Michael B. Barry

FAKE NEWS
and the
IRISH WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

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info@andalus.ie
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For Paddy Sammon

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Chronology

1916	
24 April	The Easter Rising begins in Dublin. The Irish Republic is declared. On 29 April Patrick Pearse surrenders to Brigadier-General Lowe.
1917	
February onwards	Sinn Féin win a string of by-elections.
March	National Executive of Irish Volunteers re-established.
1918	
16 April	There is universal opposition to conscription proposed for the first time for Ireland. Two million people sign a national pledge against conscription.
11 May	Lord French, appointed as Lord Lieutenant, arrives in Dublin.
17 May	Sinn Féin leaders are rounded up as part of a supposed 'German Plot'.
11 November	An Armistice is signed. WWI hostilities cease.
14 December	In the General Election, in Ireland, Sinn Féin win 73 seats; Unionists 26 and the previously dominant Irish Parliamentary Party, 6.
1919	
21 January	The first meeting of Dáil Éireann is held in Dublin. The same day an ambush at Soloheadbeg results in the shooting dead of two RIC constables.
January	Sinn Féin Department of Propaganda is established. Desmond Fitzgerald takes charge in June.
11 June	Éamon de Valera arrives in the USA intending to marshal support for Irish independence.
July	Michael Collins, now IRA Director of Intelligence, forms a 'Squad' to carry out pre-emptive assassinations.
Autumn	Isolated RIC barracks in the south and west are evacuated. The larger barracks are transformed into bastions.
October	A British Cabinet committee is established to draft a new Home Rule Bill.
November	Approval is given to reinforce the RIC with ex-servicemen recruited in Britain.
11 November	First issue of the Sinn Féin newsletter, the 'Irish Bulletin'.
19 December	There is an attempt to assassinate Lord French near Ashtown railway station, close to his official residence. Volunteer Martin Savage is killed in the ensuing gunfight.
1920	
January	Over the next months there is a wave of attacks on RIC barracks across the country.
20 March	Tomás Mac Curtain, Lord Mayor of Cork, is assassinated in his home at Blackpool by men with blackened faces.
26 March	Alan Bell, who had been involved in the forged 'Pigott Diaries' in 1887, and currently investigating Sinn Féin finances in a forensic manner, is shot dead in Ballsbridge.
Early April	The IRA burn 180 barracks recently abandoned by the RIC.
April	A review of the Irish administration leads to a shake-up: Sir Hamar Greenwood is appointed Chief Secretary in early April.
May	The 'Munitions Crisis' starts as railway workers refuse to transport soldiers and equipment. It continues until December.
May	Ex-officers are recruited and trained for the Auxiliary Division of the RIC and in the months that follow are deployed across Ireland.
May	Major-General Tudor is appointed Police Advisor. He later assigns Captains Hugh Pollard and William Darling to run the Information Section of the Police Authority.
9 August	Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (ROIA) becomes law.
August	Basil Clarke arrives at Dublin Castle and establishes the Public Information Branch (PIB)
12 August	Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, is arrested and begins a hunger strike. He dies 74 days later in Brixton Gaol.
13 August	The 'Weekly Summary' begins publication.
20 September	Volunteer Kevin Barry is arrested at an ambush. He is court-martialed and sentenced to hang. On 1 November Barry is executed.
20 September	Balbriggan is sacked and burned by Crown forces.
23 September	After ten British intelligence officers charge into the Royal Exchange Hotel in Dublin, John Lynch is shot dead in his room.

September/October	Reprisals by Crown forces at Mallow, Listowel, Tralee, Tubbercurry, Tuam and other towns.
November	The British Labour Party establishes a 'Commission of Inquiry into the Present Conditions in Ireland'. After concluding its investigations the report exposed the reprisals and atrocities in Ireland.
12 November	A minor engagement takes place between Auxiliaries and the IRA at Ballymacelligott, near Tralee, Co. Kerry. Days later, photographs (and a newsreel) appear showing the 'Battle of Tralee'. It soon emerges that these had been taken at Vico Road, Killiney, Co. Dublin in a staged attempt to show that the British were winning.
16 November	In a raid in south Dublin Auxiliaries seize papers belonging to Richard Mulcahy, Chief of Staff of the IRA. They are shocked when they see a document purporting to be a plan to spread typhoid among British troops. The document is flown to London that night.
18 November	Sir Hamar Greenwood, in the House of Commons, states that the IRA were considering spreading typhoid among British troops. He is met with disbelief.
21 November ('Bloody Sunday')	The IRA assassinate suspected British spies across Dublin. Later Crown forces fire on a crowd at a football match at Croke Park. Three prisoners are murdered in Dublin Castle that evening.
28 November	Ambush at Kilmichael, Co. Cork, where 17 Auxiliaries are killed, with three IRA dead. Within days, the British allege that the corpses were mutilated by axes.
11 December	Cork city centre is burned and looted. Hamar Greenwood, in the House of Commons, denies that Crown forces were to blame.
23 December	The Government of Ireland Bill comes into force.
27 December	Martial law is proclaimed in Counties Cork, Tipperary, Kerry and Limerick – later extended to Clare, Waterford, Kilkenny and Wexford.
29 December	The first official reprisal occurs in Midleton after an ambush. Other official reprisals soon follow.
1921	
January onwards	Ambushes continue across the country.
28 January	An ambush laid at Dripsey, Co. Cork, is foiled. Mrs Mary Lindsay, who had informed, was later killed (with her chauffeur) after five of those captured at Dripsey are executed.
20 February	At Clonmult, Co. Cork, a house where the IRA are billeted is surrounded. Twelve Volunteers are killed.
Early 1921	The 'Interim Report of the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland' is published, detailing the killing of civilians and the burning of towns.
7 March	The Mayor of Limerick and his predecessor are shot dead at their homes by men in civilian dress.
14 March	Six Volunteers are hanged in Mountjoy Gaol. Three more are hanged over the following months.
19 March	A large British sweep at Crossbarry, Co. Cork, is resisted by the IRA under Tom Barry. Ten British soldiers and four IRA men are killed.
21 March	The IRA mount an ambush at Headford Junction, Co. Kerry. Eight British soldiers, two civilians and two IRA men are killed.
26 March	In a raid, the equipment of the 'Irish Bulletin' is seized by Auxiliaries. Forged versions soon appear.
11 April	Attack on 'Q' Company base at the Railway Hotel, North Wall, Dublin. One Volunteer is killed.
May	Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Foulkes becomes 'Director of Propaganda' at the army press office.
3 May	The IRA ambushes the RIC at Tourmakeady, Co. Mayo, resulting in four RIC dead. As British troops make a sweep over the Partry Mountains, the IRA Adjutant is killed in an exchange of fire.
24 May	Elections are held under the Government of Ireland Act. Unionists win 40 of the 52 seats for the Northern Ireland Parliament. No polling takes place for the 'Southern Ireland' Parliament – all candidates are returned unopposed. Sinn Féin win 124 of the 128 seats.
25 May	The IRA seize the Custom House in Dublin, which is burnt, as planned. Four Volunteers as well as four civilians are killed.
22 June	King George V makes a conciliatory speech at the opening of the Northern Ireland Parliament
4 July	Discussions begin at the Mansion House, Dublin, between Éamon de Valera and southern Unionists on a call by Lloyd George, UK Prime Minister, for talks in London. Another meeting is held with General Nevil Macready on 8 July. Terms for a truce are agreed.
11 July	A Truce comes into force. Under its terms, the British were to end manoeuvres, raids and searches. The IRA were to cease attacks on Crown forces.
12 July	De Valera and a delegation arrive in London. He later meets with Lloyd George. There is little meeting of minds.
11 October	Irish plenipotentiaries arrive at Downing Street and weeks of negotiations ensue.
6 December	The plenipotentiaries, under severe pressure to sign the Treaty or face renewed war, fail to consult Dublin, and sign the document. There is limited freedom, but no Republic.

MAP OF
IRELAND
Showing
CENTERS OF DEVASTATION
Prepared from data submitted by Counsel for the
American Association for Recognition of the Irish Republic
SCALE OF MILES
0 5 10 20 30 40 50
KEY
Towns Shot Up
Towns Sacked
Creameries Destroyed
Orange Riots Occured
NORTH CHANNEL
SCOTLAND
Cloghaneely
Londonderry
Carrigan
Burton Port
Dunglow
DONEGAL
LONDONDERRY
ANTRIM
Donegal
TYRONE
ULSTER
Belfast
Lisburn
Dunmore
Banbridge
DOWN
Ballyshannon
Ballinfrillick
LEITRIM
FERMANAGH
ARMAGH
MONAGHAN
Camlough
SLIGO
Ballina
Ballymote
Tobercurry
Athenry
Drumshanbo
Ballinamore
Fenagh
Carrick-on-Shannon
CAVAN
Dundalk
LOUTH
MAYO
Ballaghaderreen
Carnadoe
Cloone
CONNAUGHT
Balla
Castlereagh
Ballintober
Cloondara
Granard
Ballinalee
LONGFORD
Ballymoe
ROSCOMMON
Roscommon
MEATH
Balbriggan
WESTMEATH
Mullingar
Trim
DUBLIN
Swords
Clifden
Tuam
Mount Bellew
Ballygar
Caltra
Ballyboy
Athlone
GALWAY
Moycullen
Ballagh
Galway
Athenry
Salt Hill
Oranmore
KING'S COUNTY
Tullamore
Ballinagar
KILDARE
Naas
Dublin
Dundrum
Kingstown
IRISH SEA
Ardrahan
Gort
Delgany
LEINSTER
Maryborough
QUEEN'S COUNTY
Dunkerrin
Roscrea
WICKLOW
Baltinglass
Ennistymon
Feakle
Lehinch
CLARE
Milbay
Nenagh
Duharra
Toomyvara
Clonmore
Tullow
Arklow
Silvermines
Kilcommon
Templemore
Raheen
Limerick
Newport
Knockfune
Bouladuff
Loughmore
Urlingford
CARLOW
Upperchurch
Thurles
Killenan
Littleton
Foynes
Kildimo
Doon
Reiska
TIPPERARY
KILKENNY
Droomkeen
Ballylongford
Ballybunnion
Shanagolden
Grange
Golden
Cashel
Killenaule
Enniscorthy
LIMERICK
Bruff
Newcastle
Emly
Tipperary
Rosegreen
WEXFORD
Kilmallock
Lixnaw
Garryspillane
Abbeydorney
Devon Road
Knocklong
Galbally
New Ross
Ballylanders
Ardfert
MUNSTER
Milford
Tralee
Ballymacelligott
Ballybrack
Ballyduff
Castleisland
Liscarroll
Kildorrery
Farranfare
WATERFORD
KERRY
Lismore
Kill
Killorglin
Banteer
Mallow
Fermoy
Killarney
ST. GEORGES CHANNEL
CORK
Middleton
Inniscarra
Cork
Aghada
Glengarriff
Bandon
Kinsale
Cove
Bantry
Drimoleague
Kilbrittain
Leap
Unionhall
ATLANTIC OCEAN
Longitude West 8 from Greenwich
Rand McNally & Co., N. Y.

Introduction

It is self-evident that falsehoods have been around for millennia and that these respect no national frontiers. The concept of 'Fake News' has been brought to the fore in recent times, particularly due to rather odd interpretations of truth by the former 'leader of the Free World' — who, at the end of his term, along with his supporters, disseminated what the 'Economist' called 'the biggest lie in the history of modern American politics: that he had won the election, only to have it stolen.' In parallel with this there are continuing allegations that nations such as Russia have created falsehoods by manipulating social media. Undoubtedly the principal western countries do this also, but probably in a more sophisticated and subtle manner.

As we will see later in this book, during WWI the British were masters of media manipulation and created a propaganda web that was vastly superior to that of the Germans. One would think that this expertise would have been of great use to their cause during the Irish War of Independence (1919-1921) but intriguingly, this was not the case. They were outclassed by their opponents, Sinn Féin, a nationalist movement with limited and clandestine resources, which broadly stuck to telling the truth.

I have been researching the Irish Revolution for over a decade — resulting in a trilogy of books on the various phases, as well as my most recent book, 'An Illustrated History of the Irish Revolution, 1916-1923', which ties together that whole seminal period. There was bending of the news during every phase of the Irish Revolution: in 1916 the British and the newspapers referred to the rebels as 'Sinn Féiners'— which was not true as the Sinn Féin political party of that time played no part in the Rising. During the Irish Civil War (1922-1923), the Free State side and the general press referred to the anti-Treaty IRA using the pejorative title of 'Irregulars'.

This book focuses on the manipulation of the news during that core period of the Irish Revolution, the War of Independence. In the **Preamble** we start by looking at the history of 'Fake News' and attempt to put some definition on the various gradations of refracting information — from minor alteration to full-on and wilful falsehoods. In **Chapter 1**, we look at the main trajectory of the War of Independence, starting with the parliamentary success of a revitalised Sinn Féin. We see the beginning of military action by the Irish Volunteers (soon known as the IRA) in early 1919. This gradually grew in intensity and reached its crescendo over the twelve month period from mid-1920. Next, we consider the propaganda war and cast a look at Sinn Féin's very effective efforts at spreading the story of Ireland's struggle for independence. In **Chapter 2**, to give context to the British propaganda endeavours during the War of Independence, we look at their efforts in this area during WWI. Over the war years a huge infrastructure was established which efficiently produced a torrent of propaganda for dispersal across the world. In particular, a comprehensive stream of disinformation was channelled to the United States, the most important country for the British. On occasion, outrageous examples of fake news were issued by the wilder spirits lurking within the murky depths

Left: map from the 'Interim Report of the American Commission for Ireland' published in early 1921 showing 'centers of devastation'.

of military intelligence. In a general sense the British propaganda of WWI was well crafted and effective — it totally eclipsed the feeble attempts of the Germans.

Several colourful characters involved in this successful British propaganda effort showed up during the War of Independence in Dublin, where they continued the black arts of dissimulation. One in particular was Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard, who had been behind the more egregious attempts at instigating false reports during the World War. He was assigned in mid-1920 to the Information Section of the Police Authority in Dublin Castle. Given that Pollard was the main personage behind the issuance of the most flagrant examples of Fake News during the War of Independence, we also take a detailed look in Chapter 2 at his interesting career before he showed up in Ireland.

In **Chapter 3** we examine the new team (including press officers) sent to Ireland by the British Government during the first half of 1920, with the intention of regaining control over the increasingly lawless country. In **Chapter 4** we see how British propaganda functioned in Ireland from WWI onwards. In turn we look at the new press officers of 1920 as they liaised with newsmen and began to present the British narrative of events. As atrocities by the Crown forces increased in intensity, official communiqués bent the facts, making a sharp contrast with the generally truthful information issued by Sinn Féin. The head of the Public Information Bureau, Basil Clarke, endeavoured to apply his 'propaganda by information' formula, by presenting news that was supposedly only adjusted in minor ways. He did achieve some successes, and was unchallenged in some areas, such as the prevarication after the Kilmichael ambush that the IRA had mutilated the Auxiliary corpses with axes. Clarke did his best, amidst a discordant grouping of the press offices of the Irish Office, police and the military. In the febrile atmosphere of Dublin Castle, it was the free spirits in the press office of the Police Authority (principally Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard) who came up with an increasing number of fantastical and unbelievable examples of Fake News. The more egregious instances were soon exposed, adding to a reputation for duplicity that the British authorities had gained.

As the War of Independence ground on, reaching a new crescendo of violence, reports of British atrocities percolated onto the pages of the world's press. Faced with international opprobrium, the British Government took a deep breath and decided to negotiate with, as they called them, the 'murderers and gunmen' of Sinn Féin. In July 1921 a Truce was rapidly agreed. In **Chapter** 5, the book ends with some conclusions on the propaganda war (An **Appendix** takes a look at the decidedly odd subsequent careers of some of those who, amidst the claustrophobic confines of Dublin Castle, had practised Fake News.) One major conclusion is that while the British had gained a towering mastery over the German propaganda machine in WWI, their effort in Ireland during the War of Independence was vastly inferior to that of the Sinn Féin Propaganda Department, which operated clandestinely and with scarcely any resources.

Michael B. Barry, Dublin

Preamble

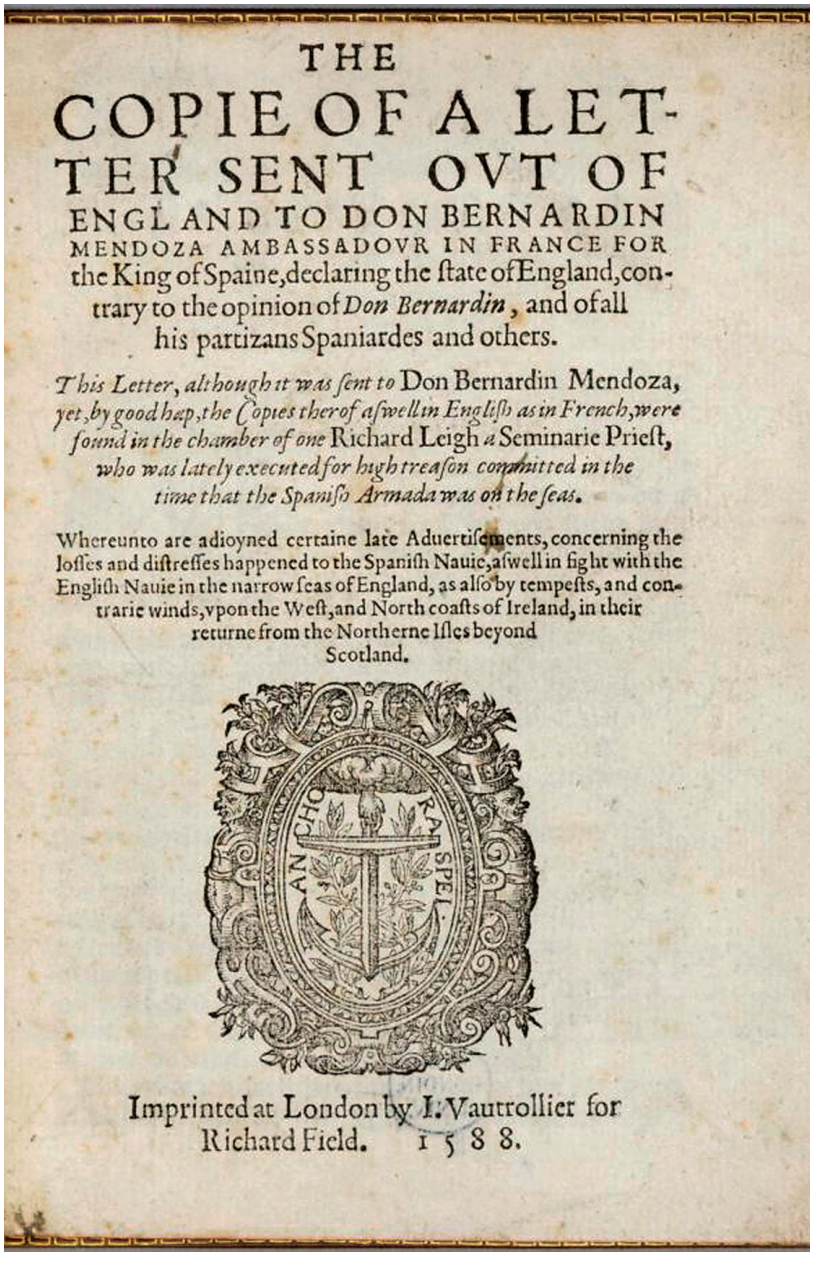
Fake News through the Ages

Fake News, the concept of spreading disinformation to best an enemy or opposing ideology, has existed for millennia, probably since man was able to communicate using clay tablets. Given that it is an inherent part of the human condition, it has been around since time began. To give an early example: in 34 BC the wealthy patrician Octavian (later to be known as the Emperor Augustus Caesar), on his journey to seizing power and becoming absolute ruler of Rome, fomented an effective campaign which spread falsehoods about his rival, the general Mark Anthony, then in a dalliance with Cleopatra, ruler of the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt.

Dissimulation has been practised across the centuries. During the sixteenth century, there was a pivotal event, part of a great European power struggle — the Spanish Armada expedition of 1588, which, as it happens, impacted Ireland during its latter stages. Philip II of Spain had lost patience with Elizabeth I of England whose ships were attacking his treasure fleets and colonies in the New World. In addition she had begun to provide support and troops to the Protestant Dutch who

An early attempt at spreading falsehoods was made in 34 BC by Octavian (later Emperor Augustus) when he attempted to blacken his rival, Mark Anthony. The latter's dalliance with Cleopatra (their first meeting is sumptuously depicted in this 19th-century painting, right), provided fertile ground for such inventions.

were mounting a rebellion against Spanish rule in the Netherlands. Philip decided to send a vast Armada to support an invasion of England by the Spanish troops based in the Netherlands. The objective was to put an end to Elizabeth's rule – to overthrow her and install a Catholic on the throne. In the event, the great Armada was deflected by an equally large English fleet, and on the return journey, around 26 of the Armada ships, amidst ferocious gales, were destroyed along the Irish coasts. The Armada clearly had not achieved its goal. However it was not destroyed, as roughly two-thirds of the ships managed to limp back to Spain.



THE
COPIE OF A LET-
TER SENT OVT OF
ENGLAND TO DON BERNARDIN
MENDOZA AMBASSADOVR IN FRANCE FOR
the King of Spaine, declaring the ſtate of England, contrary to the opinion of *Don Bernardin*, and of all his partizans Spaniardes and others.

This Letter, although it was ſent to Don Bernardin Mendoza, *yet, by good hap, the Copies therof aſwell in Engliſh as in French, were found in the chamber of one* Richard Leigh *a* Seminarie Prieſt, *who was lately executed for high treaſon committed in the time that the Spaniſh Armada was on the ſeas.*

Whereunto are adioyned certaine late Aduertiſements, concerning the loſſes and diſtreſſes happened to the Spaniſh Nauie, aſwell in fight with the Engliſh Nauie in the narrow ſeas of England, as alſo by tempeſts, and contrarie winds, vpon the Weſt, and North coaſts of Ireland, in their returne from the Northerne Iſles beyond Scotland.

Imprinted at London by I. Vautrollier for Richard Field. 1588.

Left: utter forgery. 'The copie of a letter sent...to Don Bernardin Mendoza', (1588), purporting to be from an English Catholic priest. It was written by William Cecil, Baron Burghley, Elizabeth I's principal advisor. The intention was to spread the news about the defeat of the Armada and to dissuade English Catholics from supporting the Spanish cause.

Right: high-grade propaganda. These medals were struck in the Netherlands to celebrate the defeat of the Spanish Armada. The underlying message was that there was divine approval for the Protestant cause. Near right: a fleet is shown on a stormy sea, with the inscription telling that God blew and they were scattered. Far right: The medal shows the Pope, Philip II and clerics with their heads covered in bandages and their feet kicking in vain against a bed of spikes.

There was an understandable boost to English morale after it became evident that the immediate Spanish threat had evaporated. A thanksgiving service was held in St Paul's Cathedral where Spanish banners seized in battle were exultantly paraded. Services were held all over England giving thanks for the victory, with the reassuring message that there was divine approval for the Protestant cause.

Much exaggeration and dissimulation followed. One of the most egregious examples occurred in September 1588, when William Cecil, Baron Burghley (Lord Chancellor and Elizabeth's principal advisor), forged a letter that purported to have been seized from an English Jesuit (recently executed for treason) and was supposedly destined for Don Bernardin de Mendoza, the Spanish Ambassador in France. It emphasised Spanish losses and outlined Philip II's 'unjust' reasons for attacking England. Published as a newsletter, its purpose was to spread the news of the defeat of Philip's Armada and at the same time to dissuade English Catholics from supporting the Spanish cause. Additional details were added to later versions of the letter as news arrived of the Armada losses along the Irish coast.

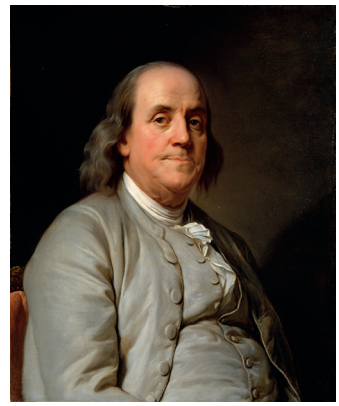
Equally, Dutch Protestants in the Netherlands rejoiced at the defeat of the common enemy. A set of commemorative medals struck there pointed clearly to whose side God was on, implying that in effect it was a Protestant wind that had confounded the Spanish fleet. One medal depicted a fleet on a stormy sea with the inscription '*Flavit et Dissipati Sunt*' which can be translated as *'(God) blew and they were scattered.'* Another in the series satirises the Pope, Philip II and some clerics, who are shown with their heads wrapped with bandages and their feet kicking in vain against a bed of spikes.

It is significant that the Armada events occurred just as printing technology was gaining its stride. The invention of the printing press allowed the mass distribution of printed material, which in turn allowed the transmission of information across borders. With relatively high levels of literacy in their towns and cities, the printing revolution had taken root in England and the Netherlands, where books, pamphlets and periodicals were issued proclaiming the great triumph of

1588. The defeat of the Armada was presented as an overwhelming defeat by plucky (and Protestant) England over a despotic Spain, brimming with the fanaticism of the Inquisition, and inflicting cruelties during its colonisation of the Americas.

This message has been long-lasting. This demonisation of Spain (called the *'Leyenda Negra'* in Spain), continued over the centuries and traces persist to this day in English-speaking countries.

Fake News in America was not invented by Donald Trump, who in effect, readjusted the usual meaning of Fake News to mean any story unfavourable to him. A leader of the developing struggle for Independence, John Adams, (later the second President of the United States) made a diary entry on 3 September 1769, cheerfully noting an *'evening spent in preparing for the next day's newspaper — a curious employment. Cooking up Paragraphs, Articles, Occurrences etc. — working the political Engine!'* As he noted, Adams was energetically engaged in placing false stories with the intention of undermining the authority of his enemy, the British. In 1782, during the American Revolutionary War, another Founding Father, Benjamin Franklin, made a blatant attempt at disinformation, planning to demonise British activities in North America. Franklin printed a counterfeit supplement to the popular 'Boston Independent Chronicle'. This supplement was well crafted and even included advertisements. Prominent within were details of wartime atrocities (how bags containing more than 700 *'scalps from our unhappy country-folks'* had been discovered) supposedly carried out by Indians at the bidding of the British. With British public opinion as his target, Franklin sent copies to various correspondents in Amsterdam, London and Madrid — and achieved his goal when the supplement was reproduced in London periodicals. As we shall see later, the British themselves faked newspapers during the early 20th century — in 1921 they printed a forged version of 'Pravda' in London and at around the



Above: Benjamin Franklin, a Founding Father of the United States and producer of a forged supplement to a Boston newspaper.

