-1918: War and Politics*. Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2003.

This book is a useful resource as it gives an account of the Catholic Church in Ireland during the time period, which is necessarily useful as the Catholic Church was a major social organization and Catholic faith being central to the contemporary Irish identity as it set them apart from the mainly Protestant English.

Bardon, Jonathan. *A History of Ulster*. Belfast: Blackstaff Press, 1994.

This monograph spans the entire history of the northernmost province of Ireland, Ulster, and includes a section focused on the development and involvement of the Unionist movement during the Home Rule Crisis and the rest of the Irish Revolutionary Period as they tried to hold onto the United Kingdom’s grasp.

Bowman, Timothy. *The Irish Regiments in the Great War: Discipline and Morale*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004.

This book is invaluable as it will be the major source of information for me in terms of secondary sources on the actual fighting and treatment of soldiers in the First World War.

Dungan, Myles. *“They shall not grow old”: Irish soldiers and the Great War*. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1997.

This document is invaluable as it is be a major resource and touchstone for this work as it is one of the most thorough pieces of literature on Irish participation in WWI.

Edmonds, James. *Military Operations France and Belgium, 1916: Sir Douglas Haig's Command to the 1st July: Battle of the Somme*. 4th ed. Vol. 1. 4 vols. History of the great war based on official documents, by direction of the Historical section of the Committee of imperial defence. London: MacMillian & Co., 1992.

This is the official military history of the First World War, commissioned by the British Army and originally completed in 1932. It is the most in depth history of the First World War, with a single volume of it alone being longer than many other sources in this bibliography.

Fitzpatrick, David. "Militarism in Ireland 1900–1922." In *A Military History of Ireland*, edited by Thomas Bartlet and Keith Jeffrey, 386-88. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

This chapter in a longer anthology focuses on the militarism in Ireland during the Revolutionary Period, drawing a clear trajectory from the opposing militias of the Home Rule Crisis, through the units of the First World War to finally the Black & Tans and IRA units of the Anglo-Irish War and subsequent Civil War.

Fitzpatrick, David. *Ireland and the First World War*. Gigginstown: Lilliput Press and Trinity History Workshop, 1988.

This book was first major piece to break the wall of silence surrounding Ireland's participation in the First World War. The central point that Fitzgerald makes is that the First World War helps to contextualize Irish nationalism in the period. This idea is key to understanding the rest of the scholarship on the subject as it began the train of thought that the majority of historians still focus on and expand upon.

Fitzpatrick, David. *The Two Irelands, 1912-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

This book offers a comparison between the South and North of Ireland, which, obviously, resonates with this topic, as the North is home to the highest number of Protestants and Unionists on the island.

Hennessey, Thomas. *Dividing Ireland: World War I and Partition*. London: Routledge, 2005.

This book enabled the comparison of the reactions and actions of the two parts of Ireland in the First World War and through the rest of the Revolutionary Period to Partition.

Horne, John. *Our War: Ireland and the Great War*. Dublin: Royal Irish Academy, 2008.

This collection of essays argues that one cannot understand the revolution without understanding how the Great War and the soldiers that Ireland sent to the Western Front and other theatres of war helped forge the Irish identity. It also represents a turning point in Irish perceptions of the war.

Ireland. Department of Foreign Affairs. *Report into the Courts-Martial and Execution of Twenty-Six Irish Soldiers by the British Army During World War I*. By Dermot Ahern. Dublin: Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2004.

This report, written by the Republic of Ireland's Department of Foreign Affairs is an invaluable resource in terms of analysis of historical data mined from Parliamentary and War Office archives regarding the executions of Irish soldiers.

Jeffrey, Keith. *Ireland and the Great War*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.

This monograph from recent years states that not only is it useful to see the First World War as a context for the Easter Rising and the subsequent events, it is integral to the telling of that story, it is a *pretext* for those events.

Joesten, Daniel. "A Declaration of War: The Press and the Irish Conscription Crisis of 1918." *Utah Historical Review* 3 (2013).

This article focuses on the role of the press in exposing the British German Plot of 1918 and recounts the events that followed the revelation that the British had lied about any sort of collusion on the part of Sinn Fein.

Kitchen, Martin. *The German Offensives of 1918*. Stroud: Tempus, 2005.

This book focuses on the last major attempt by the Germans to win the war, the Spring Offensives of 1918 and their effect on the Allies, including the attempt at introducing conscription to Ireland.

Laffan, Michael. *The Resurrection of Ireland: the Sinn Fein Party, 1916-1923*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

This nationalist-biased book focuses on the history of Sinn Fein after the Easter Rising, when it began to become a legitimate political force rather than simply a small, radical group of separatists within the wider Irish nationalist movement.

Mahony, Sean O. *Frongoch: University of Revolution*. Dublin: FDR Teoranta, 1995.

This short book is a history of Frongoch Internment Camp, which held political prisoners captured after the Easter Rising that were not executed but sent into penal servitude instead. It recounts the ways in which these men resisted and sabotaged British efforts to “break” them.

McGreevy, Ronan. “‘Heroic dead of Ireland’ recalled at Somme commemoration.” *Irish Times*, July 9, 2016. Accessed February 14, 2018.

This article relates the first official commemoration of the Irishmen who served in WWI by the Irish government at the National War Gardens in Dublin, which is the only major memorial in the Republic of Ireland to the soldiers of the First World War.

Pennell, Catriona. *A Kingdom United: Popular Responses to the Outbreak of the First World War in Britain and Ireland*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.

This book surveys not only reactions to the outbreak of war between the North and South of Ireland, but also the differences in reaction between different political wings and factions of each side.

Prior, Robin, and Trevor Wilson. *Passchendaele: The Untold Story*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016.

This book focuses on the Battle of Passchendaele, also known as the Third Battle of Ypres, one of the most brutal battles the British Army was involved in, and in which the Irish divisions saw much action.

Richardson, Neil. *Coward if I Return, a Hero if I Fall: Stories of Irishmen in World War I*. Dublin: O'Brien Press Ltd, 2010.

This book, which takes its title from a poem by Francis Ledwidge, is a collection of individual stories and personal narratives of Irish soldiers on the front lines of the various theatres of war.

Smith, Richard. "West Indians at War." *Caribbean Studies* 36, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 224-31. Accessed February 18, 2018. doi:10.1353/crb.0.0002.

This journal article focuses on the two units raised in the British Caribbean, the historical West India Regiment and the new West Indies Regiment, created explicitly for service in the First World War.

Townshend, Charles. *Easter 1916: The Irish Rebellion*. London: Penguin Books, 2015.

This is the seminal work of literature on the Easter Rising. This is one of the longest books in the bibliography, and yet it deals with one of the most specific subjects. This book is easily the most important book on this list and could probably provide enough material for a thesis on just the events of the Rising alone.