Numb. 705.

SUPPLEMENT

TO THE BOSTON

INDEPENDENT CHRONICLE.

BOSTON, March 12, 1782.

Extract of a Letter from Capt. Gerrish, of the New England Militia, dated Albany, March 7.

THE Peltry taken in the expedition [*See the account of the expedition to Oswegatchie on the river St. Laurence, in our paper of the 1st instant*], will as you see amount to a good deal of money. The possession of this booty at first gave us pleasure; but we were struck with horror to find among the packages, 8 large ones containing SCALPS of our unhappy country-folks, taken in the three last years by the Senneka Indians from the inhabitants of the frontiers of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, and sent by them as a present to Col. Haldimand, governor of Canada, in order to be by him transmitted to England. They were accompanied by the following curious letter to that gentleman.

Left: an early example of Fake News which presented falsehoods about the enemy, the British in this case. This supplement to the 'Boston Independent Chronicle' was forged by Benjamin Franklin. It alleged barbarous misdeeds by the Indians, clients of the British.

same time produced at Dublin Castle bogus editions of the Sinn Féin 'Irish Bulletin.'

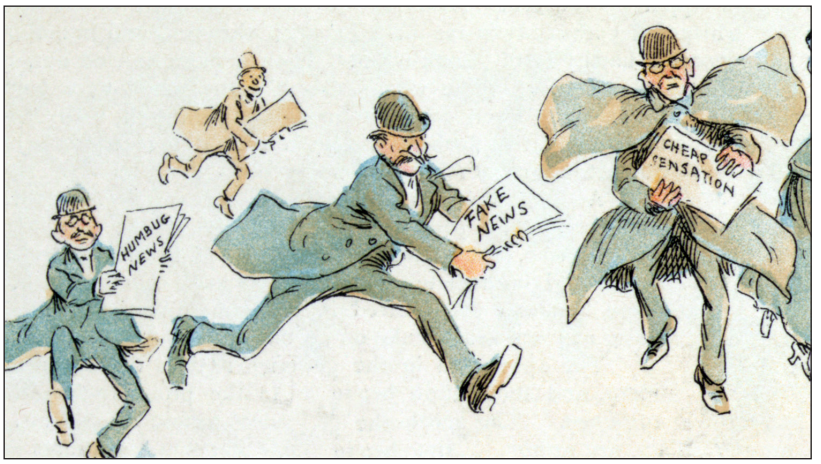
An early use of the term 'Fake News' occurred in 'Puck' magazine of New York. (Incidentally, 'Puck', like its counterpart in London, 'Punch', presented racist falsehoods about the Irish during the latter half of the 19th century, invariably portraying them as ape-like.) A 1894 issue of 'Puck' carried a cartoon which depicted a newspaper tycoon sitting beside a safe bulging with profits, as reporters raced in, carrying stories marked with such as *'Sensation', 'Exposé'* and *'Scandal'* – and one of the reporters is seen bearing *'Fake News'.*

The current Macmillan Dictionary definition of 'Fake News' is as good as any: *'a story that is presented as being a genuine item of news but is in fact not true and is intended to deceive people.'*

In these times, we have begun to drown in Fake News; indeed, with the rise of social media, it has spread as fast as Covid-19. Governments are sending out manipulated news in industrial quantities. Such is the ease and efficiency in manipulating public opinion through social media that private specialist companies have stepped into the breach. One study in 2021 showed that around 50 countries are using third-party firms to manage their propaganda campaigns.

In 2018, battered by the Brexit hurricane, the British Government decided not to use the term 'Fake News' as it was *'a poorly defined and misleading term that conflates a variety of false information, from genuine error through to foreign interference in the democratic process.'* And they should know, as the outcome of the vote in the Brexit referendum of 2016 was heavily influenced by many falsehoods issued by right-wing politicians and their advisors — including the spectacular falsehoods that adorned the infamous Brexit battle bus. In the following chapters we will see how their predecessors of a century before, working in a

Right: an 1894 edition of the American magazine, 'Puck', depicts a newspaper tycoon counting his profits, as reporters run in with sensations and scandals.



Left: detail from the 'Puck' cartoon shown on the previous page. Amidst the sensation, a reporter scurries in bearing 'Fake News'. This is an early use of the term.

variety of government departments, energetically propagated British dissimulation during WWI and the War of Independence.

Ireland proved to be an unexpected and surprising complication for the British Government as they exited from the European Union. It was even more complicated for them back in 1920-21 when the protagonists for Irish Independence were actively working to induce an even more rapid British exit — in this case, from Ireland. In the event it is surprising that, at the time, Sinn Féin turned out to be better than the British at disseminating information to the press — mainly because they generally adhered to the truth.

In Chapter 4, we will see the many gradations of disinformation that were employed by the Crown authorities in Ireland during 1920-21. There was the workaday 'propaganda by news' (a theory developed by Basil Clarke, head of the Public Information Branch in Dublin Castle) which churned out news of the events, usually factual, but favourable to the official version. The next gradation was the twisting of any reports that could prove unpalatable for the British cause. One example was during the aftermath of the burning of Cork where it proved necessary to dissemble and hide the culpability of the Auxiliaries. And then, at the top end of the scale, there was full-strength Fake News, such as that emitted by the wilder spirits in Dublin Castle, the Captains Pollard and Darling of the Information Section of the Police Authority.

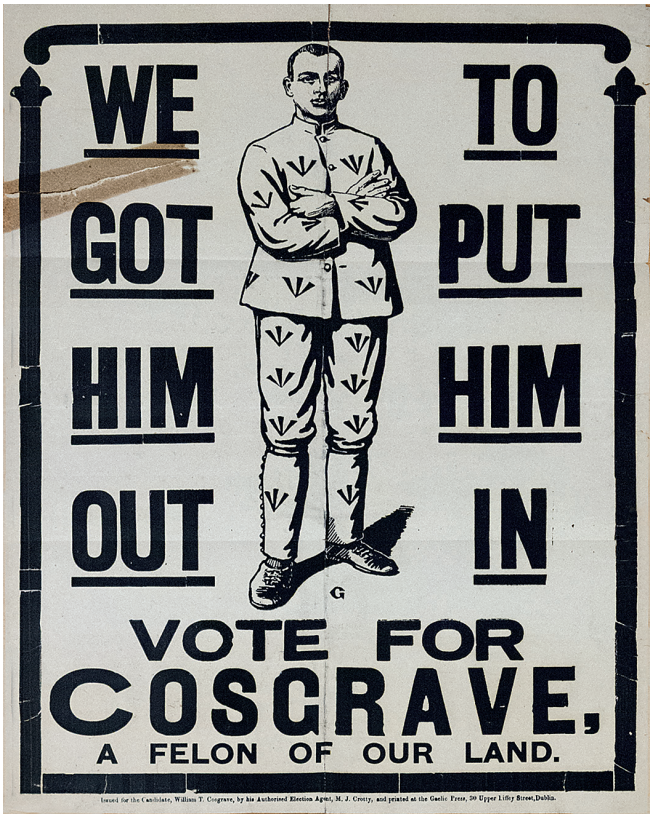
And now a century later, what are we to do in the modern world, as we are deluged by Fake News, augmented and amplified by social media and the interconnectivity of a globalised world? The answer lies, not in Artificial Intelligence, but in one's own common sense. Be aware that in any society, the perceived 'good guys' probably lie and dissimulate as much as the 'bad guys'. Take all utterances and news reports with a pinch of salt. Stay informed, use common sense, read, research and read again. Ask yourself who gains from any particular version of the news: *cui bono?*

Chapter 1
The News and the Nationalist Struggle

The War of Independence in Ireland proved to be much more bitter than the Easter Rising in Dublin. After the suppression of the rebellion at the end of April 1916, it appeared that the British could return to concentrate on fighting what they called the 'Great' War, then at its height. However, the hasty execution of the Irish rebel leaders led to a rise in sympathy for the cause of independence. Immediately after the Rising over 2,500 Republicans were arrested and shipped to various prisons in Britain. Most were transferred to the bleak Frongoch camp, a former prisoner-of-war camp in North Wales. Frongoch and other locations became universities of revolution — there was time to reflect in captivity and plan afresh for a redoubled struggle for independence. As the rebels were released from detention in Britain they joined — and rejuvenated — Sinn Féin, which went on to win a wave of by-elections. In tandem with this, the Irish Volunteers reorganised and took a new purposeful and practical direction. Determined to resolve what they perceived as the 'Irish problem', the British Government set up an 'Irish Convention' which assembled all shades of opinion, save Sinn Féin, to discuss the governance of Ireland. A mild proposal for an agreed Home Rule administration for all of Ireland faltered under opposition from a Catholic bishop, and the convention petered out. At the end of March 1918, coming under severe pressure from a new German onslaught, the British miscalculated and proclaimed conscription in Ireland — which generated immediate and universal opposition.

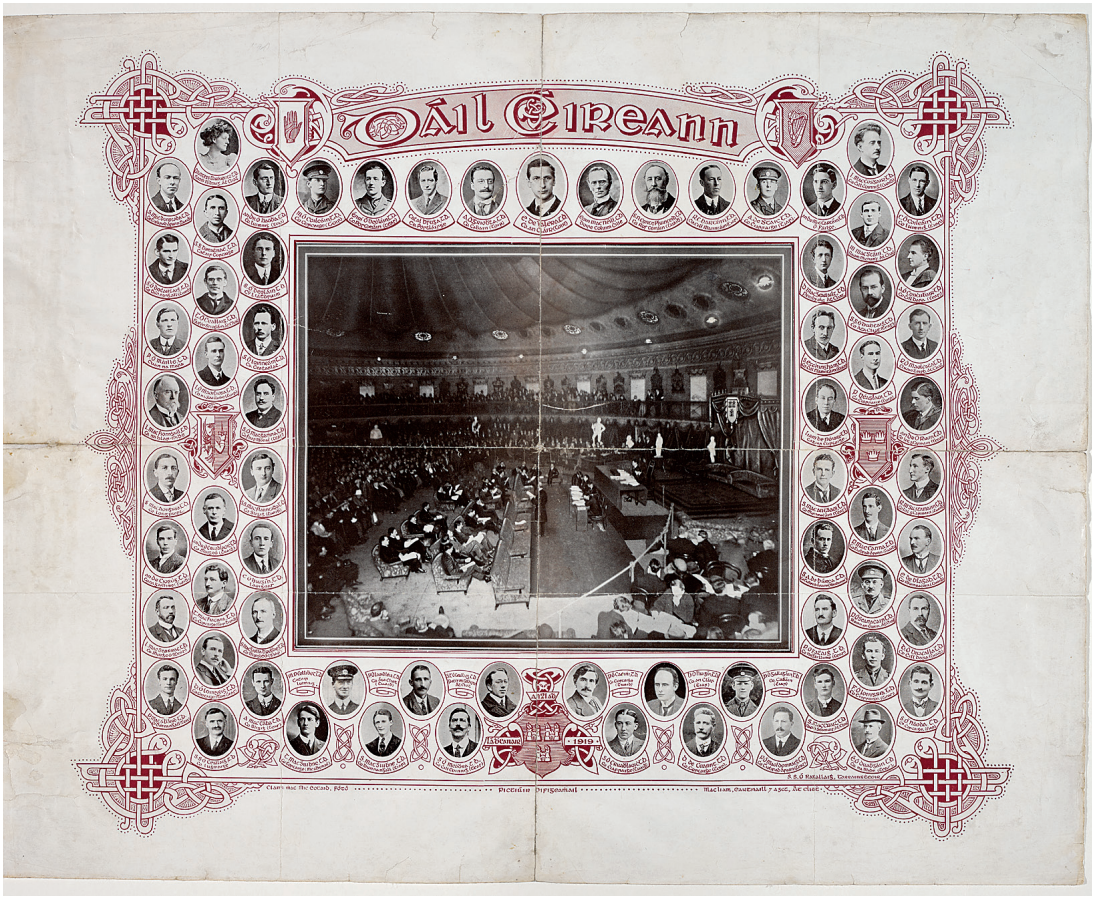
The issue of British truthfulness became public during the affair of the so-called 'German Plot'. In April 1918, the British Government convinced themselves that Sinn Féin was plotting with Germany. In reality there was no plot but the members of the Cabinet, in those feverish times, despite flimsy evidence, wanted to believe that there was a plot. Against this background, Lord John French arrived in Ireland on 11 May 1918 as Lord Lieutenant. He brought a bullish approach, opining that *'with armoured cars and aeroplanes you don't need a great many troops to enforce conscription'* — Lloyd George had deliberately chosen Lord French as he saw that he would act with firmness. French demonstrated this by citing the 'German Plot', and ordered a roundup of senior Sinn Féiners, which began on 17 May.

The plan to introduce conscription was postponed to June 1918 and then to October. By then the war had been won. The botched attempt to introduce compulsory military service had been a huge miscalculation — it had created universal opposition. With WWI at an end, a



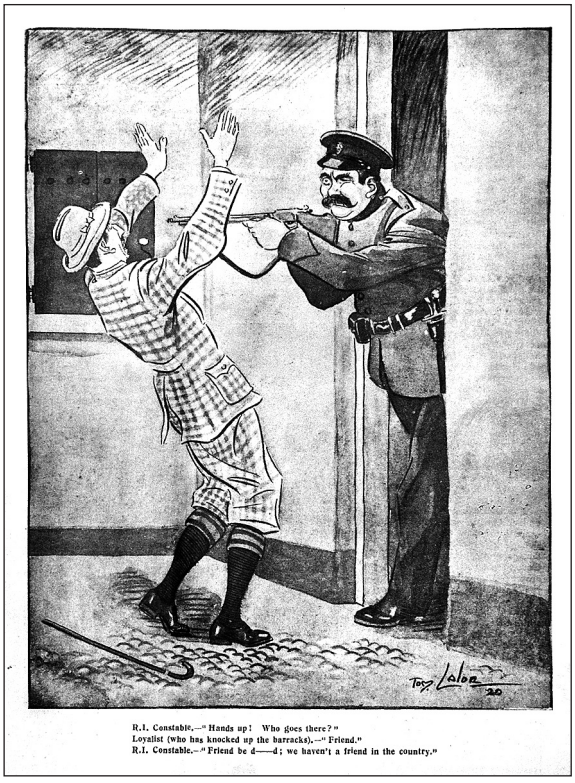
A rejuvenated Sinn Féin won a string of by-elections in 1917. Above: Éamon de Valera on the steps of Ennis courthouse after winning the East Clare by-election in July.

Left: the branding of 'felon' proved to be a powerful vote winner. WT Cosgrave overwhelmingly won the Kilkenny by-election in August 1917, gaining twice as many votes as his opponent.



Above: a poster portraying the first Dáil Éireann. After Sinn Féin won a majority of the Irish seats in the 1918 Westminster General Election, it convened a parliament for Ireland, which met in Dublin on 21 January 1919. This ratified the Irish Republic that had been declared at Easter 1916.

long-deferred General Election was held in December 1918. In Ireland, Sinn Féin gained a commanding 73 seats, resoundingly eclipsing the Irish Parliamentary Party's mere six seats. The Unionists took 26 seats. The First Dáil Éireann, held in January 1919, ratified the Irish Republic that had been proclaimed in Easter 1916. The Dáil decided to seek recognition of Ireland's independence at the Paris Peace Conference, but the delegation sent there was shunned. An ambush by Volunteers at Soloheadbeg, coincidentally on the same day as the First Dáil, resulted in two Royal Irish Constabulary (RIC) deaths. This unauthorised action caused disquiet in senior Republican circles, but in reality the ambush marked the beginning of the increasingly ruthless phase of the war for independence. Several prison escapes by Republicans ensued, particularly that of Éamon de Valera from Lincoln Gaol. Reflecting the new purposeful struggle, Michael Collins established a 'Squad' whose mission was to eliminate spies, the scourge of previous Irish independence movements. The Dublin Metropolitan Police 'G' Division, efficient gatherers of intelligence on Republicans, was neutralised. Across the country, the effectiveness of the RIC, eyes and ears in support of the British grasp on Ireland, was diminished as they were boycotted. In the face of an increased level of attacks, RIC constables were withdrawn



Left: 'not a friend in the country'. The Royal Irish Constabulary had been the effective eyes, ears and muscle for the maintenance of British control over Ireland. From 1919 onwards they were boycotted, and as the months rolled on, had to bear the brunt of the increase in violence.

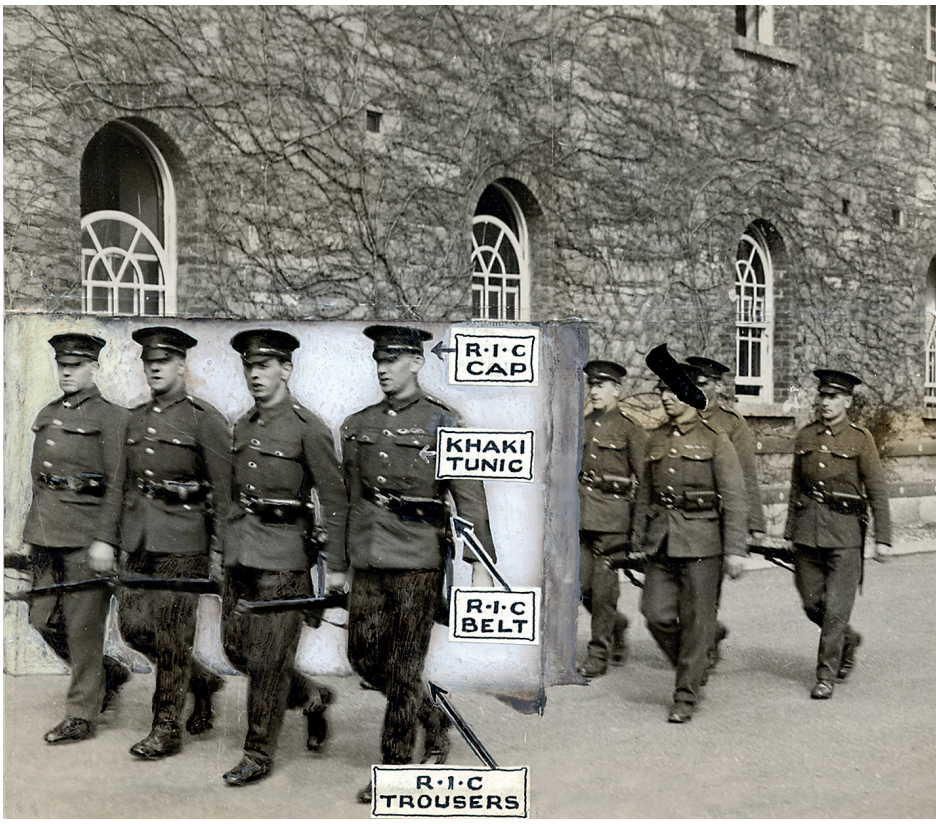
from smaller, more vulnerable barracks. As the RIC ranks became depleted due to resignations, it was decided in 1919 to strengthen the force. Ex-servicemen, mainly from Britain, were recruited, who on arrival in Ireland, gained the soubriquet 'Black and Tans'. As 1919 ended, an ambitious (but failed) IRA attempt to assassinate the Lord Lieutenant, Lord French, in Dublin caused a major shock in the British Cabinet.

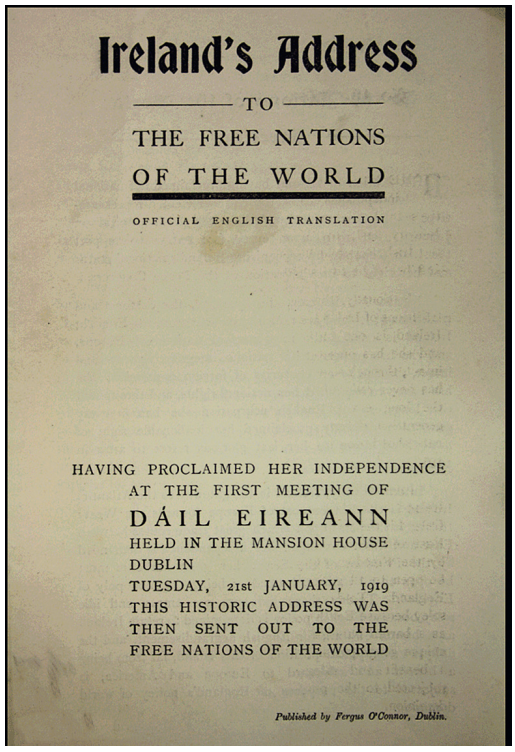
The mayhem continued into 1920. As the IRA burned 180 abandoned RIC barracks, recruiting for a new paramilitary force of ex-officers, the Auxiliary Division, began. March 1920 saw the Lord Mayor of Cork assassinated by masked members of the local Crown forces. In April a hunger strike by prisoners in Mountjoy Gaol in Dublin ended with a botched release by the authorities. The Irish Administration had long been perceived by London as being dysfunctional and the maladroit release of the prisoners resulted in the head of the British service, Sir Warren Fisher, being asked to go to Dublin to investigate the functioning of the administration there. His conclusion was damning: the administration was *'quite obsolete'* and *'woodenly stupid.'* It was to be all change — a new team was dispatched from Britain. Of the 'new brooms' that arrived, several at high level were competent and clever. However, a number of those at the next level, as we shall see in the following chapter, were second-rate and decidedly odd.

On 21 January 1919, during the proceedings of the First Dáil, a 'Address to the Free Nations of the World' was proclaimed. Reflecting the

Right: with the RIC under pressure, ex-servicemen, mainly British, were recruited in early 1920 to bolster their ranks. Due to an initial shortage of RIC dark green cloth, the new recruits were clad in a motley uniform, gaining the soubriquet 'Black and Tans'.

From mid-1920, ex-officers were recruited for a paramilitary force. Below: 'I' Company of the Auxiliaries pose in front of Amiens Street station. These featured in the staged battle at Vico Road in November 1920. DI Charles Vickers sits next to the driver in the lead vehicle.





Ireland's Address

TO

THE FREE NATIONS

OF THE WORLD

OFFICIAL ENGLISH TRANSLATION

HAVING PROCLAIMED HER INDEPENDENCE
AT THE FIRST MEETING OF
DÁIL EIREANN
HELD IN THE MANSION HOUSE
DUBLIN
TUESDAY, 21st JANUARY, 1919
THIS HISTORIC ADDRESS WAS
THEN SENT OUT TO THE
FREE NATIONS OF THE WORLD

Published by Fergus O'Connor, Dublin.

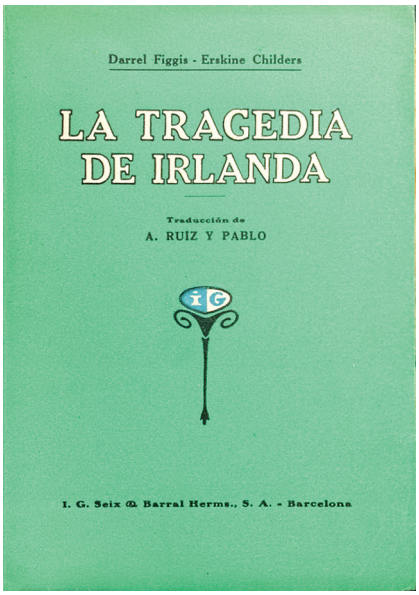
Left: the grand declaration issued by the First Dáil, the 'Address to the Free Nations of the World', did not garner the expected reaction.

Below: Paris, May 1919. Seán T O'Kelly, along with Mr and Mrs Gavin Duffy, are on their way to see French Prime Minister Clemenceau. O'Kelly had been delegated to attend the Paris Peace Conference to win support for Ireland's independence. His efforts did not prove successful, as the victorious powers did not wish to irritate their ally, Britain.

Right: Desmond FitzGerald, poet and writer. He became Sinn Féin Director of Propaganda in June 1919. With a good feel for this field, this urbane man was able to easily interact with international journalists.

optimism that was coursing through the new post-war world, it grandly called on the 'Free Nations of the World' to support the Irish Republic *'by recognising Ireland's national status and her right to its vindication at the Peace Conference.'* Sinn Féin placed great hopes in this conference, which began in January 1919. They had expectations that President Wilson's idealistic Fourteen Points would help Ireland's cause. In the event, the Irish delegation, led by Seán T O'Kelly, was roundly ignored. The victorious powers did not want to irritate their ally, Britain, or consider listening to a movement that had seemingly sided with the Germans in 1916. O'Kelly remained in France to develop contacts with journalists and spread the news about the cause of Ireland's independence. It is worth pausing to assess the general level of knowledge of this cause. Undoubtedly, within Ireland, the concept of an independent Ireland was common currency and had gained widespread support. However, in Britain, Ireland's independence was universally perceived as a threat to the well-being of Britain and its Empire. Indeed such was the British press perception at the beginning of 1919 that they reported on the First Dáil in a derisory manner. On the European continent and elsewhere there was only a vague, if any, knowledge of Ireland's cause.

In January 1919, recognising the importance of getting its message across, the Dáil established a Department of Propaganda (which was renamed the Department of Publicity in March 1921) under the elderly Lawrence Ginnell, previously an Irish Parliamentary Party MP who had joined Sinn Féin and then was elected in the 1918 General Election. Ginnell was soon arrested and the poet and writer Desmond



Left: published in Spain, a pamphlet written by Darrell Figgis and Erskine Childers, telling of 'La Tragedia de Irlanda'. Sinn Féin maintained representatives in the principal world capitals. Many pamphlets and posters were produced to spread the message of Irish independence.

FitzGerald took over his role in charge of publicity in June 1919. He possessed a good sense for propaganda and was to direct the Sinn Féin efforts for most of the active period of the War of Independence. On several occasions in 1919 he travelled to London, where he established contacts with foreign journalists as well as with editors of the principal English-language news agencies. In the meantime, Sinn Féin envoys attempted to spread the message in the major world capitals, producing many pamphlets and posters in a number of languages. As fatalities and reprisals increased during 1920, interest in Ireland grew and many British, American and continental journalists arrived in Dublin to see for themselves. Many of these contacted Sinn Féin, who treated them courteously. Sometimes there was the added *frisson* of obtaining clandestine interviews with leading Republican figures. On one occasion the urbane Desmond FitzGerald called on a journalist at the Shelbourne Hotel and, under the cloak of secrecy, arranged an interview with Arthur Griffith.

Initially, much of the press in Britain reported the official version, with little interpretation, that it was a police war against the criminal conspiracy of the 'Sinn Féin murder gang.' Some, like the 'Morning Post', could be relied on to mindlessly repeat official propaganda throughout the conflict. Others, like the 'Manchester Guardian' and the 'Daily News', took an independent view and became increasingly critical of government policy on Ireland. Many presented the IRA violence as wrong but came to see it as the consequence of misgovernment and repression.

The Sinn Féin Department of Propaganda was run on a shoestring, but its task was eased as the British began to score an ongoing series of own goals. As unofficial reprisals, mainly the burning of Ireland's towns by Crown forces, increased in intensity over the second half of

1920, this news came to be reported widely in the British and international press. The sack of Balbriggan on 20 September 1920 gained particular notoriety, due to extensive destruction, but also because it was near Dublin and thus easier for journalists to visit. Scores of houses were burnt and much of the population had to abandon the town. The shocking news flashed around the world. The 'Daily Mail' wrote after Balbriggan: *'half the world is coming to feel that our Government is condoning vendetta and turning a blind eye upon the execution of lawless reprisals…the slur on our nation's good name becomes insufferable.'* Reprisals continued, nevertheless, and became official in Munster after the introduction of martial law there at the beginning of 1921.

When Desmond FitzGerald was arrested in February 1921, Erskine Childers took charge. He was a famous English novelist turned fervent Republican and much else, including (as we will see in Chapter 2) a founding member in his former life of the hyper-Imperialist Legion of Frontiersmen. The fluent Childers wrote in the 'Irish Bulletin' and the many Sinn Féin pamphlets that were distributed overseas.

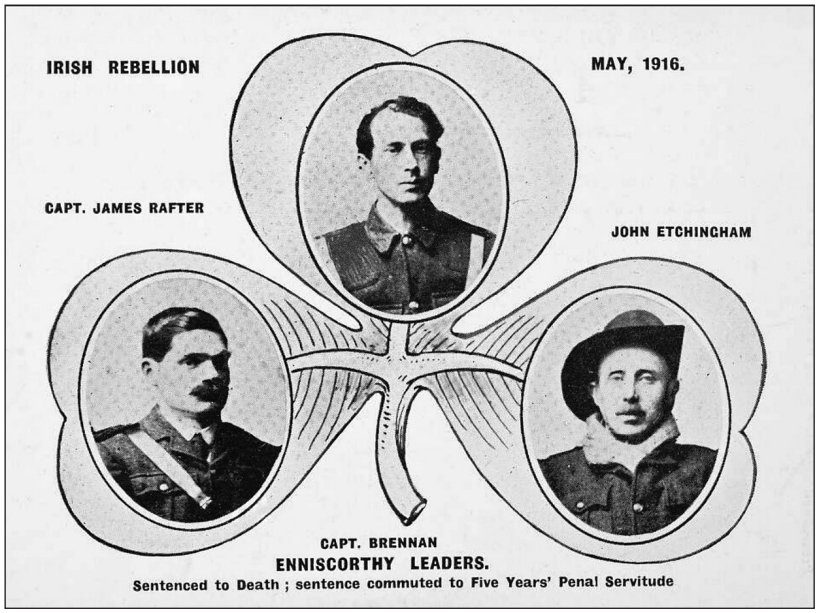
The Irish Volunteers, or the Irish Republican Army (IRA) as they began to be known, began publishing the magazine 'An tÓglach', edited by the journalist and 1916 veteran Piaras Béaslaí, on 31 August 1918. This was aimed at the Volunteers. Each edition commenced with an article that rallied the troops with inspirational words such as this example on 1 October 1920: *'We must keep up our offensive...we must deal with the new campaign of murder and savagery. We are now far better armed, equipped, trained and instructed than ever before; and the people of Ireland look to us for help. Speed up the work!'* As well as technical and organisational instruction there was an occasional piece on military history. The magazine continued to be produced during the War of Independence and, surprisingly for what was a clandestine publication, it managed to maintain a consistent and professional layout over that time.

However, it was also essential to get the Republican message to the general public. In April 1919, Terence MacSwiney, recognising the need for a publication that would act as a vehicle to inform and influ-

Right: Kathleen McKenna, the central figure behind the publishing of the 'Irish Bulletin'. Throughout its existence, she consistently typed, assembled and produced the newsletter.

ence the press and politicians, presented a motion in the Dáil that a daily paper should be established. The matter was referred to the Director of Propaganda, but did not progress for several months. It took until 11 November 1919 for the first simple and mimeographed edition (a mere 30 copies) of the 'Irish Bulletin' to be printed. The Cabinet had just voted a budget of £500, just about enough to pay for the typewriter, duplicator and basic running expenses. The initial staff were based at the Sinn Féin headquarters at 6 Harcourt Street in Dublin. Central to the whole enterprise was the doughty Kathleen McKenna who typed and produced the newsletter throughout its existence. Two journalists who had been behind the clever and effective publicity campaign during the 1918 General Election were involved from the beginning. Robert Brennan, veteran of one of the few successful actions of the Rising outside of Dublin in 1916 at Enniscorthy, wrote the first edition. Frank Gallagher wrote the next three. Gallagher had been editor of the 'Cork Free Press' (and was later the founding editor of the 'Irish Press'.) The publication soon gathered pace and grew to three or more pages, issued five times a week. Over the full extent of its clandestine existence, it never missed an issue, until publication ceased after the Truce in July 1921. Within its pages it catalogued the actions of the Crown forces and reported on Republican aims and activities. As reprisals increased, reports of these took up increasing space in the paper. Favourable comments in the foreign press were quoted. An intricate organisation had been set up to gather news. The various departments of the Dáil Government cooperated and IRA units around the country sent information to the GHQ, on raids and reprisals by the Crown forces. After Erskine Childers' appointment as Director of Propaganda in early 1921, the 'Bulletin' also listed the IRA attacks and ambushes.

Right: a typical page of the 'Irish Bulletin'. 'Purple-inked' as one of its editors, Frank Gallagher, later called it, it was mimeographed with a basic layout. Nevertheless its measured tone and factual accuracy resulted in its gaining credibility amongst a wide range of international decision-makers.



The journalist Robert Brennan wrote the first edition of the 'Irish Bulletin'. He had directed Sinn Féin's successful campaign in the December 1918 General Election.
Left: a postcard honouring Brennan and other Volunteer leaders in Enniscorthy, scene of one of the few effective actions in 1916 outside of Dublin. The Volunteers took over the town on Thursday 27 April and held it for three days.

POLICEMEN AS THEY ARE IN IRELAND.

Incendiarism as a Method of Preserving Law and Order.

It has now been ascertained that the attempt to burn the residences of prominent Sinn Feiners at Kilmallock, Co. Limerick, was made by policemen in uniform. When the occupants of the houses were in bed and the town was absolutely peaceful, policemen threw petrol on the fronts of the houses and set fire to them. This occurred on Sunday morning, May 30th (not on Saturday morning as stated in yesterday's Bulletin). In other words, it took place 48 hours after the attack on the police barracks had concluded.

———o———

" THAT FREEDOM MAY LIVE."

Geddes Salutes the Dead — His Government Prepares to add to their Number.

The Press of June 1st reports the following from Washington, United States America:-

"Sir Auckland Geddes has sent the following message to Mr. Baker, Secretary of War, and Mr. Daniel, Secretary for the Navy, on the occasion of Decoration Day:-

'In the name of my Sovereign, His Majesty King George, and British peoples throughout the world, I hail America's sons and daughters who have died that freedom may live.' "

The Press of June 1st also reports the following:-

"The 'Tsatitsa' arrived at Queenstown, Co. Cork, and disembarked the Cameron Highlanders about 1,000 strong."

"Three motor lorries laden with soldiers arrived at Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, taking up quarters at the Royal Irish Constabulary Barracks. A detachment with fixed bayonets was posted around the Courthouse and remained there during the night."

"A force of Lancers arrived in Waterford City yesterday."

"Barbed wire entanglements are still arriving in Dublin from England."

"A convoy of 60 military cars for service in the 22 towns of the Western military district have arrived at Brigade Headquarters, Athlone, Co. West Meath."

"Military aeroplanes were busy in the neighbourhood of Youghal, County Cork, between 11 p.m. and midnight on Sunday."

"A number of warships are now being fitted out at Sheerness for despatch to Irish ports."

"Large reinforcements of troops with accompanying stores and equipment are to arrive in Ireland this week for distribution in the South and West."

"The people of Moycullen, Co. Galway, are suffering many hardships at the hands of the military stationed in that neighbourhood."

"There were exciting scenes at an Irish Language Festival at Cononagh, Rosscarbery, Co. Cork. Armed military and police took possession of the field and removed the people. A machine gun was placed inside the entrance. Soldiers tore down bunting and partly wrecked the platform."

Reports from Ireland on May 31st include:-

The promiscuous shooting by uniformed police and troops on the public streets of Kilmallock 48 hours after the necessity for shooting had disappeared.

Left: the English-born Erskine Childers — variously imperialist, writer, soldier, intelligence officer and then, fervent Republican. After Desmond FitzGerald's arrest in February 1921, this fluent and articulate man took charge of the Dáil Department of Propaganda.

In general, the 'Irish Bulletin' maintained a measured tone and avoided fabrications. This was deliberate policy, as Frank Gallagher later wrote in his book on the period: *'Day after day it set out, not in argument, but in cold hard reality the horrors of British rule.'* He told how its circulation and influence grew: *'At first it was circulated to a few people only — the Dublin newspaper offices, correspondents and outside papers in Dublin. Slowly its circulation widened — sent by post to a few friendly British papers and MPs, then to all important papers in Britain and the United States, to members of the British Opposition in the Commons and Lords, to the leading members of the Senate and the House of Representatives in Washington, then to leading men in all the English-speaking countries. It went to India, Egypt and other nations asserting their right to freedom. It was translated by the Irish Republican delegations in Paris, Rome and Madrid, and went to leading personalities on the continent and to very important newspapers.'*

The 'Irish Bulletin's' gold-plated circulation list and ability to reach international decision-makers at a high level was a tribute to the effectiveness of the clandestine, impoverished and sometimes rickety Sinn Féin Propaganda Department. Its reputation for accuracy was such that recipients first turned to it for information in comparison to the blatantly false press notices that emanated from Dublin Castle.

Frank Gallagher recounted how *'At first the 'Bulletin' was not believed; it was put aside as war propaganda. Then there came into ordinary news from another source, reports of an outrage the 'Bulletin' had already given in detail, and some of the more thoughtful recipients went back to its account to test its accuracy. They found it to be 100 per cent true...Soon it was appreciated that this was a new form of war propaganda — one based*

on actual happenings, observed and provable. Thus, emboldened, more and more people in Britain and elsewhere, grounded their own statements on what they had read in this purple-inked sheet which reached them every morning.'

In his memoirs, the Republican CS (Todd) Andrews noted that the 'Irish Bulletin' was one of the most important weapons of the Republican Movement: *'It was worth several Flying Columns...Had it not been for (its) exposures, the British campaign of terror could have been conducted relatively quietly and the measure of resistance of the IRA would never be known to the outside world.'*

The Castle authorities soon realised the dangers inherent in the paper and it ranked high on the search-list for the nightly raids across Dublin. As a result the small staff of the paper had to move frequently from hide-out to hide-out. General Nevil Macready, Commander-in-Chief, Ireland, related in his memoirs how on 22 May 1920, very soon after his arrival in Ireland, he *'wrote to the Chief Secretary drawing his attention to a leaflet called 'The Irish Bulletin', issued by Sinn Féin broadcast, but especially to the French and American press, and urging that something should be done by way of a counterblast, "sticking to essentials, and contradicting evident mis-statements, or supplying them with a context which would alter the whole atmosphere."'*

In direct response, in August 1920 Dublin Castle produced the 'Weekly Summary', flawed and full of blatant propaganda. This made the Sinn Féin newsletter look good by comparison — and, as we shall see, the 'Irish Bulletin' was paid the ultimate compliment, when in 1921 the propagandists of Dublin Castle produced fake versions.

The dynamic of death and funerals has always provided powerful and emotive propaganda for the Republican cause. Back in 1915, this had been amply demonstrated by the large crowds at O'Donovan Rossa's funeral. Pearse's oration helped energise the cause of the Rising, which occurred a year later. In September 1917, Thomas Ashe's funeral had equally drawn huge crowds and provided Michael Collins with the opportunity during his oration at the graveside to state, marking a new ruthlessness, that *'Nothing additional remains to be said. That volley which we have just heard is the only speech which it is proper to make above the grave of a dead Fenian.'* Equally, there was a huge outpouring of sympathy for the youthful Kevin Barry, condemned to death and then executed after being captured during an ambush. The long-drawn-out-agony of Terence MacSwiney's hunger strike during the second half of 1920 generated great sympathy and admiration in Ireland and internationally, to the consternation of the British.

The Restoration of Order in Ireland Act (ROIA) of August 1920 maintained strict control over the press in Ireland. The 'Irish Times', then representing the Irish Unionist viewpoint, invariably reported the official version. The other principal Irish newspapers had to tread a fine line between reporting the truth, and official suppression. Always condemning IRA violence, they generally came to report fairly on Sinn

The dynamic of death and funerals had always provided powerful and emotive propaganda for the Republican cause. Above: in September 1917, large crowds line the north quays in Dublin during the funeral of Thomas Ashe, hero of the 1916 Ashbourne engagement.

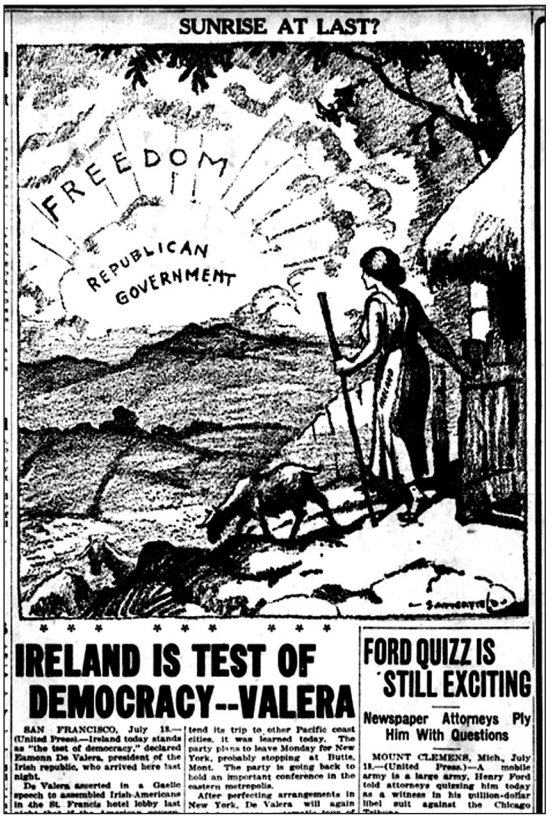
Left: the funeral of Cork Lord Mayor Terence MacSwiney in St George's Cathedral, Southwark, London, in October 1920, as depicted by Sir John Lavery. Huge crowds attended the funeral processions in London and Cork.

Féin activities, while at the same time uncovering the violence of the Crown forces. In December 1920 the editor and owners of the 'Freeman's Journal' were sentenced to one year's imprisonment under the ROIA.

The press in Ireland did not suffer only from British pressure. Some local IRA units became frustrated at the reporting by newspapers of their activities. On Christmas Eve, 1920, IRA Volunteers attacked the offices of the 'Cork Examiner' which, in an editorial, had supported the Bishop of Cork, who had targeted the IRA by decreeing excommunication for anyone *'who organises or takes part in ambushes or murder or attempted murder.'* The venerable 'Skibbereen Eagle' (which at the close of the nineteenth century, had thundered against the Tsar and advised that it would '*keep its eye on the Emperor of Russia*') suffered the indignity of having its printing machinery dumped into the River Ilen by the local IRA. In turn, the other Skibbereen paper, the pro-Republican 'Southern Star' suffered raids by Crown forces and in October 1919 was suppressed by order of the British military.

In the hope of getting American recognition for Irish independence, Éamon de Valera travelled to the United States in June 1919, where he remained until December 1920. While he did not secure any recognition from official America, he embarked on a series of mass meetings advancing the Irish cause, which resulted in widespread newspaper coverage. De Valera also launched a bond drive for the Irish Republic, with a $5 million target. During the post-WWI years (and, in reality, ever since) and the United States emerging as the dominant world power, the British were particularly sensitive to public opinion there.

Right: Éamon de Valera during a visit to the Chippewa reservation in Wisconsin. In June 1919 he had travelled to the United States in the hope of harnessing American support for Irish independence. Given the rising importance of the United States and their own relative decline, the British were particularly sensitive to public opinion there.


SUNRISE AT LAST?

FREEDOM

REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT

IRELAND IS TEST OF DEMOCRACY--VALERA

SAN FRANCISCO, July 18.—(United Press).—Ireland today stands as "the test of democracy," declared Eamonn De Valera, president of the Irish republic, who arrived here last night.

De Valera asserted in a Gaelic speech to assembled Irish-Americans in the St. Francis hotel lobby last

tend its trip to other Pacific coast cities. It was learned today. The party plans to leave Monday for New York, probably stopping at Butte, Mont. The party is going back to hold an important conference in the eastern metropolis.

After perfecting arrangements in New York, De Valera will again

FORD QUIZZ IS STILL EXCITING

Newspaper Attorneys Ply Him With Questions

MOUNT CLEMENS, Mich, July 18.—(United Press.)—A mobile army is a large army, Henry Ford told attorneys quizzing him today as a witness in his million-dollar libel suit against the Chicago

Left: as seen by the 'Seattle Star' — freedom dawns with the prospect of a Republican Government — de Valera gets the message of Irish freedom across to the American press.

Major Cecil John Street (veteran of propaganda in the intelligence section, MI7.b, and later for the Dublin Castle administration) in his book, 'The Administration of Ireland 1920' cast a baleful eye on Irish activism in the United States and the danger therein for Britain: *'Finding Germany a broken reed, the Irish malcontents have turned once more to America, as being the country whose population might be expected to be most in sympathy with Irish ideals. The so-called President of the Republic himself made the United States his headquarters for over a year...and for the last few years there has been a fog of misunderstanding between two great cousin nations, America and England.'*

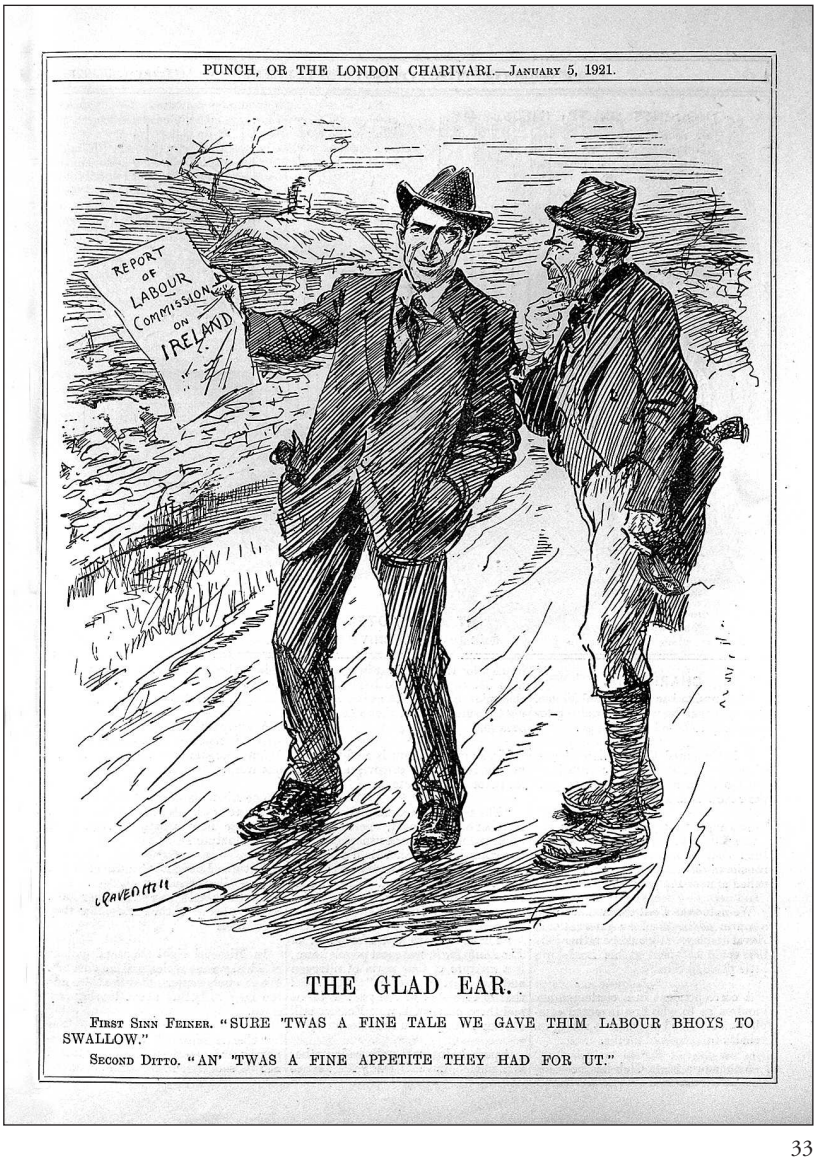
During WWI, amongst many other initiatives, the British had sent out visiting delegations to preach their cause. In December 1919, to counter De Valera's tour, a group of Protestant clergymen from Belfast began a circuit of the United States, under the auspices, in one account, of the well-oiled British propaganda network in America. This posed a danger to de Valera's mission, with the potential to paint him as leading an essentially Catholic movement, which would not go down well in the United States, with its predominately Protestant ethos and population. De Valera and his supporters adroitly deflected the challenge, pointing out that the question of Ireland's rights was a political, not a religious one — and that in any case over the past century and a half for Irish independence the most distinguished leaders had not been Catholic. This message was reinforced when a Presbyterian

minister from the north, Reverend JAH Irwin joined de Valera on the tour to present the case of those Irish Protestants in favour of self determination for Ireland.

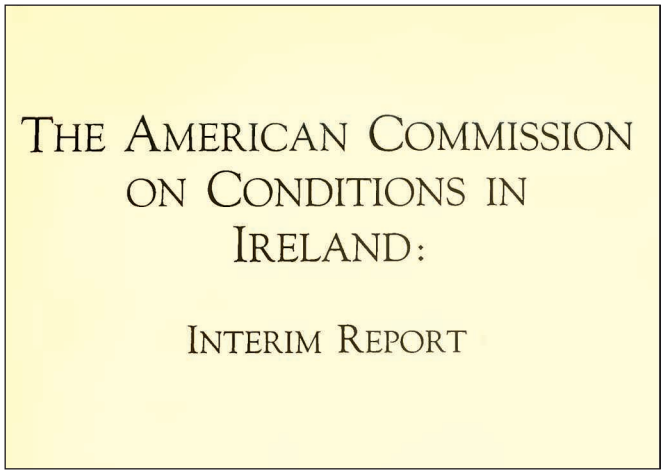
As 1920 rolled on, the news of the atrocities committed by the Crown forces in Ireland echoed through the world. This caused significant foreign interventions in the form of two investigating commissions. The reports that followed confirmed the maladroit activities and brutality of the British in Ireland — and in turn burnished the legitimacy of the Irish Republican cause across the world.

The British Labour Party, since its foundation, has had a very mixed relationship with the cause of Ireland. In 1920 it had opposed the partition of Ireland, but it was also against the concept of a republic — it wanted to maintain the connection between the two islands. The party in effect ignored Ireland and continued to preserve its British patriotic

Alarmed by the news of the reprisals in Ireland, the British Labour Party set up a commission of enquiry in November 1920. In its report the commission concluded: 'Things are being done in the name of Britain which must make her name stink in the nostrils of the whole world'.



Right: Punch steps up to the plate to discredit the Labour Commission to Ireland and its unpalatable report of British atrocities. It portrays what it calls the 'Labour bhoys' as Sinn Féin dupes.



Left: the cover of the 'Interim Report of the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland', issued in early 1921. This investigation into the situation in Ireland by prominent US politicians, churchmen and journalists proved disastrous for Britain's reputation. Its conclusions included: 'The Imperial British forces in Ireland have indiscriminately killed innocent men, women and children.'

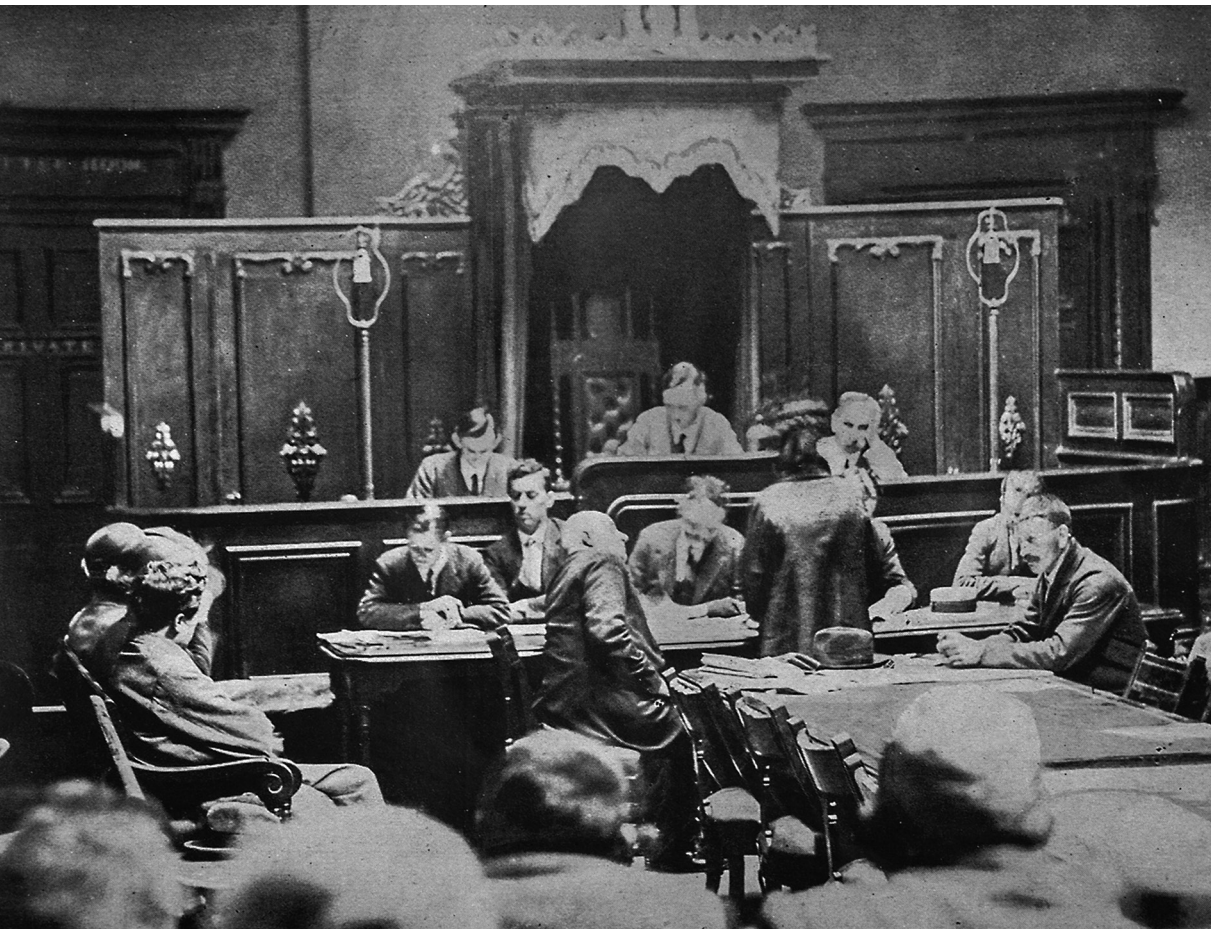
'brand', as well as concentrating on social improvements on the island of Britain. However, amidst the background of the uproar in Ireland, the leadership was assailed for its timidity. As a sop, a commission of enquiry was proposed in November 1920. A delegation (which included legal and military experts) duly showed up in Ireland. It travelled to different locations, held sittings and heard witnesses. It published a report which detailed reprisals and atrocities — and also included photographs of the destruction around the country. The report concluded: *'Things are being done in the name of Britain which must make her name stink in the nostrils of the whole world...a nation is being held in subjugation by an empire which has proudly boasted that it is a friend of small nations.'*

In the United States, alarmed by the news from Ireland, a 'Committee of One Hundred Fifty on Conditions in Ireland' was formed. It was as high level as they came and was composed of a grouping of politicians (including five State Governors and nine US Senators), churchmen, journalists and educators, of every political and religious hue. It proposed to investigate the Irish situation in order to prepare an impartial account of the atrocities committed by both sides. Ironically, the arrangements were modelled on the Bryce committee set up in Britain in December 1915, to investigate alleged German atrocities (see Chapter 2). From November 1920 to January 1921, hearings were held in Washington, and written and oral testimonies from witnesses in Ireland were considered. Despite promises to cooperate, the British Government denied witnesses permission to travel to give evidence — some witnesses had to be smuggled illegally into America. Unsurprisingly, Hamar Greenwood and those of an anti-Republican viewpoint refused to engage with the committee. In due course the interim report was published. It included eyewitness accounts on the main recent events in Ireland, including the killing of civilians and the burning of towns. The conclusion did not mince words: *'The Imperial British forces in Ireland have indiscriminately killed innocent men, women and children; have discriminately assassinated persons suspected of being Republi-*

cans.' It ended by noting: *'In spite of the British "terror" the majority of the Irish people, having sanctioned by ballot the Irish Republic, give their allegiance to it; pay taxes to it; and respect the decisions of its courts and of its civil officials.'*

The conclusion of the American Commission reflected the fact that the narrative of the Republican movement was a clear one that resonated internationally. Ireland was an independent state *de jure*; the Dáil, the legitimate representative of the Irish people, had ratified the establishment of the Irish Republic. As its 'Address to the Free Nations of the World' stated, it had the right *'to uphold her national claim to complete independence against the arrogant pretensions of England founded in fraud and sustained only by an overwhelming military occupation.'* Since its foundation, the Dáil asserted its moral authority over the country, an authority that was increasing being accepted and was gaining legitimacy. Moreover, the IRA was presented as the army of the state, defending it against a foreign invader. In addition, from June 1919, steps had been taken to build up a Republican counter-state with consular envoys placed in major capitals, tasked with spreading the message of Ireland's cause. Under the Minister of Finance, the multi-tasking Michael Collins, a loan drive had been launched, to help finance the Irish Republic. Following Sinn Féin's success in the municipal elections of January 1920, the party gained control over more than half of the town councils. The setting up of an alternative courts system in mid-1920 proved successful in some districts, particularly as there had been a collapse of the British legal system, in tandem with the withdrawal of the RIC from many rural areas. However, as the historian Michael Hopkinson noted: *'Most of the Dáil government's Ministries existed more for their propaganda value than for any functioning reality.'* Nevertheless, the combination of a burgeoning counter-state with an increasingly active army added to the credibility of the claim for Irish independence.

As in all conflicts, there were obscure recesses where things were not so straightforward — some actions carried out by the IRA were most unlikely to gain general support from the community. One issue in particular was the shooting of women spies — over the course of the bloody conflict, the IRA had shot three such spies. The IRA policy was that executing anyone required ratification from the brigade commandant concerned. IRA General Order No. 13, dated November 1920, specifically instructed brigade commandants that if a woman were *'doing petty spy work'*, the brigade commandant was to set up a court martial to examine the evidence against her. If she was found guilty, she shall be *'advised accordingly, and except in the case of an Irishwoman, be ordered to leave the country within seven days. It shall be intimated to her that only consideration for her sex prevents the infliction of the statutory punishment of death… In dangerous and insistent cases of this kind, however, full particulars should be placed before GHQ and instructions sought.'*

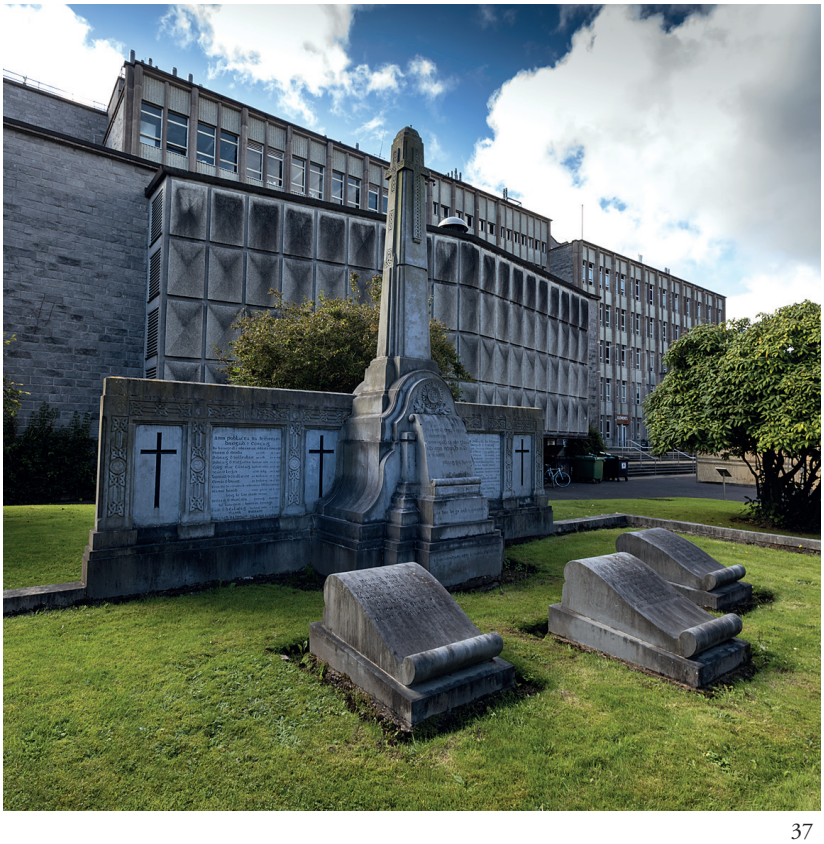


Above: a Sinn Féin court. The narrative of the Republican movement was clear: Ireland was an independent state and the Dáil was the legitimate representative of the Irish people. From June 1919, steps were taken to build up the Republican counter-state, with government departments and a legal system.

Left: masterful propaganda for the counter-state. Michael Collins, as Minister of Finance, issues bond certificates in 1919.

Three women were executed by the IRA. One of these was Kitty Carroll, from Aughnameena, Co. Monaghan, who was shot by the IRA on 17 April 1921. She had reportedly sent information to the RIC on IRA operations. One account tells that two IRA men had earlier been sent to warn her to desist — and that, despite this, the following day she wrote again to the local RIC *'describing the men who had given her the warning.'* One of the forged versions of the 'Irish Bulletin', the edition of 21 April 1921, under the heading '*No Concealment of Anything*' reproduced the 'Freeman's Journal' account of her killing.

The IRA was made up of a grouping of independent regional fiefdoms fighting their own version of guerrilla warfare and the GHQ rules, written in Dublin, were not adhered to on many occasions. General Order No. 13 and its requirement to consult with GHQ was broken in the case of Mrs Mary Lindsay, an elderly loyalist living in Co. Cork. On the night of 27 January 1921, IRA Volunteers had set up at Dripsey, ready to ambush a patrol. The next morning Mrs Lindsay went to inform the military. A strong force of soldiers encircled the ambushers and eight IRA men were captured. Five of these were sentenced to death. On 17 February Mrs Lindsay and driver were abducted. She was forced to write a letter saying she would be shot if the prisoners were executed. Nevertheless, the prisoners were executed in Cork at the end of February. On 11 March, Mrs Lindsay and her driver were shot dead. This was done by the local IRA without getting permission from



At the end of January 1921, Mrs Mary Lindsay, an elderly loyalist, informed the British about an ambush that had been prepared at Dripsey, Co. Cork. As a result, the military were able to encircle the ambushers and capture eight Volunteers. Five of these were sentenced to death and then executed by firing squad on 28 February 1921. Right: memorial to the executed Volunteers at the former Cork County Gaol where they were buried (now the UCC grounds).

Left: Mrs Mary Lindsay. Following the execution of the five Volunteers, Mrs Lindsay and her driver were shot by the IRA on 11 March 1921. There was no mention of this action in the 'Irish Bulletin'.

or even informing GHQ. When the IRA leadership became aware of this, the killing of Mrs Lindsay was an embarrassment to them.

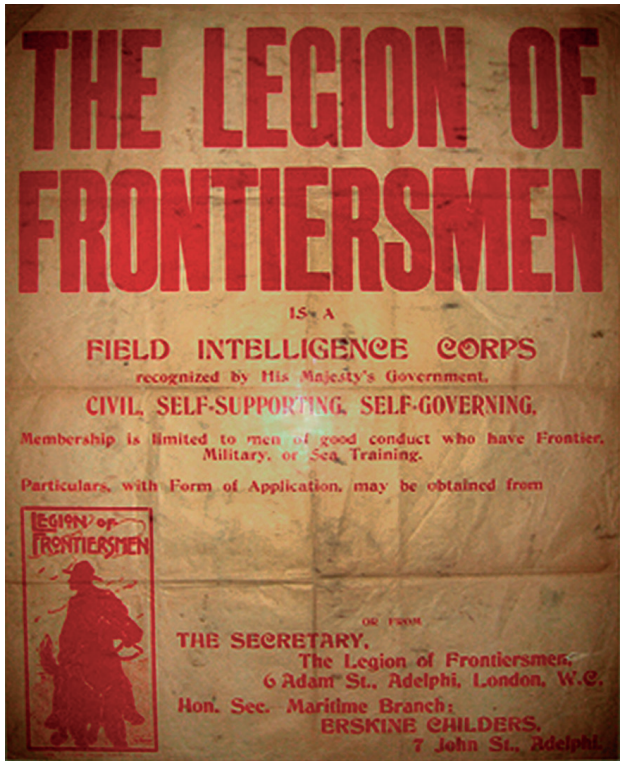
In early 1922, immediately after the War of Independence, Brigadier-General Ormonde Winter made a report on British Intelligence activities in Ireland. In this he claimed that, in a captured letter dated 25 May 1921, Erskine Childers, Director of Publicity, had written to Michael Collins asking how to deal with the question of women spies. Ormonde Winter (admittedly not the most reliable of witnesses), alleged that Childers had written in the document: *'Shall we say (1) the execution of women spies is forbidden. Kitty Carroll was not killed by the IRA. Or (2) Kitty Carroll was killed, in contravention of orders, by the IRA, and that (3) Mrs. Lindsay is now in prison for giving information to the enemy leading to the death of three IRA.'* Mrs Lindsay of course was over two months dead at this stage. If this document were genuine, it shows the anguish that a departure from high-minded principles caused within the Republican movement — anguish not seen within any analogous internal documentation emanating from the British administration, police or military regarding their killing of civilians or prisoners. With regard to Mrs Lindsay, the problem was resolved by silence. There was no mention of her death (nor indeed of that of Kitty Carroll) in any editions of the 'Irish Bulletin' over the following months. This was not Fake News — the Republican movement simply did not issue any news of these events.

Chapter 2

Winning the Propaganda War in WWI

In this chapter we examine how the British Government, through a variety of agencies, expertly disseminated and manipulated information during WWI—in the hope that this will give some context to their propaganda effort during the War of Independence in Ireland.

Before we look at the general story, we will look at the early years of a particular individual, one Hugh Bertie Pollard, who turned out to be the principal begetter of Fake News during the War of Independence. Pollard enjoyed a career of imperial adventuring prior to WWI and became a master creator of Fake News during it. We we will see in Chapter 4 how he applied his inventive talents in Ireland during 1920-21. Pollard was born in 1888, the son of a distinguished doctor, and went to the historic public school, Westminster School in London (included in the stellar list of its alumni are such colourful and disparate characters as Kim Philby and Shane McGowan). Pollard studied at the School of Engineering at Crystal Palace in 1906 and is seen next listed as a Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers. Having demonstrated an enthusiasm for hunting and shooting, Pollard became one of the first recruits to the Legion of Frontiersmen. This was (and is) a rather odd institution: it was a private paramilitary organisation (giving the opportunity to wear a uniform and a 'Mounties'-style hat, along with medals and regalia). It had been established in 1905, with the self-declared objective of providing field intelligence for the task of guarding the boundaries of the Empire — and branches were soon established worldwide. Its pocket book noted, in a piece written by the Irish Peer and ardent imperialist, the Earl of Meath, how the Frontiersmen promoted a movement worthy of the *'great responsibilities which Providence has thought fit to place upon the shoulders of the British race.'* Prominent members included Arthur Conan Doyle, Admiral Prince Louis of Battenberg (grandfather of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh), and Sir John French, commander of British forces in France during WWI and Lord Lieutenant in Ireland during the War of Independence. Interestingly, there are other Irish connections with the Legion of Frontiersmen. An early member was Major Sir Francis Fletcher Vane, a quixotic character, who served in Portobello Barracks, Dublin, during 1916, was. After the murder in the barracks of Francis Sheehy Skeffington, he travelled to London to inform Lord Kitchener of this. Erskine Childers (then at the beginning of his journey from Empire loyalist to zealous Republican) was also an early member. He served on the executive council and was secretary of the Maritime Branch. He also

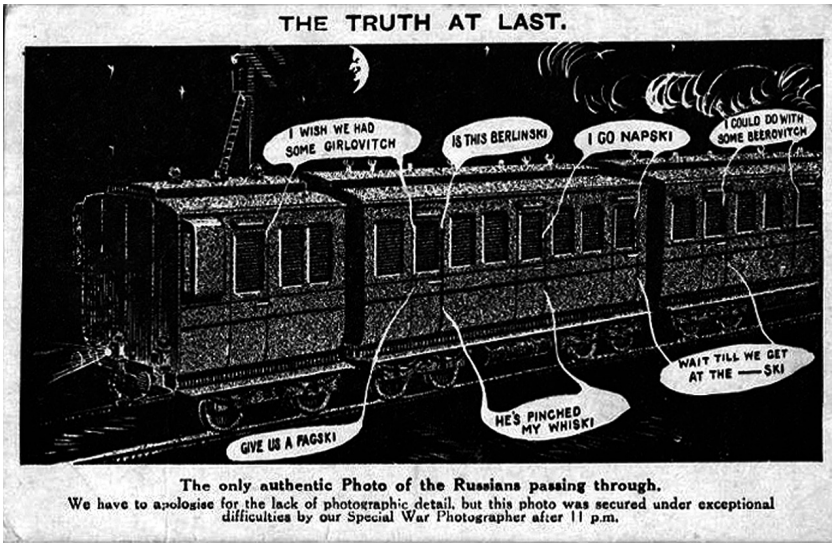


Left: the 'Legion of Frontiersmen', with its self-proclaimed mission to guard the frontiers of the British Empire, was an odd construct. This poster gives details on how to join, with an address for the secretary of the Maritime Branch, one Erskine Childers.

contributed to the Legion's pocket book an article on how to manage small sailing vessels.

We turn to Morocco in North Africa, then in a state of dynastic turmoil. A pretender, Abd al-Hafid (Moulay Hafid), was in revolt against his brother, the king. Another Frontiersman, one Andrew Belton, was there, attempting to convert and train a miscellany of rebels into the semblance of an army. The newly constituted force then managed to defeat the king. On ascending to the throne, Moulay Hafid granted Belton the title of 'Kaid' or 'commander'. In 1908 Pollard travelled to Morocco with a bunch of adventurers, under the guise of an exploration syndicate, and they became involved with Belton's activities. (There is another intriguing Irish connection. In the early 1920s, 'Kaid' Andrew Belton, now a businessman, had a company which was a constituent member of the Irish Broadcasting Company, then seeking a licence to operate the national radio service in the nascent Irish Free State. A scandal ensued when it turned out that the nationalist politician, Darrell Figgis, had been a business associate of Belton's; allegations were made that Figgis had used his position to gain special influence for Belton's company. A Dáil committee, set up to investigate the issue of a national radio service, were horrified at the idea of granting a licence to a group with such strong British connections. It was subsequently decided that radio in Ireland was to be a State-run service.)

In 1908, Robert Baden-Powell established the Boy Scout movement, which aimed to impart skills in outdoor activities to boys, as well as an



Right: an early example of Fake News in WWI — the story ran in 1914 that a Russian division had arrived in Scotland and then to travelled south to embark for France. This humorous postcard depicts what became known as the 'Phantom' army travelling by train through Britain. Captain Hugh Pollard, (who later worked in Dublin Castle during the War of Independence), claimed to have been the begetter of this false story.

underlying spirit of serving the British Empire. Many leading lights of the Scouts were also members of the Legion of Frontiersmen. Demonstrating that the Legion was a form of scouting for grown-ups, but with guns, its members attended the great Boy Scouts Rally in the Crystal Palace in September 1909, wearing not just their Legion uniforms but complete with issue revolvers. Hugh Pollard is recorded as the official organiser of the rally.

Pollard was addicted to adventure and we next hear of him travelling to another country in upheaval, Mexico. Nominally working there as a 'surveyor', he published a book afterwards— 'A Busy Time in Mexico' (1913), which details his adventures there. It was written in the style of Biggles abroad — Pollard racily tells of revolution, shootings, savage Indians and the jungle, interspersed with casual racism, such as *'the nigger porter joined us.'* In 1912, back in London, Pollard joined the Territorial Army as a second Lieutenant, and at the same time he began a career as a journalist, writing for minor monthlies like 'The Cinema' and 'The Autocycle'. He also worked as a correspondent for the 'Daily Express' and continued there up to the outbreak of war. In August 1914 he was mobilised, with an initial assignment to command dispatch riders in London.

We now come to the first noteworthy example of wartime Fake News. WWI had begun dramatically and resoundingly: on 4 August 1914 the Germans attacked Belgium and, around a fortnight later, the Russians invaded East Prussia. As massive mobilisations took place across Europe, the astonishing news appeared that the Russians had dispatched a large force of 70,000 men by steamer from Archangel to Leith in Scotland. The Russian troops then travelled south through Britain by train where they were transhipped from a southern port to join the Allied effort on the western front. As the story appeared widely, rumours flew — including one that Russians had been heard asking for

Left: cities put to the torch, executions, Nurse Cavell's grave and babies on bayonets. A poster by the British Empire Union colourfully depicts the brutality of the German foe.

vodka at Carlisle railway station. The news reached the United States, where on 4 September 1914, the supposedly reliable 'New York Times' ran the story on its front page. Pollard claimed afterwards that he, together with another journalist and fellow Legion member, Alan Osler, were behind the planting of this story of what soon became known as the 'Phantom' Russian Army. In November 1914 Pollard was seconded as a staff Lieutenant to the Intelligence Corps of the British Expeditionary Force in France. He was wounded in the battle of Ypres in Flanders and invalided home.

Before we continue on Pollard's particular role in wartime disinformation, we pause to look at the general British propaganda ef-

fort. At the outbreak of the Great War, the British started with many advantages in the means of propagating information. Their Empire encompassed nearly a quarter of the world's population and was (albeit somewhat unevenly) tied together by the English language and culture. In addition, the English-speaking United States, then becoming a media giant, was broadly part of the same cultural family. A web of telegraph cables linked all this together. The English-language British and American news services dominated the world's media. Enhanced by the expertise and reach of the Foreign and Colonial Offices, Britain possessed immense soft power, with the capacity to influence the entire world. Germany, by contrast, while it had become an major economic power in Europe and had a growing and formidable navy, only possessed a few relatively minor colonies. Furthermore, it had a great disadvantage — the German language was not widespread.

Just after the war started, in September 1914, Lloyd George, then Chancellor of the Exchequer, perceiving that the Germans had begun to churn out huge amounts of propaganda (as we shall see later, the effectiveness of this was another matter), ordered the establishment of the War Propaganda Bureau. This was based in Wellington House in London, with the mission of producing a stream of books, pamphlets and articles which would be used in Allied and neutral countries.

As the years rolled on, the British propaganda machine developed into what was, in effect, a giant publishing house. A vast amount of material was produced for dissemination by cable, wireless, press and also via the new medium that was cinema. America, the most important of the neutrals, was the most important target. One historian noted how America was *'at the commencement of the war, deluged with British propaganda.'* Material was channelled to over 500 newspapers there and a British Information Bureau was set up in New York. The messages imparted were: the militarist ideal of German life; the German war policies and atrocities; how British colonial practices were better than German ones and finally, the idealistic aims of the Allies (in contrast with those of the Germans). The Germans, by comparison, found it difficult to direct news to American and international newspapers, as the British had cut the German transatlantic cables at the beginning of the war.

A surreptitious subsidy was paid by the British to newspapers in Latin America and Greece (where six newspapers received £650 per month). The ostensibly respectable Reuters international news network was contracted under a highly secretive agreement to disseminate British propaganda all over the world. The nuances of this arrangement were acknowledged in an internal Department of Information memo which distinguished between the propaganda issued by its own news service and the work done by Reuters. It also noted that the latter output was *'that of an independent news agency of an objective character, with propaganda secretly infused.'* A contract was also instituted with the Marconi Company to disseminate material by wireless. High-quality

illustrated newspapers were produced directly by the propaganda organisation in English and dozens of foreign languages. The Irish painters, William Orpen and John Lavery, were among the many writers and artists who were drafted in to take part in this information exercise. In addition to a multitude of private associations, other governmental organisations such as the Neutral Press Committee provided information to neutral countries. Recruiting was hugely important and posters were issued by the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee. (In Chapter 4 we look at the intensive and ingenious poster campaign that was mounted in Ireland.)

Two years after it was set up, and after much bureaucratic jostling, Wellington House was absorbed into the Department of Information, which came under the auspices of the Foreign Office, which had always felt that propaganda and information should come under its remit. From February 1917, this department was directed by the novelist, John Buchan, who reported to the minister responsible, Dublin-born Sir Edward Carson. According to one account, Carson took little interest in this brief, being more concerned about Irish affairs. In February 1918 Lloyd George established a new ministry, the Ministry of Information, which took charge of all propaganda activities, and appointed the Canadian newspaper magnate, Lord Beaverbrook, as minister in charge.

From the very beginning Wellington House (and successor departments) produced a veritable paper mountain of pamphlets and leaflets. These were mostly based on fact, but with the necessary twist to make them result in being favourable for the British cause. Much was dutiful stuff: a leaflet produced for circulation in German naval ports, for example, gave a long list of U-Boat commanders, captured or dead, as well as extolling the mastery of the Royal Navy over the U Boat. A few leaflets, aimed to be dropped amongst German troops, played on what was perceived to be *'the deep religious strain'* in the German character, and pointed out that their military defeats were a just retribution for the crimes of their Government. At the commencement of the war a new tactic was initiated, which offered a means to communicate with enemy soldiers without any intermediary: the Royal Flying Corps began dropping propaganda leaflets directly on German trenches. The Germans contended that this was contrary to the rules of war, and in 1917, court-martialed two captured Royal Flying Corps airmen on the charge of dropping 'inflammatory literature'. After these were sentenced to ten years of hard labour, the Corps abruptly stopped the practice. Complicated arrangements were later made to drop leaflets over enemy territory by balloon. From then on all such leaflets bore the words 'by balloon' to protect airmen from prosecution.

The British enjoyed propaganda successes whether by design, through German cack-handedness, or both. Notable examples include the case of the British nurse Edith Cavell. When the Germans occupied Brussels in November 1914, she was matron of a clinic in the city.

Right: remembering the execution of Nurse Edith Cavell by the Germans. The British made great publicity about this emotive event. The Germans neglected to publicise a similar situation where the French executed German nurses.

She then became involved in a network that assisted escaping Allied prisoners and was duly arrested in August 1915. Nurse Cavell was tried by military court martial and shot by a firing squad in October 1915, which provoked universal outrage. It later turned out that the network she was involved with was transmitting secret intelligence back to the Allies. Shortly afterwards, the French executed two German nurses for the same offence — in this case, for helping German prisoners to escape. Illustrating their rather wooden response to propaganda opportunities, the German agency for overseas propaganda, the *Zentralstelle für Auslandsdienst*, chose not to publicise this. Indeed an American reporter in Berlin tells of his exchange with a Prussian officer who had charge of propaganda for the General Staff:

'Why don't you do something to contradict the British Propaganda in America?'

'What do you mean?'

'Raise the devil about those nurses the French shot the other day.'

'What? Protest? The French had a perfect right to shoot them!'

Incidentally, the same issue regarding the execution of women arose after the Easter Rising in Dublin. In May 1916, Prime Minister Asquith instructed General Maxwell in Dublin not to execute women — Countess Markievicz's death sentence was accordingly commuted to penal service for life — thus illustrating that the British were very aware of the emotive dangers of executing women.

The Germans had indeed violated Belgian's neutrality by invading it, and as the troops surged in, they had brutally executed Belgian civilians as alleged *'franc tireurs'* (snipers). Immediately after the invasion, a flood of atrocity stories emerged. Amongst many accounts in the press was one in September 1914 which reported that a Scottish nurse, Grace Hume, had been the victim of great cruelty by German soldiers

GERMANS SATIRIZE LUSITANIA SINKING

Medal struck off in Germany by K. Goetz, a prominent artist, to celebrate the torpedoing of the liner and loss of American lives. These have been sold extensively throughout Germany.

The medal shows Death selling tickets to American passengers. "Business Above Everything," says the caption. A skeleton appears on the poster in the middle of the line's advertisement.

(From photos by Press Illustration Co.)

On the reverse side the Lusitania is shown sinking. "No Guarantee," says the upper inscription, while the lower reads: "The Liner Lusitania, Sunk by a German Undersea Boat, May 5, 1915."

Left: a case of shooting oneself in the foot. The 'New York Tribune' of 17 May 1916 reports on how a German artist, Karl Goetz, had prepared this medal to satirise the 'Lusitania' sinking. On one side, it depicts a skeleton selling tickets. British Naval Intelligence later reproduced 300,000 copies of the medal, presenting it as a perverse celebration of a barbarous event.

in Belgium — her breasts had been cut off and she died in great agony. It later turned out that her sister, back in Dumfries, had fabricated the story. There were reports of troops 'violating' nuns in Belgian convents. A baby's hands were reported chopped off and 'The Times' reported on 2 September 1914 that French refugees were claiming that the Germans had said *'They cut the hands off little boys so that there shall be no more soldiers for France.'* In December 1914 the volume of these reports resulted that, the British government set up the 'Committee on Alleged German Outrages' chaired by a respected peer, Viscount Bryce. Information was gathered from Belgian refugees living in Britain, but, as it turned out, their accounts were not examined in any detail. Despite misgivings by a committee member who felt that the evidence was unsubstantiated, a report was published in May 1915 which presented a long list of outrages by the Germans, focussing on murder, rape and pillage. The report was translated into 30 languages and widely distributed via the many British propaganda channels (including 40,000 copies sent to America by Wellington House). It was taken up by newspapers in the USA where it struck a chord and Germany was now indelibly branded as the perpetrator of brutal atrocities.

The report had been issued in a hurry so as to emerge just five days after the sinking of the 'Lusitania', another event that helped convince the Americans to join the war on the side of the Allies. The enormous civilian casualties on the ship allowed this emotive event to be used, once again, to demonstrate the 'frightfulness' of the Germans. In August 1915, a German artist, Karl Goetz, convinced that the blame lay with Cunard and the British Government in allowing a passenger ship carrying armaments to sail in a time of unrestricted submarine warfare, privately cast a medallion, intended to be satirical. (Goetz produced many satirical medals during WWI: one from 1916 shows 'The Execu-

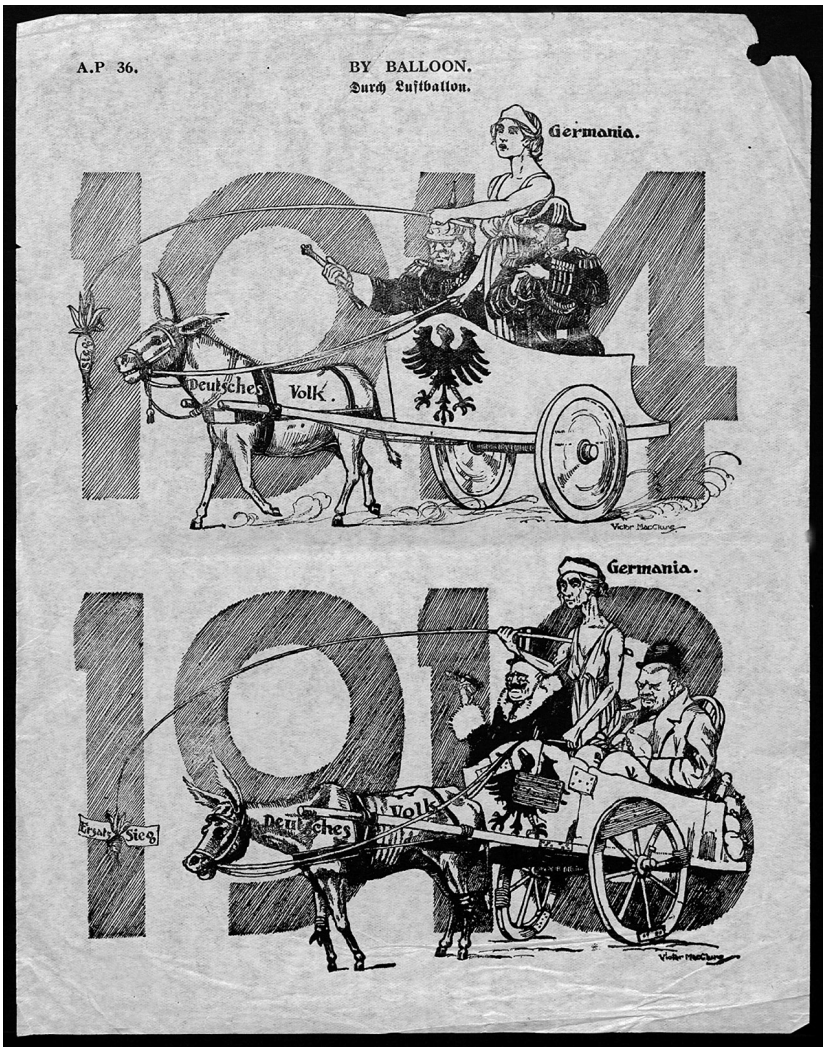
tion of Roger Casement', referencing the antique English law of 1351 that was used to convict him.) Mocking the Allied obsession with business above all and the supposed impartiality of the USA, the Lusitania medallion depicted the ship sinking with its bow laden with armaments, and on the obverse, a Cunard ticket office with a skeleton selling tickets and a man reading a newspaper with the headline 'U-Boat danger'. The attempt at satire backfired in mid-1916, when 300,000 copies of the medallion were reproduced on the orders of Captain Reginald Hall, Director of Naval Intelligence — which managed to cleverly portray it as a perverse celebration of an event of singular barbarity. It came in a presentation box with a helpful explanatory leaflet which intimated that it was an official German commemorative piece — and was widely circulated in the USA and neutral countries. The timing of the medal's issuance was fortuitous, as it diverted attention from news just emerging in the world's press of the brutal executions after the 1916 Easter Rising, news that was potentially damaging to Britain's reputation.

The news in 1916 had not been generally good for the British. Their Expeditionary Force was bogged down in trench warfare in northern France and suffering huge casualties. The Dardanelles Campaign had proved disastrous. Added to discontent on the home front was a growing belief abroad that Great Britain was not shouldering its responsibilities, being too reliant on colonial troops. Perhaps reflecting a feeling that the Wellington House civil-service-led approach was not sufficient, the authorities decided to influence the press using more subtle and strategic means. In January 1916, as part of a reorganisation of the Imperial General Staff, a new Directorate of Military Intelligence was formed, including the MI7 section, which specifically dealt with press matters.

Carrying out propaganda activities within the Intelligence realm had the advantage that these could be performed in secret and were thus totally deniable. The new department included sections of a relatively routine nature such as those which issued press communiqués, censored press articles and granted journalists access to the front. However, the section at the cutting edge was MI7.b, which focussed on foreign and domestic propaganda. It was decided to greatly expand MI7.b and in mid-1916, a request was sent out to the Home Command seeking officers with literary experience. By the beginning of 1917, the section had sourced around 20 full-time officers of proven literary ability. It was based at Adastral House in central London, and was directed by Captain AJ Dawson (a member of the Legion of Frontiersmen — who, in 1917, hired the founder of the Legion to work there for three months). The group included luminaries such as AA Milne (deputy editor of 'Punch', who later wrote the 'Winnie-the-Pooh' stories) and Major Cecil John Street. In 1920, Street was to run the London branch of Dublin Castle's Public Information Branch. He later wrote two propaganda books on Ireland and then settled down to

Left: navvy, writer and rifleman — Patrick MacGill from Donegal. Described as having 'a wonderful descriptive power', he was one of a small group, mainly officers, who were recruited for MI7.b, the covert propaganda section of British Military Intelligence, during WWI.

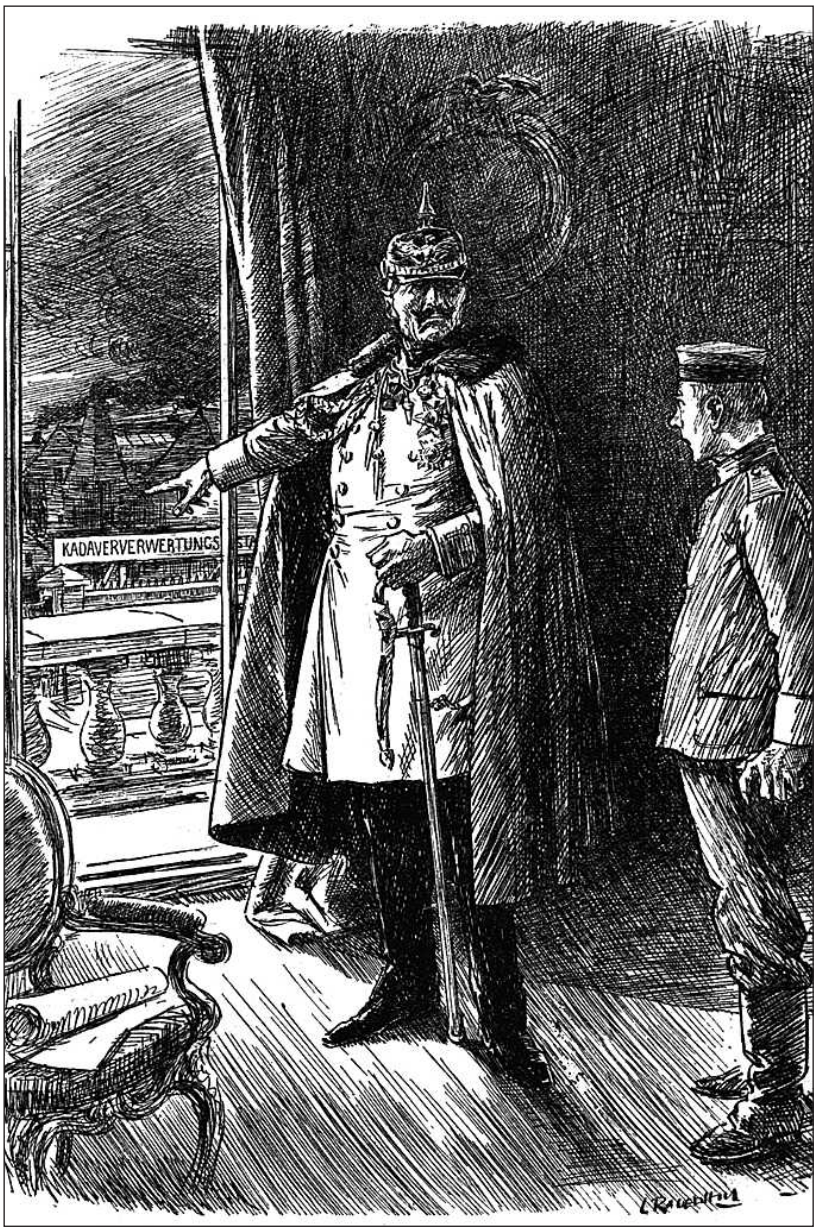
a career of writing detective novels. There were a few Irishmen: Captain Edward Plunkett (Lord Dunsany, a writer of fantasy novels), and, a fact that some attendees at the eponymous Summer School in Glenties may find surprising, the Irish writer and poet, Patrick MacGill. Brought up in poverty in Donegal, he worked as a navvy in Scotland and then wrote articles about his experiences. After the outbreak of WWI, MacGill enrolled in the London Irish Rifles. He wrote two powerful memoirs detailing his war experiences. Wounded in October 1915, he returned to convalesce in Britain. In February 1916, a memorandum written in Dublin Castle records a conversation with George Russell (AE) on *'the sort of literature with which Ireland should be fed to ensure an improvement in the recruiting atmosphere'* and *'that some good writers knowing something of journalism'* should come to the fore as eye-witness-



Right: a British propaganda leaflet dropped over German lines in July 1918, intending to depict the futility of continuing the fight. For the year 1914, it depicts a healthy-looking donkey ('the German people') in 1914 pulling Germania, accompanied by a prince and a general in a cart. By 1918 the donkey is now skeletal, chasing a scrawny ersatz carrot. An equally scrawny Germania is accompanied by two bloated profiteers in what is now a rickety cart. The propaganda here may seem crude, but in an article in the 'Cornhill Magazine', Major Cecil John Street of MI7.b (and of later propaganda service in Ireland during the War of Independence) referred to it proudly, claiming that such was the impact it made and the appreciation it received, that copies changed hands in the German lines for five marks apiece.

es giving an Irish perspective. Russell suggested Patrick MacGill as his books showed *'wonderful descriptive power.'* Presumably it was this exceptional fluency that led to him being chosen for MI7.b, even though he was not an officer. In 1923 a newspaper article on MI7.b refers to him as *'Rifleman MacGill'*, and being one of the two 'other ranks' in the section. During his time in MI7.b, MacGill wrote books which were a sea change from his earlier works on the war — these were now pure propaganda, full of gallant troops dashing to victory.

One wonders about the clash of cultures that arose as soldier-writer MacGill worked among this group of officer-writers, imbued with the mores of the Empire. He must have managed to overcome these difficulties and become a fully-integrated member of the team, as he was chosen to be co-editor of the house journal, the 'Green Book', which was privately produced in January 1919 after the section was closed down. In valedictory mood, the journal refers to all there who were *'a really distinguished family of genuine light-producers'* and who were



Left: in this Punch cartoon of 1917, Kaiser Wilhelm says to a new recruit: 'And don't forget that your Kaiser will find a use for you — alive or dead' — in reference to the 'German Corpse Factory' which can be seen out the window. Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard (later stationed in Dublin during the War of Independence) was working in MI7.b at that time. Pollard claimed to have been the originator of this 'German Corpse Factory' story which turned out to be the master hoax of WWI.

'producing floods of light for the edification of mankind and the illumination of a naughty world.' And it related how *'Every day for two years and more its messages appeared in pretty nearly every country in the world that mattered.'*

This was true — during the war years, this group of writers laboured mightily in producing articles for placement in the press. There was also outsourcing from officers, still serving in their units — one estimate is that over 1,000 pieces were received from this literate group. MI7.b churned out propaganda on an industrial scale — by war's end over 7,500 articles had been produced. Other work included producing weekly and monthly summaries of military operations and, by 1918,

daily accounts of great offensives. It was not surprising that in 1917, the energetic and inventive Hugh Bertie Pollard, by now a Captain and recuperating after injuries suffered at Ypres, was selected for MI7.b. Given his fantastical predilections he must have flourished in this environment, working among like-minded colleagues.

In 1917 a sensational story emerged in newspapers that the Germans were distilling fat from the bodies of their dead. The report in 'The Times' of 16 April 1917 gives a flavour: *'We pass through Everingcourt. There is a dull smell in the air as if lime were being burnt. We are passing the great Corpse Exploitation Establishment (Kadaververwertungsanstalt) of this Army Group. The fat that is won here is turned into lubricating oils, and everything else is ground down in the bone mill into a powder which is used for mixing with pig's food and as manure — nothing can be permitted to go to waste.'* The story gained legs (if one can use such an allusion in this context), and was taken up by the press across the world, gaining additional gory detail with each repetition. It was particularly shocking in China, where, given the prevailing custom of ancestor-worship, the idea of boiling down corpses was intensely repugnant — this was a useful reaction at a time when the Allied side wanted China to participate in the war. While most people doubted the tale, it still reinforced the underlying message of German brutality. At the time official Britain denied being the originator of the story which was a total fabrication (although the story was eerily prescient of the murder and cremation of millions of people by the Nazis during the Holocaust in 1941-45). The 'Corpse Factory' story was probably the most fantastical example of Fake News that was produced by the Allied side during WWI.

The invention of such Fake News would not normally be regarded as an accolade, but Brigadier-General John Charteris of British Military intelligence, in 1925 during a lecture tour in the USA claimed authorship — but on his return to Britain he denied making the remarks. Captain Pollard also made the claim that he had originated the story — this contention came to light much later in 1970 when his filmmaker cousin, Ivor Montagu (his polar opposite, a Communist and spy for the Soviet Union) wrote in his autobiography that Pollard had gleefully recounted to him *'how his department had launched the account of the German corpse factories…He explained that he had originally thought up the idea himself to discredit the enemy among the populations of Oriental countries, hoping to play upon the respect for the dead that goes with ancestor-worship… The tears ran down his cheeks as he told us of the story they had circulated of soap from Germany arriving in Holland and being buried with full military honours. But, even for us, the taste of some of his tales began to grow sour after he became a Black and Tan.'*

The MI7.b origins of the 'Corpse Factory' story are confirmed by a reference in the aforementioned 'Green Book' of that department, published privately in 1919 by those who had worked in the section. These jocose verses, written by AA Milne, appear under the heading *'Some Earlier Propagandists'*:

Captain William Shakespeare of a Cyclist Battalion
In MI7.b
Who loves to lie with me
About atrocities
And Hun Corpse Factories
Come hither, come hither, come hither,
Here shall he see
No enemy,
But sit all day and blether

The overall British propaganda exercise had been on a huge scale. Much of what was issued was based to some degree on facts, but refracted to present British interests in a positive light. Did the avalanche of propaganda produced by the various British Government departments work? The dilemma is probably similar to that facing an American department-store magnate, who is reputed to have remarked: *'Half the money I spend on advertising is wasted; the trouble is, I don't know which half'* — it is difficult to know which half of the British propaganda issued in WWI worked — but it did work. Despite an array of competing agencies the overall propaganda campaign was effective, resulting in a worldwide perception of brutish behaviour by the Germans. British propaganda was particularly successful in its most important target country, the United States. The negative opinion of Germany generated there was strong enough to overcome the advocacy by the German- and Irish-Americans of the maintenance of neutrality — and was one of the reasons that allowed President Wilson to lead his country to war on the Allied side in April 1918.

For a German view on the efficacy of British propaganda, we turn to their generals. Von Hindenburg self-servingly blamed the defeat of Germany on British propaganda, as it demoralised the German army. Ludendorff, who had been behind the great victories at Liège and Tannenberg in 1914, wrote *'We were hypnotized…as a rabbit by a snake. (British propaganda) was exceptionally clever, and conceived on a great scale…'* He also noted: *'The German propaganda was only kept going with difficulty; its achievements …were inadequate. We produced no real effect on the enemy peoples.'*

It is best to allow a proven expert on the use of malevolent falsehood to have the last word on the value of British propaganda during WWI. Adolf Hitler, who had been a lowly corporal during the war, referring to propaganda then, wrote, in 'Mein Kampf': *'What we failed to do, the enemy did with amazing skill…'* He considered that the atrocity propaganda and the anti-German campaign were *'an inspired work of genius'*. He concluded that propaganda by the enemy had been regarded *'as a weapon of the first order, while in our country it was the last resort of unemployed politicians and a haven for slackers.'*

Chapter 3
New Broom in Dublin

In early 1920, as the news from Ireland steadily worsened for the British, the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, perceiving the Irish administration to be dysfunctional, purged it and sent a new team to Dublin. These new arrivals ranged from the efficient to the exotic, particularly those working in the field of propaganda. Some were senior civil servants, but most had military experience, doubtless appropriate, as Ireland was rapidly developing into a war zone.

The top political post in Ireland was that of Chief Secretary. The Canadian, Sir Hamar Greenwood, an MP, was appointed to this position on 2 April 1920. He was not the first choice — it was not a much-sought-after position. Lord Oranmore, obviously underwhelmed, noted in his journal: *'a Canadian bagman and a windbag at that.'* Although Winston Churchill himself was impressed by Greenwood's qualities, his wife Clementine was less enthused. She wrote in February 1921 how Greenwood was *'nothing but a blaspheming, hearty, vulgar, brave, knockabout-Colonial.'* Not noted for outstanding intelligence, the new Chief Secretary did not contribute much to the advancement of British policy on Ireland. In the years following his appointment, even though he was an effective public speaker, Greenwood lost credibility as he mindlessly stonewalled in the House of Commons, denying atrocities committed in Ireland that were palpably true.

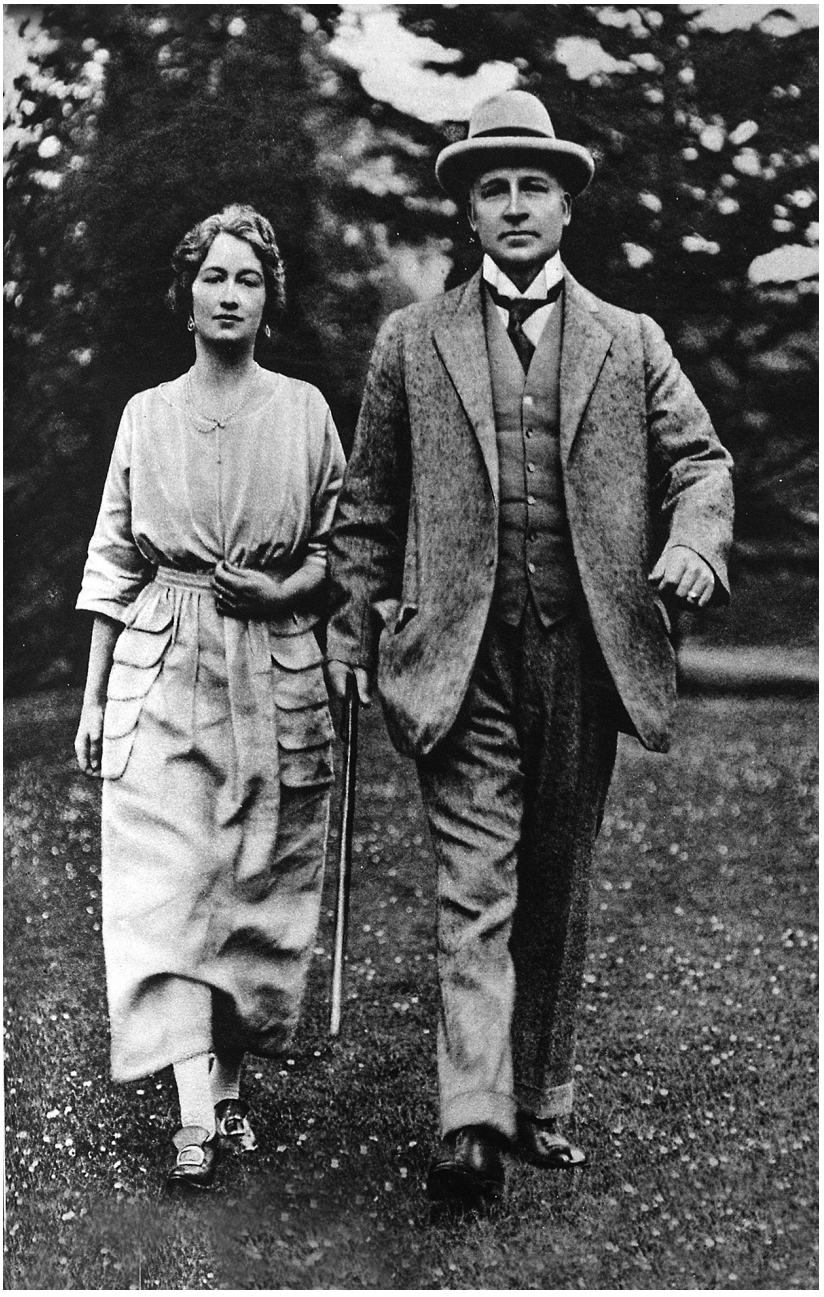
In April also, General Sir Nevil Macready arrived as Commander-in-Chief of the army in Ireland. He had the usual colonial experience, having fought in the Boer War, and had risen to senior rank during WWI. His most recent position had been Commissioner of Police in London. Significantly, he also had experience in 1910 of directing troops during the miners' strike in the Rhondda Valley. Despite the fact that his paternal grandfather had been a well-known Irish actor-manager, he harboured a visceral hatred of the Irish, like many of the senior British leaders assigned to Ireland. In 1919 he wrote to Ian Macpherson, just appointed as Chief Secretary for Ireland, that *'I cannot say I envy you for I loathe the country you are going to and its people with a depth deeper than the sea and more violent than that which I feel against the Boche* (i.e. the Germans)*'.* During his time as Police Commissioner he had refused to recruit Irishmen. In his memoirs he wrote that *'murder methods (were) indigenous to the soil.'* His solution to the problem was martial law over the whole island, which would have resulted in a kind of protective zoo, because, as he explained: *'a people characterised by…lack of discipline, intolerance of restraint, and with no common*

Left: General Sir Nevil Macready, Commander-in-Chief of the army in Ireland. In his opinion, given that the Irish lacked discipline and morality, he believed that the country could only be held in check 'under the protection of a strong military garrison'.

standard of public morality, can only be governed and held in check under the protection of a strong military garrison.'

His view was that the troops in Ireland exhibited an extraordinary forbearance and discipline in the face of provocation and danger at the hands of the rebels there, coupled with abuse and misrepresentation on the part of a section of their own countrymen in Great Britain. Oddly, he harboured an admiration for Arthur Griffith. In his memoirs he wrote that he thought Griffith's 'Resurrection of Hungary' could be said to be the Bible of Sinn Féin, and that he kept a copy on his desk in his HQ at the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham.

Right: Sir Hamar Greenwood, with his wife, at their residence in the Phoenix Park. Chief Secretary for Ireland since April 1920 and an articulate man, he lost credibility as he subsequently stonewalled on atrocities by the Crown forces in the House of Commons. In 1921 Winston Churchill's wife described him as 'nothing but a blaspheming, hearty, vulgar, brave, knockabout-Colonial'.

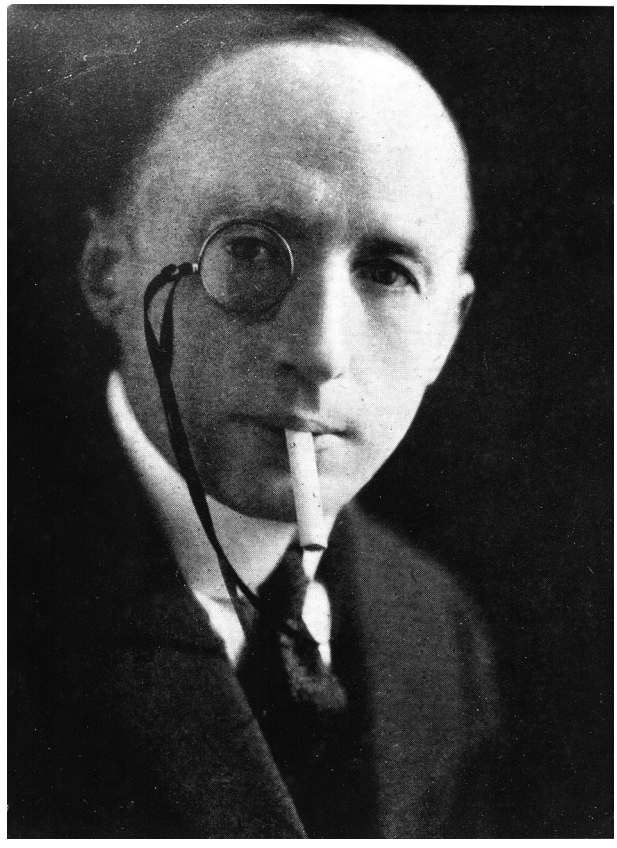


To replace what had been called by Sir Warren Fisher, after his recent investigation, as the 'obsolete' Irish administration, Lloyd George and his government dispatched the brightest, the best, and no doubt, what they perceived as the toughest. A large team of officials arrived in May, seconded from various British ministries. These initially stayed in the Royal Marine Hotel in Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire), but as the War of Independence intensified in early autumn, they were obliged to take up residence in Dublin Castle.

Leading this group of officials was a talented trio. Sir John Anderson had been appointed Under-Secretary for Ireland, the most senior position in the civil service. He was supported by two able Assistant Under-Secretaries, Mark Sturgis and Alfred 'Andy' Cope. Anderson, who exuded competence, had been a brilliant student, having studied science at Edinburgh University (his later thesis was on uranium). He came first in the British civil service entrance exams, and by 1917 was the principal civil servant in the Ministry of Shipping — and one historian has noted that Whitehall regarded him as *'the greatest administrator of his time, perhaps of any time in the country's history.'* Mark Sturgis, who kept a particularly racy diary of his time in Dublin Castle, was an out-

Above: the new brooms line up in Dublin Castle. Seated in the front, from right, are Sturgis, Anderson and Cope. Basil Clarke, wearing spats, is standing on the left.

Right: Major-General Sir Henry Hugh Tudor, the police supremo. He gave free rein to the new Auxiliary paramilitary force. The Information Section of the Police Authority was under his direction.



Right: Brigadier-General Ormonde Winter. He exuded cleverness and was described as 'a wicked little white snake'. He energetically reorganised the British intelligence system in Ireland.

Above: Dublin Castle — the heart of English rule of Ireland since 1204. During the War of Independence it became the main centre for dissemination of British propaganda.

going old Etonian, who, in his time in Dublin, socialised and enjoyed the horse-racing. However, he too harboured the usual prejudices of his class about the natives: *'I almost begin to believe that these mean, dishonest, insufferably conceited Irishmen are an inferior race and are only sufferable when they are whipped — like the Jews.'* Andy Cope was a former Customs detective who, by dint of talent, had risen in the ranks of the civil service. The trio constituted the doves of Dublin Castle, inclining to negotiation rather than coercion.

There were also hawks in Dublin Castle, all of military origin, none more so than Major-General Sir Henry Hugh Tudor, who in May 1920, was appointed police supremo on the recommendation of his friend, Winston Churchill. Tudor was designated as Police Advisor and later in November (after the head of the RIC had retired) was made Chief of Police. A veteran of the Boer War and an artilleryman, he had no police experience — as we shall see, Tudor brought a pugnacious approach to crushing what he called the 'outrages'.

Brigadier-General Ormonde de l'Épée Winter, who had served under Tudor in India, was selected by him to lead the intelligence effort — equally, he had no previous experience of intelligence. Winter was appointed as deputy chief of police and head of the Combined Intel-

ligence Service in Ireland. Slight and dapper, he exuded energy and cleverness. When one of his former colleagues in India heard that he had been appointed to Ireland he said *'God Help Sinn Féin, they don't know what they are up against.'* Mark Sturgis described him in his diary as *'a wicked little white snake.'* Like Macready and the others, he nursed the racist and colonial attitude to Ireland, writing: *'The Irishman, without any insult being intended, strongly resembles a dog, and understands firm treatment, but like the dog, he cannot understand being cajoled with a piece of sugar in one hand while he receives a beating from a stick in the other.'* When Winter arrived the intelligence activities of the Dublin Metropolitan Police (DMP) 'G' Division had been totally smashed by Collins' squad. He methodically set to reorganising the intelligence system in Ireland. Filing and coordination were improved, and a flood of secret service men were imported from Britain. New types of operatives were appointed to track down the 'Sinn Féiners'. Amongst these was a particularly effective group recruited from RIC men from rural Ireland, under Head Constable Eugene Igoe. Their mission was to travel around Dublin and identify, seize or kill Republicans.

One of the first tasks for the new Dublin Castle administration was to improve management of the press. The success of the Sinn Féin Department of Propaganda underlined the lack of an effective information section in Dublin Castle. Up to then, the British had dealt with the press in draconian fashion under the Defence of the Realm Act (DORA). This had been enacted in August 1914, as a means of social control in wartime for the entire United Kingdom, and had been much used in Ireland after Easter 1916. The clause *'No person shall by word of mouth or in writing spread reports likely to cause disaffection or alarm among any of His Majesty's forces or among the civilian population'* proved to be a useful instrument in muzzling the press. While DORA was repealed in Britain at the end of the war, it was left in place in Ireland.

The senior British leadership in Dublin was generally dissatisfied with newspaper treatment of the occurrences across the island. The Lord Lieutenant, Lord French, considered that the Irish and British press were exaggerating the events there. General Macready believed that the British army was being vilified in newspapers and was worried about the effect on the morale of his troops. Concerned about the *'nimble and unscrupulous propagandists'* of Sinn Féin, he urged Greenwood to improve British propaganda efforts. In July 1920 Macready and Anderson travelled to London to meet Lloyd George and take stock of the worsening situation in Ireland. A new vigorous approach was decided on, including the need to take fresh measures to deal with the press. Against the growing disorder, it was felt that DORA, essentially a wartime measure, was outmoded. A replacement bill was specifically crafted and the 'Restoration of Order in Ireland Act' (ROIA) became law in August 1920. This allowed for the suppression of Irish newspapers if there was 'sedition'. In addition, it was felt there was a need to channel material favourable to the British view, to the Irish and

Left: Basil Clarke, head of the Public Information Branch, based at Dublin Castle

international press. A new office to deal with the press was to be set up and in July 1920 the Public Information Branch (PIB) was created. Its functions were to liaise with newspapers in Dublin and London — reports and articles would be prepared for the press and interviews would be given to correspondents.

To direct the new department, Basil Clarke, a widely experienced journalist, was chosen. After gaining a classics degree from Oxford, he had joined the 'Manchester Guardian'. Some years later, he moved to the mass-circulation 'Daily Mail'. This newspaper (noted at the time as *'written by office boys for office boys'*) was an odd construct — it had been founded by the eccentric Alfred Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe, who had been born at Chapelizod near Dublin). In the run-up to WWI, the newspaper printed inflammatory anti-German articles. However, at the beginning of the war, Lord Northcliffe wrote a devastating editorial in the 'Daily Mail', accusing the Secretary of State for War, Lord Kitchener (who became a hate figure for Northcliffe), of starv-

ing the British army in France of the correct type of shells. When the War Office sought to ban all war reporting at the outbreak of the war, under DORA, Northcliffe was having none of it and dispatched Basil Clarke to report from the front line. In October 1914 Clarke made an unsuccessful attempt to reach Ostend, just before it was captured by the Germans. He managed to reach France and spent several months as a *'journalistic outlaw'* (as he described himself), before being expelled from Flanders in January 1915. In 1916, using his talent at reaching those parts where others could not reach, he made it to Dublin in the aftermath of the Easter Rising. One account claims that his articles in the 'Daily Mail' were the first independent reports in the British press of the events there. At the end of that year he returned to report on the latter stages of the Battle of the Somme, this time as an accredited reporter for Reuters and the Press Association. By the end of 1917 he was working on press duties for various government ministries. In 1919, after six months as editor of the 'Sheffield Independent', he joined the Ministry of Health. In August 1920 he was on his way to Dublin Castle, seconded there as Director of the Public Information Branch (PIB).

Clarke built up his staff at the PIB head office in Dublin Castle. This comprised of: an army Captain; an RIC District Inspector; a civilian assistant; a photographer and two typists. There were also three staff members based at the Irish Office in London, whose duties were to liaise with the press there. Major Cecil John Street was in charge of the London section. He had seen service as an artillery officer in France during the war, and was later recruited to serve the dark propaganda mill that was MI7.b. In London, Street was assisted by Captain Garro-Jones. After wartime service (including an interlude in the Royal Flying Corps), in the period 1919-20, he had served as Private Secretary to Sir Hamar Greenwood during his various ministerial positions. In Chapter 4 we will observe how Garro-Jones found a kindred spirit with Dublin-based Captain Pollard, and worked with him during the Vico Road affair.

As we have seen, General Tudor was appointed as Police Advisor. Tudor began the uphill task of converting the battered RIC into a force that was able to face the growing insurgency in Ireland. Since early 1920, a stream of recently recruited ex-servicemen (the 'Black and Tans') was being deployed in RIC barracks across the country. Tudor had also secured agreement for an additional force of experienced ex-officers that would act as a counter-insurgency gendarmerie. By the end of August 1920, the first units of what was called the Auxiliary Division of the RIC (ADRIC, better known as the 'Auxiliaries') began deployment to the 'hottest' parts of Ireland. Separately, under Brigadier Ormonde Winter's intelligence watch, scores of officer-spies were recruited for Dublin, many from outposts of the British Empire.

Tudor was allocated his own press office, the 'Information Section of the Police Authority'. Appointed as Press Officer was none other than our old friend, the eloquent and inventive Captain Hugh Bertie

Left: Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard was appointed Press Officer in the Information Section of the Police Authority. His career had been replete with the spirit of imperial adventure and he had ascended the heights of disinformation during WWI. Now, amidst this latest British colonial war, he was able to set free his creative spirit and propagate more fantastical Fake News.

Pollard. Amidst the colourful medley of British officers who were assigned to Ireland in 1920 as part of the new surge, Pollard was the most exotic. As we have noted in Chapter 2, he had enjoyed a most peculiar career, ranging from his Legion of Frontiersmen activities to his successful planting of surreal disinformation in the press such as that of the 'German Corpse Factory'. He continued to demonstrate his unique abilities during the War of Independence, being the principal concoctor of Fake News. Indeed, Pollard's subsequent career was equally bizarre and we will touch on that in the Appendix on the aftermath. Tudor also recruited as Secretary of the Information section, one Captain William Young Darling. Darling, from Edinburgh, had enjoyed a distinguished military career: he had served in France and Gallipoli and had been awarded the Military Cross, having been wounded five times.

The Headquarters of the British Army Irish Command was located at the former Royal Military Infirmary at Infirmary Road, Dublin, on the eastern boundary of Phoenix Park.
Above: the Royal Military Infirmary, built to a design by James Gandon in 1794.

The main centre of British power in Ireland was, as it had been over the centuries, located in Dublin Castle, in the heart of the city. However, a mere two kilometres to the north-west, a more muscular manifestation of that power was concentrated in the Army Headquarters, Irish Command, at Infirmary Road by the Phoenix Park. As we have seen, the army commander, General Macready, was dissatisfied with newspaper reporting on Irish events, and was highly sensitive to the effect such reports would have on the morale of his men. Shortly after his arrival in April, Macready, conscious of the importance of improving liaison with the newspapers, ordered the establishment of an army press office, which was independent from Dublin Castle.

Major Reginald Marians was assigned to lead the press office at the Irish Command HQ. Born in London to a Polish-born father, he had joined the Territorial Army as second lieutenant in 1909. By the end of WWI Marians had achieved the rank of Major. He was awarded an OBE in 1919.

In May 1921 Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Foulkes arrived at the Irish Command HQ, as Director of Irish Propaganda. Foulkes had enjoyed an interesting career. During 1917 he had been in charge of the special brigade responsible for chemical warfare and Director of Gas Services. After WWI, as the British expert in gas warfare, he was sent to the North West Frontier (now Pakistan) to advise on the possibilities of using gas on the Waziri tribesmen, then in revolt. Foulkes thought that

Left: Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Foulkes, chemical warfare expert, was appointed Director of Irish Propaganda at Irish Command HQ in 1921.

it was a good idea. Foulkes later recounted a conversation he had there in October 1919, with the Viceroy, Viscount Chelmsford. The Viceroy, who viewed gas warfare as inhumane, asked him what would have happened if a village had been treated with mustard gas. Foulkes replied that *'probably every man who slept in the village the same night would have died'* and that *'supposing you produced this effect in a village at the commencement of a frontier campaign, don't you think that the mysterious annihilation of its inhabitants would create such a panic along the Frontier that fighting would fizzle out?'* Earlier Foulkes had airily pointed out to the Viceroy's wife, Lady Chelmsford, that *'death from phosgene poisoning ...was really comparable to smoking ganja (marijuana).'* In the event, the British administration did not agree to the use of gas, although the RAF continued to strafe and bomb the tribesmen. It is interesting to note that, while the British Government had no scruples in bombing and strafing from the air in far-away British India, in next-door Ireland, fearful of civilian 'collateral damage', for most of the War of Independence, they forbade the RAF to use similar tactics there. It was only from March 1921 onwards that they sanctioned the RAF to make such attacks. Whether or not they entertained scruples about using inhumane methods on colonial natives, the British authorities suffered a massive shock in November 1921 (as we will see in Chapter 4), when it appeared that inhumane warfare might be used against themselves — after they discovered a document that indicated a presumed plot by the IRA to spread typhoid amongst British troops.

Chapter 4

Propaganda before and during the War of Independence

At the outbreak of WWI, one of the most immediate tasks for the United Kingdom was to rapidly recruit and build up its army. While in Britain there was much initial enthusiasm for enlistment, things were more complicated in Ireland. The Unionist community were enthusiastic in prosecuting the war and members of the Ulster Volunteer Force militia were allowed to enter the British Army and form the basis of the 36th Division. In the rest of the island, there was a certain level of opposition. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, advocated that the nationalist Irish Volunteer militia should support the British and join their army. The Volunteers split. The majority followed Redmond's advice. However, a minority, (around 12,000) sustained their independent stance, and continued under the designation 'Irish Volunteers'. In an island of complicated loyalties and different aspirations, clever bending of the facts was needed. Thus, in attempts to improve recruitment in Ireland, the obvious tack for the authorities was to play up the perfidy of the Germans. During the early stages of the war, much was made of the case of the Irish nuns of Ypres, a Belgian city that had been initially under Allied control. After a German bombardment of Ypres, an order of Irish nuns had to hastily evacuate their Benedictine Abbey there and fortuitously, the Munster Fusiliers came to their assistance. As the nuns left, they brought with them a historical relic, the regimental flag considered to be that of the Irish Brigade — that had been recaptured by the Brigade in 1706 at the Battle of Ramilles during the War of the Spanish Succession. A book entitled 'The Irish Nuns at Ypres' was published soon afterwards. John Redmond wrote the forward and played up the wanton destruction of Ypres by the Germans and how the nuns were driven from their home and shelter. Redmond referred to the famous flag *'often spoken of in song and story, captured by the Irish Brigade in the service of France'*, while, in a mild refraction of the truth, he neglected to point out that the Irish Brigade had taken back their flag from the old enemy, England.

The target audience in the general recruitment campaign was the common man, who might not always read newspapers. Thus posters formed the backbone of the campaign. The Parliamentary Recruiting Committee in London, which initially covered both Britain and Ireland, produced huge amounts of publicity material: over the first year

of war it issued around six million posters, five million pamphlets and nine million leaflets. Such was the effectiveness of these posters that the *Kriegspresseamt* (German War Press Office) made a study of them — a Colonel from the office later explained *'the artists we called in for advice were really astonished to see how much our enemies have made in the use of the poster.'* In Ireland, given that any exhortation to join the British forces was going against the national grain, a 'Central Council for the Organisation of Recruiting in Ireland' was soon established to give the local touch. Clever posters targeting potential Irish recruits were rolled out. One, approved by John Redmond, used his image while exhorting *'Join an Irish Regiment today!'*. These posters included a liberal mixture of Irish motifs such as St Patrick, Irish wolfhounds and shamrocks. Posters in Ireland carried words such as *'duty', 'democracy', 'liberty'* and *'Irish Regiment'* — but definitely not '*the King*' or '*British Army*'. The refrain ran that Ireland was fighting for *'civilisation and Christianity'* and the *'rights of small nations'*, in other words, Belgium. In a similar fashion to the account of the Irish nuns at Ypres, another story was promoted that the brutal Germans had shot Belgian priests and left monasteries and cathedrals in ruins. While the refrain about Belgium was a constant one, on occasion the story had to be altered to suit the vastly differing audiences in the north and south of Ireland. One observer related how he saw a recruiting poster in Dublin that said *'Save Catholic Belgium'*. Later he travelled to Belfast where, after getting off the train, he saw a poster that exhorted *'Fight Catholic Austria.'*

Above: guns and nuns — perfect propaganda. A depiction in the 'Weekly Freeman' of how the Irish nuns were rescued by the Munster Fusiliers after Ypres had been bombarded by the 'perfidious' Germans. A nun carries the flag captured two centuries before by the Irish Brigade — the nuances that it had been taken in a war with the old enemy, England, were not explored.

Right: the sinking of the Lusitania in May 1915 was hugely emotive. It afforded the Central Council for the Organisation of Recruiting in Ireland the opportunity to produce this effective recruiting poster.

As we have observed in Chapter 2, the Lusitania was torpedoed in May 1915, resulting in a huge loss of civilian life. This hugely emotive sinking, a mere 18km off the Irish coast, proved a godsend for the Central Council for the Organisation of Recruiting in Ireland. It produced a poster which depicted the ship going down in flames, its lifeboats packed, while passengers (including a man carrying a child on his back) try to hold on to wreckage for dear life. The punchline was: *'Irishmen, Avenge the Lusitania — Join an Irish Regiment To-day.'* As the war rolled on there was a need for more recruits to replace what was termed *'the wastage of Irish soldiers'*. To give a new impetus, the Central Council was replaced later in 1915 by the 'Department for Recruiting in Ireland' (with the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Wimbourne appointed as Director-General.)

Probably the most iconic recruiting poster of WWI was the one which showed (Kerry-born) Lord Kitchener exhorting *'Your Country Needs You.'* Waterford was honoured when the promoter of that poster campaign, the British advertising expert, Hedley Le Bas, decided to apply his talents there — the Waterford region duly received a number of well-crafted recruiting posters and pamphlets.

Above: no mention of 'King' or 'British Army' in this trio of recruiting posters aimed at an Irish audience. St Patrick, shamrocks and a burning Belgium are variously invoked.

In marketing, positioning for the local market is all. In early 1916 the Department for Recruiting circulated a handout in Irish, which chattily explained the culinary delights that awaited Tommy: *'Badh deacair cinnt ar na struisínibh agus na pigheadeachaibh is mó bhíos mar bhiadh ag an saighdiúir faoi comhair an lae'* ('It would be hard to beat the stews and pies which form the principal portion of Tommy's daily menu.')

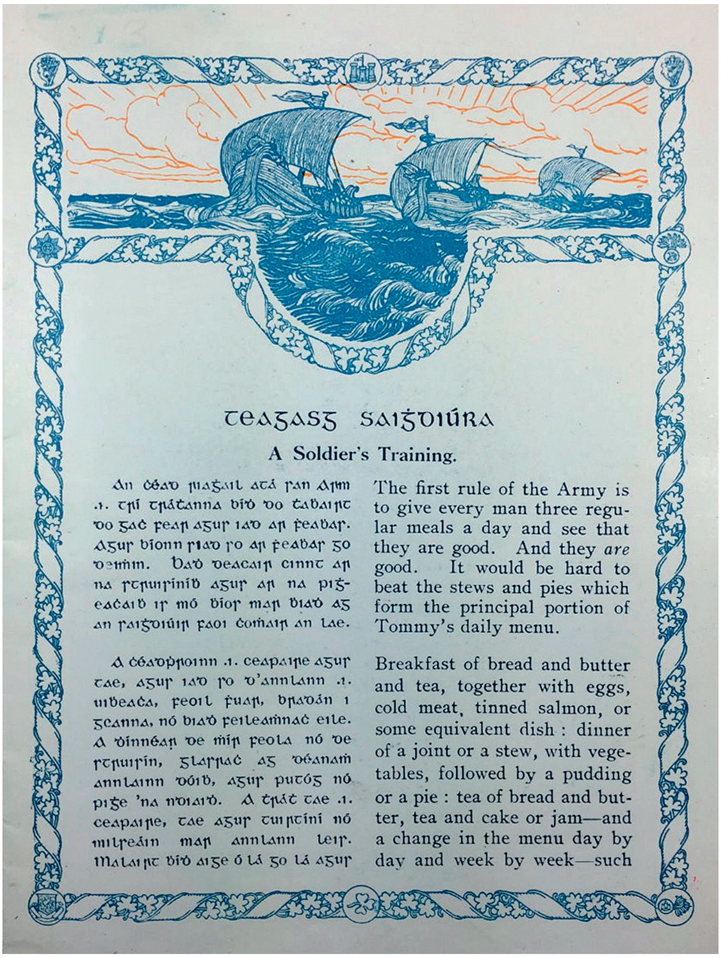
Around 44,000 Irishmen joined the British army during the first months of the war. A similar number joined over the whole of 1915, but as casualty numbers grew, Irish recruitment declined rapidly during 1916. Next came an apocalyptic shock — the British administration was taken by surprise when, on Easter Monday, 24 April 1916, advanced nationalists rose up in Dublin and took over the city centre.

By the week's end the rebel high command had to abandon the burning GPO and retreat to a terrace on Moore Street. Appalled by the sight of casualties, Patrick Pearse and the Provisional Government decided to end the fighting and to treat with the British. On Saturday 29 April, 1916 Patrick Pearse met the British commander, General Lowe at Parnell Street, where he surrendered. A British officer (probably the Dublin-born Captain Harry de Courcy-Wheeler) captured the surrender scene with a portable camera. In what is probably the most iconic photograph of the Easter Rising it grainily depicts General Lowe (accompanied by his son, a Lieutenant) on the left, accepting the surrender of Pearse.

As sympathy for the rebels grew after the executions of their leaders, Ireland was on the way to becoming a lost cause for the British. Nevertheless there were attempts to put a spin on the Rising events. Reliable publications such as 'The Illustrated London News', trying to allay any nervousness about the loyalty of Irish regiments, portrayed these as

charging the enemy trenches, *'saying what they think of treason at home.'* The Germans, hopeless at propaganda, made a feeble attempt to capitalise on the Rising. They placed a placard opposite the Royal Munster Fusiliers' trenches which said: *'English guns are firing on your wife's* [sic] *and children.'* Targeting Irish soldiers, the Germans produced leaflets which gave news of the executions in Ireland. One of these, in the form of a newsletter entitled *'Eire go Brath',* recounted that its programme, inspired by the spirit of the Irish dead, may be defined as the *'fight of the Isle of Saints against the Isle of Thugs.'*

Public opinion in the United States was very important to the British war effort. The British Embassy in Washington was understandably nervous as news of the Rising was published in newspapers across the country. The death sentence on Roger Casement proved hugely controversial. The British Ambassador, Cecil Spring-Rice, passed on information about Casement's 'perversion' (based on the infamous 'Black Diaries') to political and religious leaders in an effort to undermine the US campaign for clemency. Particularly dangerous to the British side were the two largest immigrant groups in America, the Irish- and German-Americans. Both shared an interest in keeping America out of



Teagasg Saiġdiúra

A Soldier's Training.

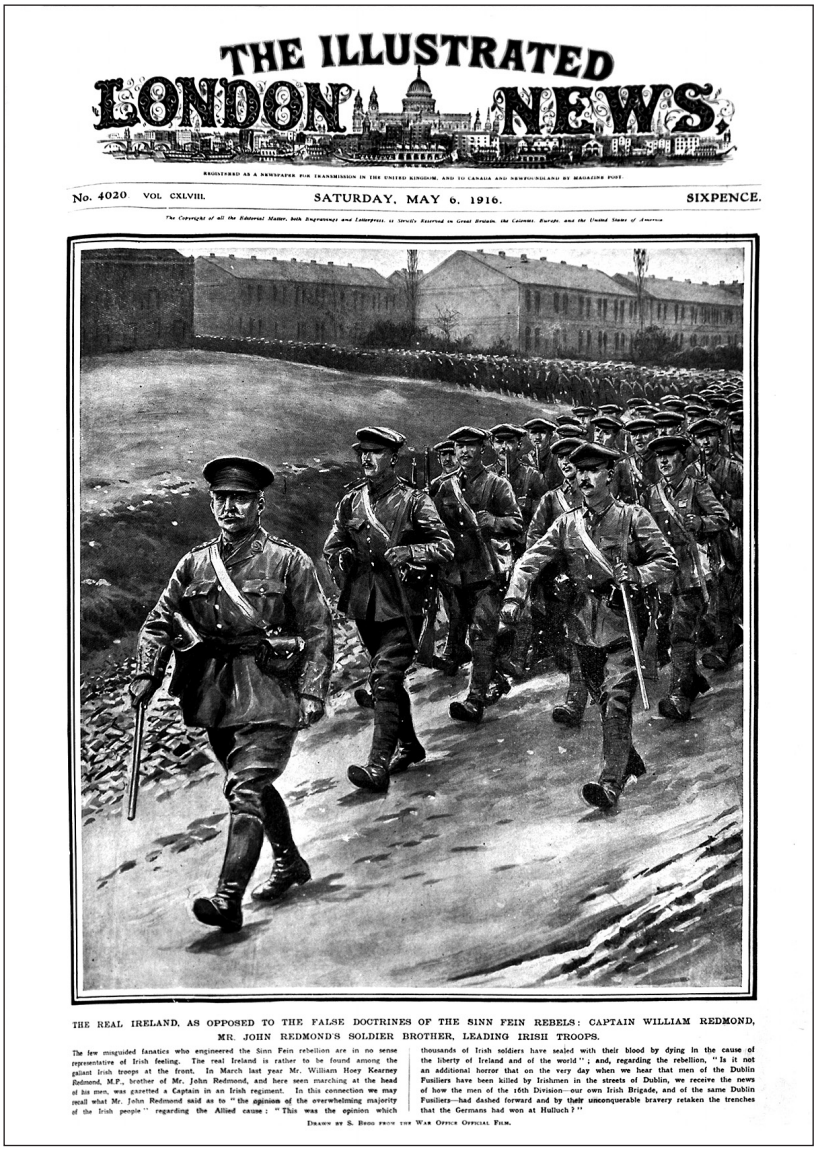
An céad riaġail atá san Arm .i. trí tráṫanna bíḋ do ṫabairt do gaċ fear agus iad ar ḟeabas. Agus bíonn siad so ar ḟeabas go deimin. Baḋ deacair cinnt ar na scruisinib agus ar na pig-eaċaib is mó bíos mar biaḋ ag an saiġdiúir faoi ċoṁair an lae.

The first rule of the Army is to give every man three regular meals a day and see that they are good. And they *are* good. It would be hard to beat the stews and pies which form the principal portion of Tommy's daily menu.

A ċéadṗroinn .i. ceapaire agus tae, agus iad so d'annlann .i. uibeaċa, feoil ḟuar, bradán i gcanna, nó biaḋ feileaṁnaċ eile. A ḋinnéar de ṁir feola nó de scruisín, glasraċ ag déanaṁ annlainn dóib, agus putóg nó pige 'na ndiaiḋ. A ṫrát tae .i. ceapaire, tae agus cuirtíní nó milseáin mar annlann leis. Malairt bíḋ aige ó lá go lá agus

Breakfast of bread and butter and tea, together with eggs, cold meat, tinned salmon, or some equivalent dish : dinner of a joint or a stew, with vegetables, followed by a pudding or a pie : tea of bread and butter, tea and cake or jam—and a change in the menu day by day and week by week—such

Right: this handout, written in Irish, outlines the culinary delights that await when one joins the British Army.



THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

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THE REAL IRELAND, AS OPPOSED TO THE FALSE DOCTRINES OF THE SINN FEIN REBELS: CAPTAIN WILLIAM REDMOND, MR. JOHN REDMOND'S SOLDIER BROTHER, LEADING IRISH TROOPS.

The few misguided fanatics who engineered the Sinn Fein rebellion are in no sense representative of Irish feeling. The real Ireland is rather to be found among the gallant Irish troops at the front. In March last year Mr. William Hoey Kearney Redmond, M.P., brother of Mr. John Redmond, and here seen marching at the head of his men, was gazetted a Captain in an Irish regiment. In this connection we may recall what Mr. John Redmond said as to "the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people" regarding the Allied cause: "This was the opinion which thousands of Irish soldiers have sealed with their blood by dying in the cause of the liberty of Ireland and of the world"; and, regarding the rebellion, "Is it not an additional horror that on the very day when we hear that men of the Dublin Fusiliers have been killed by Irishmen in the streets of Dublin, we receive the news of how the men of the 16th Division—our own Irish Brigade, and of the same Dublin Fusiliers—had dashed forward and by their unconquerable bravery retaken the trenches that the Germans had won at Hulluch?"

Drawn by S. Begg from the War Office Official Film.

The reliably jingoistic wing of the British press did not hesitate to put a spin on the Dublin rising against British rule. Left: the 6 May 1916 edition of 'The Illustrated London News' tells of the 'real Ireland, as opposed to the false doctrines of the Sinn Féin rebels'. Captain William Redmond (brother of John Redmond) is depicted as bravely leading his Irish troops. Rather jarringly conflating the cause of the British Empire with that of Irish liberty, it quotes John Redmond on the opinion of the Irish people regarding the Allied cause, as saying that 'this was the opinion that thousands of Irish soldiers have sealed with their blood by dying in the cause of the liberty of Ireland and of the world'.

the war and their respective newspapers highlighted British injustice in Ireland. A German-American weekly, 'The Fatherland' hit the propaganda bull's-eye when, on the front cover of the issue of 17 May 1916, it depicted a heroic Patrick Pearse greeting George Washington with the message *'we fought the same foe and for the same reason.'* News of the executions of May 1916 changed the American perception of Britain — Ambassador Spring-Rice reported to the Foreign Office on how attitudes to Britain (particularly those of Irish-Americans) had changed for the worse after the Rising, noting *'… They have blood in their eyes when they look our way.'*

Having re-established their control over Ireland, the British were able to return to concentrate on the war effort. However, the nationalist flame had not been extinguished. From December 1916 onwards,

Right: German propaganda during WWI was vastly inferior to that of the British. In the immediate aftermath of the Easter Rising in 1916, this sign was posted by the Germans opposite the Royal Munster trenches saying: 'Irishmen! Heavy uproar in Ireland; English guns are firing on your wifes (sic) and children!'

Below: in a counterblast of spin, 'The Illustrated London News' printed this scene under the caption: 'The German attempt to pervert Irish troops by posting (a) placard...failed ignominiously. After singing 'Rule Britannia!' the Irishmen, by a daring night raid, captured the placard.'

Left: effective propaganda in the immediate aftermath of the Easter Rising, albeit an example that only reached a small audience. The May 1916 edition of this German-American weekly depicts a heroic Pearse greeting George Washington with the message: 'We fought the same foe and for the same reason.' The British were nervous about the Rising and how its impact on American public opinion would affect possible US participation in WWI.

Irish rebels were released from detention, returning to acclamation by welcoming crowds. A revitalised Sinn Féin won a string of by-elections. Irish nationalism grew apace and gained force as the Irish Volunteers reorganised. As the British government struggled to decide what to do about the 'Irish question', the Great War continued. The signing of a treaty with the Bolsheviks in March 1918 resulted in the Germans immediately moving their divisions westward — allowing them to mount a massive offensive on the Western Front. The British, in a state of desperation, decided to introduce conscription in Ireland. This proved to be a disaster — most of Ireland united against the threat of conscription. As uproar ensued, Prime Minister Lloyd George decided to send Field Marshal Lord John French, Commander of the British Expeditionary Force during WWI, to Ireland as Lord Lieutenant, to introduce a new firmness and in effect to act as military supremo.

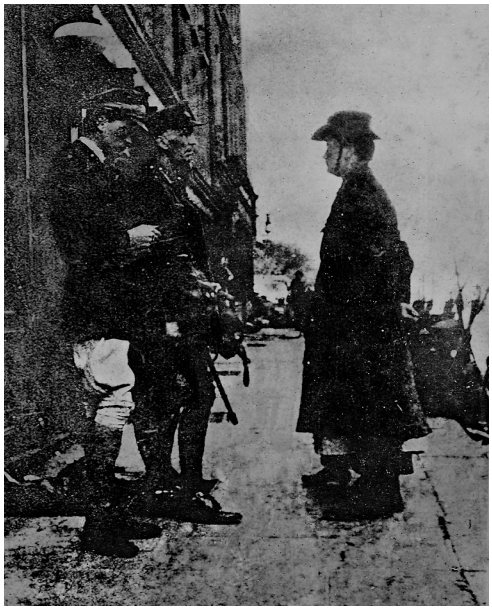
It was in this heated atmosphere that the so-called 'German Plot' emerged. It started in April 1918 when a man, just landed from a German submarine off the Clare coast, was captured. It emerged that he had been a member of the 'Irish Brigade' (set up in 1915 in Germany by Roger Casement). The British made a giant leap of logic and alleged that the Sinn Féin leadership was plotting with the Germans. While

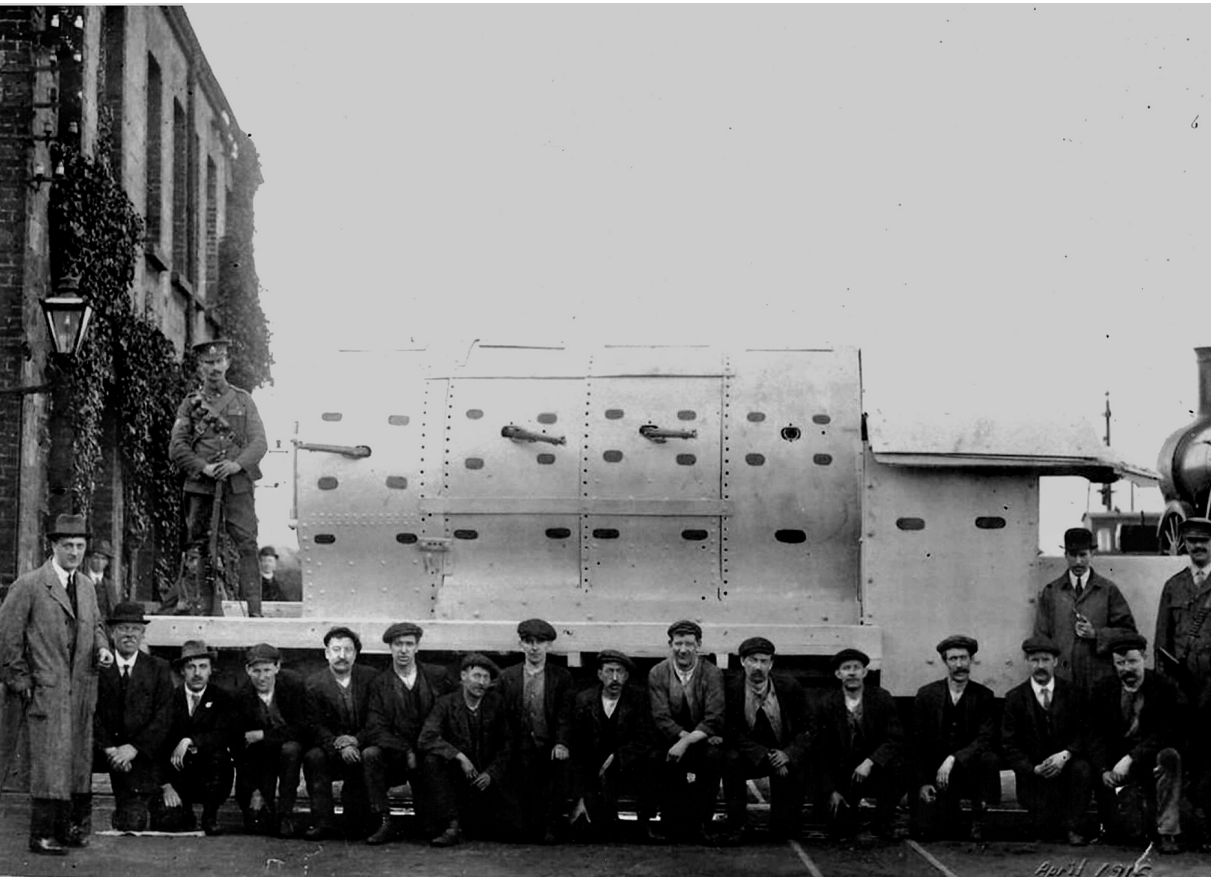
Below: Airbrushing. The most iconic photograph of the 1916 Rising, Patrick Pearse surrendering to General Lowe on 29 April. On the left, Elizabeth O'Farrell's feet can be seen behind Pearse's. On the right, part of the front page of the 'Daily Sketch' of 10 May. O'Farrell's feet have disappeared. It has been suggested that she was airbrushed from the photo as part of a dark plot by the British to obscure the fact that Irish women were also in revolt against the British Empire. However, it is more likely that a harassed sub-editor decided to tidy up, painting out her feet as well as making crude adjustments to Lowe's face. The 'Daily Sketch' photo is the only example of the 'airbrushing' of O'Farrell.

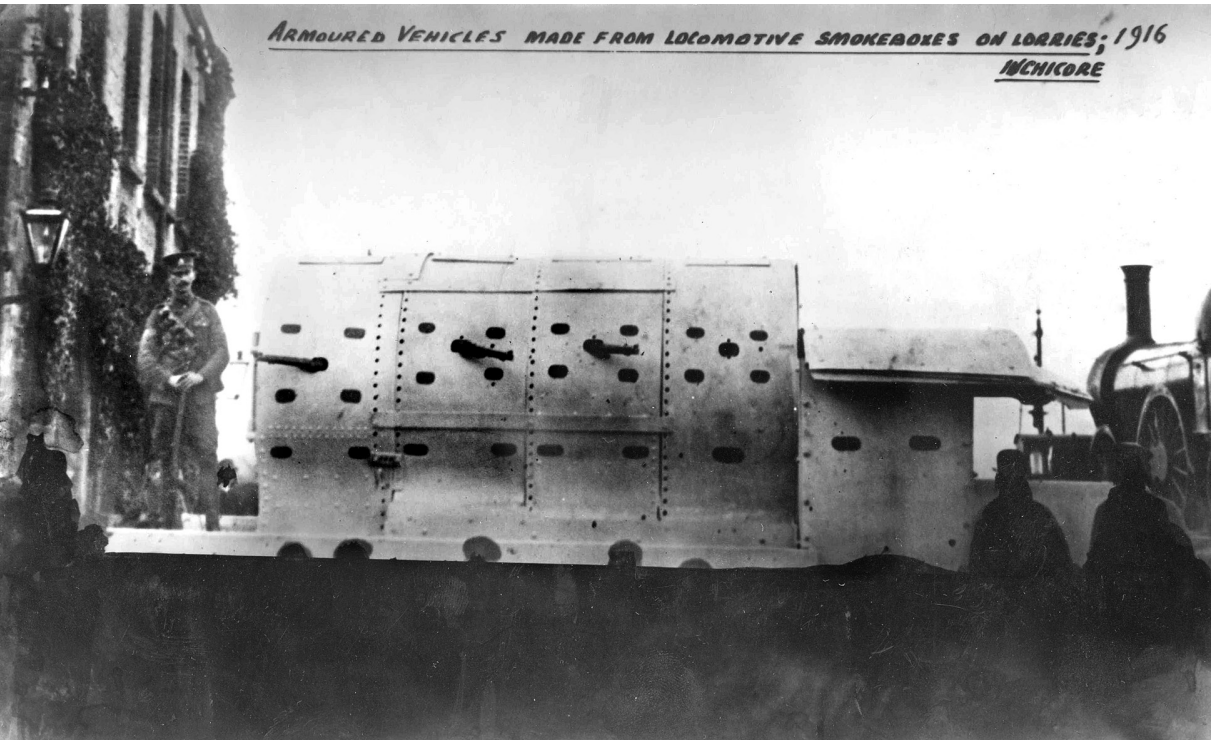
there had been collaboration with the Germans in the run up to the Easter Rising, there is no evidence that any senior Republican had been in contact with them in 1918. The submarine episode is likely to have been initiated by the Germans (then desperate and in extremis) in a bid to establish contact with the Sinn Féin leadership, in the hope of once again confounding the British anew in Ireland. The concept of a 'German Plot' was indeed Fake News, but in those fevered times the British Cabinet, despite flimsy evidence, desperately wanted to believe their own suppositions. As well as offering an excuse to smite Sinn Féin, the 'plot' created useful propaganda to influence the Americans, who were just entering the war. The prominent Government minister, Austen Chamberlain, wrote to Lloyd George at the beginning of May, noting that if there were *'moral proofs of cooperation between Sinn Féin and Germany'* then *'although it may be insufficient for a jury it will be sufficient for America …'.* However, as General Macready later wrote, the *'supposed German Plot…was not substantiated by very convincing evidence.'*

Lord French arrived in Ireland on 11 May 1918 to take up his position. Mandated to act firmly, French seized the opportunity afforded by the 'German Plot' — he promptly ordered the round-up of prominent Sinn Féiners. Most of those arrested were at the political end of the spectrum. Michael Collins and more radical members avoided arrest, with the unintended consequence, disastrous for the British, that Collins and others were now able to pursue, unimpeded, a more militant course.

After the ending of the 'Great War' in November 1918, Sinn Féin won a majority in the December General Election. In January 1919, the Sinn Féin MPs set up their own parliament in Ireland, coincidentally on the same day that an ambush occurred which resulted in the






ARMOURED VEHICLES MADE FROM LOCOMOTIVE SMOKEBOXES ON LORRIES; 1916
INCHICORE

Airbrushing fakery. The images on the left illustrate an odd case of dissimulation from the 1950s, linked to the events of 1916.

Left: In the first days of the uprising in 1916, the British hurriedly borrowed lorries from the Guinness brewery to armour them for use in the fighting. At Inchicore Railway Works, locomotive smoke-boxes were placed on the truck body, complete with holes for rifles. The photograph shows the Inchicore workmen proudly posing in front of their handiwork.

Left: this photograph, was sent to the Military Archives by the Chief Mechanical Engineer of Córas Iompair Éireann (the railway company), in 1951, the year of the 35th anniversary of the Rising. Here, the staff have been painted out. Times had changed by then; this redaction was obviously done to hide the identity of the people who had carried out the work.

death of two RIC men. As 1919 rolled into 1920, the IRA (as the Irish Volunteers were now called) developed an empirical form of guerrilla warfare that turned out to be effective in the escalating encounters with Crown forces. Particularly successful was the 'Squad' — set up by Michael Collins — which hunted spies and informers in Dublin. One Alan Bell, whose public persona was that of an elderly retired Resident Magistrate, became a target for the Squad. In reality, Bell had spent his entire career enmeshed in the shadowy British spy world in Ireland and as it turned out, during the late-nineteenth century, had been a principal protagonist in the creation of a shocking piece of 'Fake News'.

At the beginning of 1920 Alan Bell was in Dublin, having been drafted in as a member of a secret Dublin Castle committee that was investigating how to improve the intelligence effort. He had been running a spy network and his activities soon came to Republican attention. In early March the 'Irish Bulletin' wrote that Bell had acted as agent provocateur in the West of Ireland during the times of the Land League and how he had played a role in the 'Pigott forgeries' case. This forgery arose in 1887, when 'The Times' printed a letter that purported to be written by Charles Stewart Parnell, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party, and which indicated his approval of the Phoenix Park murders of 1882 (the fatal stabbing of the Chief Secretary and his Under-Secretary). In 1888 a special commission investigated the allegations and cleared Parnell. It turned out that an Irish journalist, Richard Pigott, had forged the letter — Pigott fled to Madrid where he shot himself. Bell was accused of being the secret agent behind the payment to Pigott by 'The Times'.

Back to 1920 and, as part of a detailed enquiry into Sinn Féin funds, Bell had begun an energetic interrogation of bank officials. Bell's enquiry was becoming too energetic and too close to the bone. On 26 March 1920, he was taken off a tram at Ballsbridge and shot by members of the Squad. The killing of Bell was to have consequences for the 'Freeman's Journal'. In the months preceding his death the newspaper had written about Bell's activities — details of which were picked up by newspapers like 'The Times'. General Nevil Macready developed the fixed opinion that publicity in the 'Freeman's Journal' had been behind Bell's death, and wrote of the newspaper in his memoirs that *'... the press, under the guidance of the murder gang, had directed the aim of the assassins' weapons. In the case of Mr Bell...his murder was preceded by a torrent of abuse and vituperation.'* As we see later on, this perception of the 'Freeman's Journal' contributed to the prosecution of the owners and editor at the end of 1920, which resulted in a fine and a sentence of a year's imprisonment.

By mid-1920, the new British team, supposedly the best talent that could be assembled, were now finding their feet in Dublin Castle. They began their efforts to sort out the mess that was Ireland — a 'Devil's broth' *(Potas y Diafol)* as Lloyd George had picturesquely described it in his native Welsh. A new push in the areas of policing, intelligence

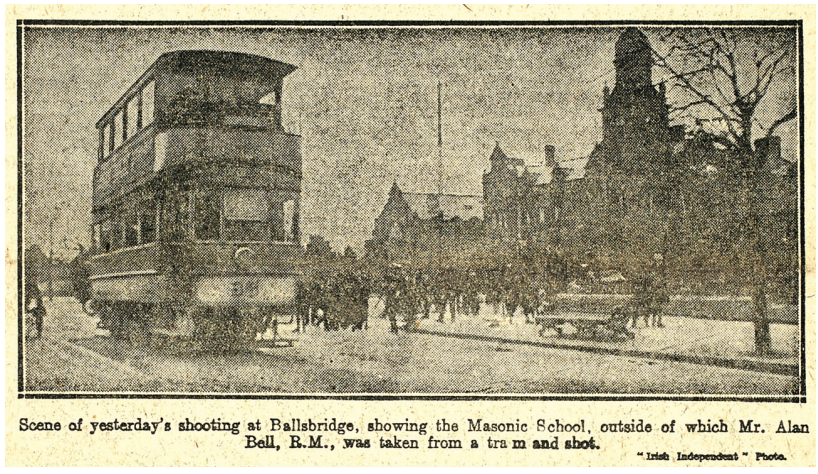
Above: some of the Sinn Féin leadership rounded up in the 'German Plot' of May 1918. Despite there being no real evidence, the allegation that Sinn Féin had been recently plotting with the Germans was useful propaganda for the British cause in the US.

and military activities was initiated. Up to then little had been done in the field of propaganda, other than suppress unfavourable press reports. Now the British established a dedicated propaganda regime, which was intended to work in an assertive and pro-active manner. The man appointed in charge of the new Public Information Branch (PIB), Basil Clarke, was an experienced journalist. He was a proponent of what he termed *'propaganda by news'* — he noted that to gain *'a hold over the press'* the material issued to it should focus on the facts. Neutral language should be used in press statements, sticking to bare facts rather than giving opinion — sometimes minor details detrimental to the British side could be included, which would help gain credibility and trust. Expounding this theory to his superiors, he gave a fictional example of a situation where police broke into a house, firing indiscriminately, robbing and burning down the house. In what might be regarded as a massive understatement, he noted that this would have *'a very real minus propaganda value.'* However, if it was revealed that unarmed policemen had been murdered in the house three days before, this would lessen the minus propaganda effect. He grandly continued: *'In fact for simpler minds…it is well-nigh removed.'* Clarke settled into his task and he and his Bureau duly built up connections with the press. As he noted in a memo to a colleague, *'about 20 pressmen, Irish, British and foreign, visit the Castle to take our version of the facts — which I take care are as favourable to us as may be, in accordance with truth and verisimilitude — and they believe all I tell them. And they can't afford to stay away.'*

However, the army, directed by General Nevil Macready, decided to march to a different propaganda drum. (Macready's dealing with the press was not always appreciated by the politicians. Mark Sturgis, in

'Fake News' in 1887. The journalist Richard Pigott (right) had forged a letter, published in 'The Times' purporting to show that Charles Stewart Parnell approved of the Phoenix Park murders. There were dark allegations that Alan Bell, later assassinated in March 1920 by the Squad, had been behind the payment made to Pigott for the forgery.

his ever-entertaining diary, relished noting on 12 November 1920 that *'Macready got properly wigged by both LG (Lloyd George) and Winston (Churchill) for his interviews'*.) Macready established his own army press office at the Irish Command Headquarters at Infirmary Road in Dublin. He modelled it on the press office that he had established during his time as Police Commissioner at Scotland Yard, where, as he noted in his autobiography, *'at certain hours each day pressmen could get reliable information… (on) police activities.'* Always alert, the 'Irish Bulletin' responded on 20 April 1920, the day after the news of the establishment of an army press office. Noting the general's intent to provide information on military matters, it referred to a previous event in Arklow where the military had fired on civilians and the information provided had


Scene of yesterday's shooting at Ballsbridge, showing the Masonic School, outside of which Mr. Alan Bell, R.M., was taken from a tram and shot. "Irish Independent" Photo.

Right: the 'Irish Independent' report on the scene at Ballsbridge where Alan Bell was assassinated by the Squad on 26 March 1920.

been *'grossly false'* and was even contradicted by *'The Irish Times, organ of British Propaganda in Ireland.'*

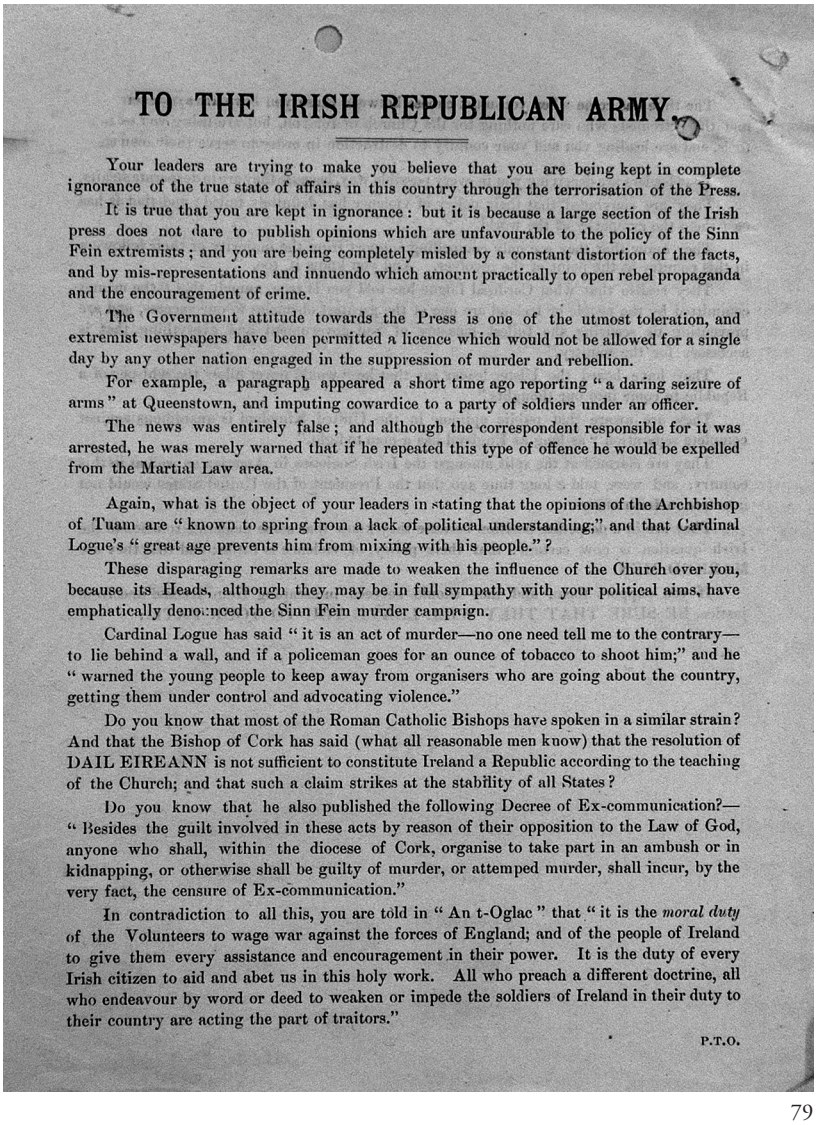
Headed by Major Reginald Marians, the army press section began to issue bulletins to the press on actions where the military had been involved — and in particular where there had been press reports *'contradicting untrue statements about the troops.'* The civilian Public Information Branch under Basil Clarke was established several months later. An element of day-to-day cooperation was established — in due course, Clarke assigned a journalist, Percy Russell, to be based in Marians' office as liaison. As we have seen with his view of Alan Bell's death and the press, Macready had a low, and indeed paranoid, opinion of the newspapers. He later noted in his memoirs: *'In September, 1920, considerable irritation was felt among the troops in Ireland by the publication in 'The Times' of extracts from the 'Irish Bulletin', the mouthpiece of the Irish extremists, in which British officers were accused of organizing a campaign of murder...the soldiers can hardly be blamed if they thought that before assisting Sinn Féin to spread its insidious propaganda those responsible for the leading London "daily" might have caused inquiries to be made at GHQ...That the extracts from the 'Irish Bulletin' found wide publicity in the 'Daily Herald' on the same day as they appeared in the 'The Times' was, of course, no surprise, and it was some consolation to notice that at the same moment the revelations concerning the transfer of some £75,000 from Bolshevik sources into the pockets of persons intimately connected with the 'Daily Herald' became public.'*

In May 1921, Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Foulkes arrived at the army press office as 'Director of Irish Propaganda'. As we have seen in Chapter 2, Foulkes had commanded the British gas units in WWI. He soon got into the spirit of manipulating the news. Perhaps more than most, he was able to gauge the toxicity of this activity in comparison with chemical warfare — so much so that, in 1921, he wrote to a friend that: *'you may remember me in connection with chemical warfare in France, I am now running a variation of this sport, i.e. propaganda in Ireland.'* Perhaps Foulkes over-egged the effectiveness of his output — he was behind the propaganda leaflets which were dropped in their myriads across Ireland by the RAF. These leaflets were a waste of the British propaganda effort (perhaps equalled only by the 'Weekly Summary'). One leaflet addressed the IRA and informed them that they had been duped by their leaders: *'you are being completely misled by a constant distortion of the facts.'* The leaflet continued with some abstruse moral theology about the justness of the IRA cause.

When martial law was declared in most of Munster at the end of 1920, much of the news from there was concerned with military activities. It was indeed the most active of areas and as Macready wrote: *'Cork was notoriously the hotbed of rebellion and the abode of the worst and most degraded type of gunmen.'* Macready complained to the under-Chief Secretary, Sir John Anderson, that Clarke did not know how to

issue propaganda that covered military operations. The perception that there was poor coverage of the military in the press was also held by Lieutenant-General Peter Strickland (commanding the 6th Division, based in Cork) who wrote *'while nearly every paper at home is full of the atrocities committed against the patriotic IRA, yet the Government avail themselves of no propaganda on the other side. The accounts are so colourless.'*

Macready's principal concern regarding the press was that nothing should be reported which would damage the morale of his men. He continued to fret at what he saw as the feeble British propaganda effort, later noting that *'a factor which increased the exasperation of the troops was the total absence of counter-propaganda on the part of the Government.'* Over the period of the War of Independence, there was an underlying tension between Macready and the practitioners of propaganda in Dublin Castle. Clarke felt that army men had no experience of



TO THE IRISH REPUBLICAN ARMY.

Your leaders are trying to make you believe that you are being kept in complete ignorance of the true state of affairs in this country through the terrorisation of the Press.

It is true that you are kept in ignorance: but it is because a large section of the Irish press does not dare to publish opinions which are unfavourable to the policy of the Sinn Fein extremists; and you are being completely misled by a constant distortion of the facts, and by mis-representations and innuendo which amount practically to open rebel propaganda and the encouragement of crime.

The Government attitude towards the Press is one of the utmost toleration, and extremist newspapers have been permitted a licence which would not be allowed for a single day by any other nation engaged in the suppression of murder and rebellion.

For example, a paragraph appeared a short time ago reporting "a daring seizure of arms" at Queenstown, and imputing cowardice to a party of soldiers under an officer.

The news was entirely false; and although the correspondent responsible for it was arrested, he was merely warned that if he repeated this type of offence he would be expelled from the Martial Law area.

Again, what is the object of your leaders in stating that the opinions of the Archbishop of Tuam are "known to spring from a lack of political understanding;" and that Cardinal Logue's "great age prevents him from mixing with his people."?

These disparaging remarks are made to weaken the influence of the Church over you, because its Heads, although they may be in full sympathy with your political aims, have emphatically denounced the Sinn Fein murder campaign.

Cardinal Logue has said "it is an act of murder—no one need tell me to the contrary—to lie behind a wall, and if a policeman goes for an ounce of tobacco to shoot him;" and he "warned the young people to keep away from organisers who are going about the country, getting them under control and advocating violence."

Do you know that most of the Roman Catholic Bishops have spoken in a similar strain? And that the Bishop of Cork has said (what all reasonable men know) that the resolution of DAIL EIREANN is not sufficient to constitute Ireland a Republic according to the teaching of the Church; and that such a claim strikes at the stability of all States?

Do you know that he also published the following Decree of Ex-communication?—"Besides the guilt involved in these acts by reason of their opposition to the Law of God, anyone who shall, within the diocese of Cork, organise to take part in an ambush or in kidnapping, or otherwise shall be guilty of murder, or attemped murder, shall incur, by the very fact, the censure of Ex-communication."

In contradiction to all this, you are told in "An t-Oglac" that "it is the *moral duty* of the Volunteers to wage war against the forces of England; and of the people of Ireland to give them every assistance and encouragement in their power. It is the duty of every Irish citizen to aid and abet us in this holy work. All who preach a different doctrine, all who endeavour by word or deed to weaken or impede the soldiers of Ireland in their duty to their country are acting the part of traitors."

P.T.O.

Right: hundreds of thousands of propaganda leaflets were dropped by the RAF during the War of Independence. These were devised by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Foulkes, 'Director of Irish Propaganda' of the army press office. In what seems to be a pointless waste of effort, this leaflet informs the IRA that they were being duped by their leaders and then adds a complex bit of moral theology.

dealing with the press and complained that *'journalistic values…, which count so much in ultimate propaganda values, are not expertly weighed'* by them. Macready, in turn, had a low estimation of Basil Clarke's abilities and wrote in his memoirs: *'A gentleman was later imported from London into the Castle to give out news and I believe to plant literature here and there among the press, a good move in its way, but far short of what was required.'* He also took a pot shot at Sir Hamar Greenwood: *'The Chief Secretary himself on occasions did his best to beat the propaganda drum in the House of Commons in defence of the police and soldiers, but unfortunately his super-abundant energy so often carried him beyond the boundaries of fact that he soon became as one crying in the wilderness.'*

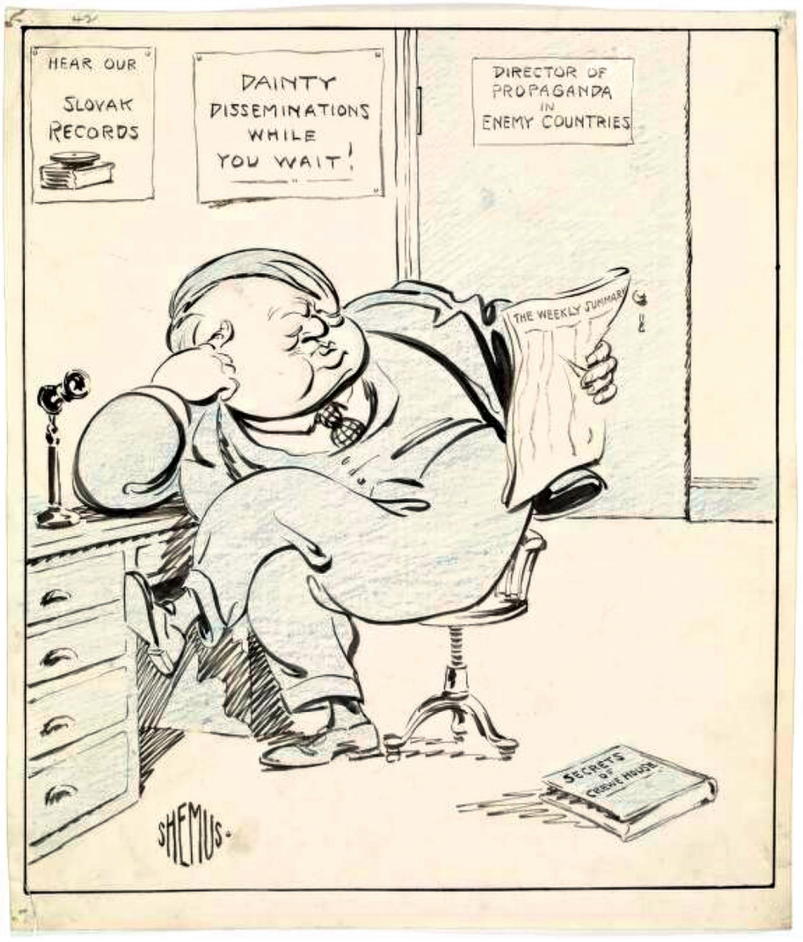
Another strand of the British press effort in Ireland was the Information Section of the Police Authority, which came under the remit of the police supremo, Major-General Hugh Tudor. This new section operated in darker recesses than the more public PIB and even the army press office. It was in this world, secure within the confines of Dublin Castle, that Major Hugh Bertie Pollard, veteran of war-time service in the equally murky MI7.b, was able to flourish and give free rein to his ability to conjure fantastical castles in the air.

As we have seen, since November 1919, Sinn Féin had been producing the 'Irish Bulletin'. By sticking to the facts it had become particularly influential and was circulated to decision-makers — it had even been quoted in the House of Commons by critics of the Government. As we have noted in Chapter 1, General Macready, ever insistent on what he saw were the failures in British propaganda, recognised this when he wrote to Hamar Greenwood at the end of May 1920, pointing out how the 'Irish Bulletin' was being picked up by the French and American press, and urged that something be done by way of a counterblast.

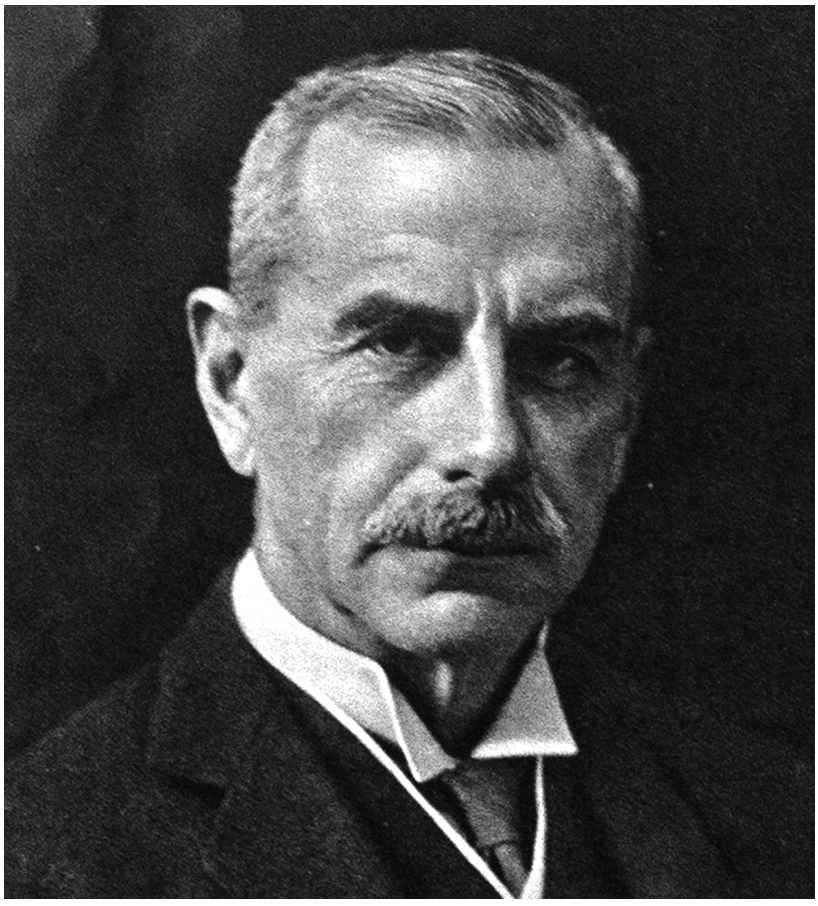
In August 1920, under Major-General Tudor's initiative, the Information Section of the Police Authority duly began to publish a police journal entitled the 'Weekly Summary.' It was produced by Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard, aided by Captain William Darling. The publication, with a basic layout, was printed by the Government Stationers in Dublin for issuance to constabulary barracks across Ireland.

Just as General Macready was concerned about the effect of press reports on his troops, one of the objectives of the 'Weekly Summary' was to improve the morale of the RIC. The British government had decided that the struggle against those they considered as Sinn Féin criminals was to be mainly a police action (with the army merely acting in support of the civil power). Thus, to date, the RIC had borne the brunt of the IRA assault. By mid-1920, the force had been buffeted by a sequence of body blows including an extensive boycott, mass resignations and their withdrawal from small and vulnerable barracks. In turn the IRA had burnt the abandoned barracks and was attacking the larger barracks, which were now fortified and turned into veritable bastions. The RIC had to abandon its traditional policing functions

Right: a Shemus cartoon which was printed in the 'Freeman's Journal', with a punning caption — the 'Weakly Summary'. The cartoon depicts the newspaper magnate Lord Northcliffe (under a sign 'Director of Propaganda in Enemy Countries') reading the periodical under a note saying 'Dainty disseminations while you wait'.



and revert to the paramilitary role it held when it was founded. Thus, in this febrile atmosphere, the 'Weekly Summary' emerged, with one of its principal audiences being the RIC constable, now no longer a local community policeman, but suffering ostracism and in mortal danger. However, the tenor of the articles as written in the 'Weekly Summary' would have felt utterly alien to a typical Irish constable, used to the rather dry reportage of the police service, which generally stuck to facts and avoided conjecture. Reflecting the characteristics of Pollard, one of its originators, it adopted the strident, semi-racist, jingoistic tone of the officers' mess. As it emerged, it was a publication written by Englishmen for Englishmen. Both the periodical and Hamar Greenwood indeed struck a chord in certain quarters — the IRA commander, Ernie O'Malley, later wrote how he had, when in captivity in Dublin Castle, seen the Auxiliaries reading the 'Weekly Summary' and remarking with approval *'strong man, Greenwood, strong man.'* The 'Weekly Summary', somewhat self-reinforcingly, reproduced articles from like-minded papers, such as the 'Morning Post', favourable to its own point of view. As it emerged, the content of the 'Weekly Summary' was the polar



Left: Basil Thomson, Director of Intelligence in the Home Office in London. In 1916 he had been behind the discovery and circulation, amongst influential circles, of the alleged 'Black Diaries' of Roger Casement. Heavily involved in the intelligence world in Ireland, he cooperated closely with Captain Hugh Pollard in the production of the 'Weekly Summary"

opposite of the 'matter of fact' manner as advocated by the head of the PIB, Basil Clarke.

The dark presence of Sir Basil Thomson, at that time Director of Intelligence at the Home Office, was behind the gestation and production of the 'Weekly Summary'. Thomson had form with Ireland — as head of the Special Branch he had interrogated Roger Casement after his capture in April 1916. He had been responsible for the discovery of the infamous 'Black Diaries', allegedly written by Casement. Thomson is believed to have been behind the whispering campaign which used selected extracts of these to show to influential personages such as churchmen and newspaper editors. (Ironically Thomson's role as arbiter of morality later proved a little thin. Thomson, whose father had been the Archbishop of York, was arrested in 1925 for *'committing an act in violation of public decency'* at Hyde Park in London. He had been detained with a young prostitute, and the court rejected his story that he had been engaged in 'conversation' with the young lady as research for a book he was writing on the vice world in London.) The salacious allegations about Casement swept away any chance of clemency in 1916. The jury is still out on whether the diaries were produced by Thomson's Special Branch in what would be called today a 'psyop'. Thomson also

Right: the top front page of the counterfeit edition of 'Pravda' produced in February 1921, as instigated by Basil Thomson.

Пролетарии всех стран соединяйтесь!

ПРАВДА

Орган Центр. Ком. Моск. Кум. и Моск. Губ. Ком. Р. К. К.

№ 151. СРЕДА, 22-го СЕНТЯБРЯ 1920 г. № 151.

СЕГОДНЯ В НОМЕРЕ:

Третій Интернаціоналъ и Европа.

Сколько в Англіи коммунистов?

Новейшие рабочие и 3-й Интернационал.

had experience in forging newspapers. From its inception at the end of 1917, the Bolshevik Government in Russia was seen by the British government as posing a serious threat. In February 1921 a forgery attempt was exposed when the 'Daily Herald' reproduced the front page of a counterfeit 'Pravda', the official newspaper of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The forgery was not perfect — the fake edition carried an imprint of the London printers. The Home Secretary denied any knowledge of this in Parliament, but it soon emerged that Basil Thomson and his Special Branch had been responsible.

As demonstrated by the Casement affair, Thomson was one of the prime movers in Britain acting to thwart Irish 'sedition'. This had been the primary task of the Special Branch which had been established in London in 1883 to counter the Fenian threat in Britain. At the time of the War of Independence, Thomson was heavily involved with Irish matters and, from London, had been directing agents in Ireland. When Brigadier-General Ormonde Winter took over as head of intelligence in Dublin Castle, his new spy network superseded and absorbed Thomson's Irish network. However, Thomson's strong involvement with Irish intelligence matters continued. Demonstrating the intimate links between the worlds of intelligence and propaganda, he worked closely with Pollard and Darling at Dublin Castle in the production of the 'Weekly Summary'. The collaboration was so intense that Mark Sturgis later wrote in his diary that the publication was, in his circle, jocosely referred to as *'BT's weekly'.*

On 8 September 1920 the 'Freeman's Journal' reprinted the front page of the 'Weekly Summary' of 27 August 1920 under the headline *'Amazing Dublin Castle Propaganda for Police Consumption.'* Under the heading *'Black and Tans'* the 'Weekly Summary' set out that *'they were wanted badly and the RIC welcomed them… TERRORISM, INTIMIDATION, BOYCOTT — These may harass the civilian, but the 'BLACK AND TANS' are undaunted. They will go on with their job — the job of making IRELAND once again safe for the law abiding, and an appropriate hell for those whose trade is agitation and whose method is murder.'*

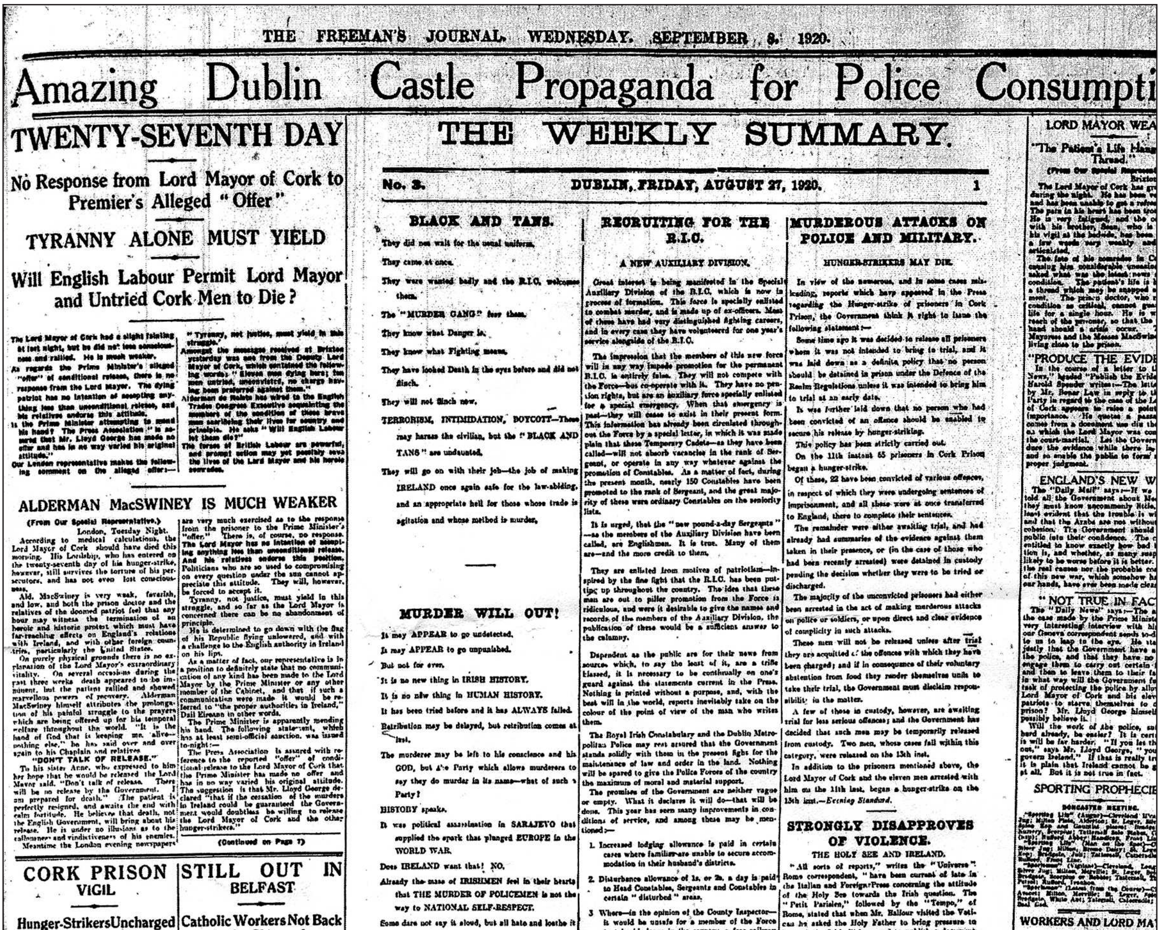
The 'Freeman's Journal' was having none of this — its editorial pointed out that the last sentence *'was an incitement to those Auxiliary forces...to continue those so-called 'reprisals', those murderous outrages which have now become the common sanctions of Government policy'.* The editorial continued: *'This is the propaganda that was carried on with Irish money by Sir Edward Carson…(and his) publicity department during*

the war. They evidently left their pups behind them when they themselves went out of office. During the war the propaganda was aimed at foreign opinion. Now it is directed to armed, murderous resentment of the forces of the Crown against the advocates of Irish liberty and Irish reform.' Separately the newspaper noted that *'we understand that copies of the "Weekly Summary" are read aloud in some police barracks for the 'edification' of the Royal Irish Constabulary.'* On 11 September 1920, the paper published a cartoon which mocked the new Castle periodical. This, entitled 'The Weakly Stupidity', was by the cartoonist Shemus and included a notice promising *'dainty disseminations while you wait.'* For the Irish Administration in Dublin, the 'Freeman's Journal', had been a persistent thorn in their side, and in their eyes got its comeuppance when, just after Bloody Sunday in November 1920, the paper was charged with spreading false reports and causing disaffection. There was a court martial (not a good place to be, because as we have previously noted, General Macready harboured a special hatred for the paper). In December 1920, the owners and the editor were fined and sentenced to a year's imprisonment. (Shortly afterwards, in early January 1921, following strong condemnation in the British press, they were unconditionally released).

The 'Weekly Summary' soon gained a poor reputation amongst the press, both Irish and international, due to its crude falsehoods, as well as its hectoring tone. Over these years, the English journalist Hugh Martin had maintained an independent and balanced role in reporting the events in Ireland for the 'Daily News' — so much so that, as he recounted in a later book, when he was touring in Tralee with other journalists, a Black and Tan asked: *'Is there a Hugh Martin among you? Because if there is, we mean to do for him.'* In the event Martin sensibly decided to hide his identity. In the same book Martin analysed an early edition of the 'Weekly Summary' — it consisted of short leading articles and many extracts from British newspapers. He noted that there was exhortation to reprisal, quoting where the paper had reprinted a 'Morning Post' account of an 'Anti-Sinn Féin Society' leaflet in Cork which threatened: *'...if in the future any member of His Majesty's Forces be murdered, two members of the Sinn Féin party in the County of Cork will be killed.'* He also noted the extract on page two from a proclamation by General Paine, the commander of the Union army in Kentucky during the American Civil War: *'I shall shoot every guerrilla taken in my district; and if your Southern brethren retaliate by shooting a Federal soldier, I will walk out five of your rich bankers, brokers and cotton men, and make you kneel down and shoot them. I will do it, so help me God!'*

In the House of Commons, Hamar Greenwood, the Chief Secretary, valiantly defended the periodical, explaining that the purpose of the 'Weekly Summary' was to hearten the RIC and that it only cost £15 or £20 a week. Greenwood was a master of dissembling when it came to fending off criticism of the paper. On 22 November 1920 the matter

Right: the 'Freeman's Journal' of 8 September 1920 reprinted one of the early editions of the 'Weekly Summary', under the headline: 'Amazing Dublin Castle Propaganda for Police Consumption.'



THE FREEMAN'S JOURNAL, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1920.

Amazing Dublin Castle Propaganda for Police Consumpti

TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY

Nó Response from Lord Mayor of Cork to Premier's Alleged "Offer"

TYRANNY ALONE MUST YIELD

Will English Labour Permit Lord Mayor and Untried Cork Men to Die?

ALDERMAN MacSWINEY IS MUCH WEAKER

(Continued on Page 7)

CORK PRISON VIGIL

Hunger-Strikers Uncharged and Untried

PRISONERS' CONDITION

One Man Twelve Months Arrested

STILL OUT IN BELFAST

Catholic Workers Not Back in the Shipyards

MR. DEVLIN'S EFFORTS

Claims for Unemployment Benefit to be Conceded

THE WEEKLY SUMMARY.

No. 3. DUBLIN, FRIDAY, AUGUST 27, 1920. 1

BLACK AND TANS.

They did not wait for the usual uniform.

They came at once.

They were wanted badly and the R.I.C. welcomes them.

The "MURDER GANG" fear them.

They know what Danger is.

They know what Fighting means.

They have looked Death in the eyes before and did not flinch.

They will not flinch now.

TERRORISM, INTIMIDATION, BOYCOTT—These may harass the civilian, but the "BLACK AND TANS" are undaunted.

They will go on with their job—the job of making IRELAND once again safe for the law-abiding, and an appropriate hell for those whose trade is agitation and whose method is murder.

MURDER WILL OUT!

It may APPEAR to go undetected.

It may APPEAR to go unpunished.

But not for ever.

It is no new thing in IRISH HISTORY.

It is no new thing in HUMAN HISTORY.

It has been tried before and it has ALWAYS failed.

Retribution may be delayed, but retribution comes at last.

The murderer may be left to his conscience and his GOD, but the Party which allows murderers to say they do murder in its name—what of such a Party?

HISTORY speaks.

It was political assassination in SARAJEVO that supplied the spark that plunged EUROPE in the WORLD WAR.

Does IRELAND want that? NO.

Already the mass of IRISHMEN feel in their hearts that THE MURDER OF POLICEMEN is not the way to NATIONAL SELF-RESPECT.

Some dare not say it aloud, but all hate and loathe it in their heart of hearts.

The murder gang are condemned by PUBLIC OPINION.

The policy is futile, for it runs counter to all decent human feeling.

The Community will be purged from it.

It can not last in the light of our common humanity.

It can not last.

MURDER WILL OUT.

RECRUITING FOR THE R.I.C.

A NEW AUXILIARY DIVISION.

Great interest is being manifested in the Special Auxiliary Division of the R.I.C. which is now in process of formation. This force is specially enlisted to combat murder, and is made up of ex-officers. Most of these have had very distinguished fighting careers, and in every case they have volunteered for one year's service alongside of the R.I.C.

The impression that the members of this new force will in any way impede promotion for the permanent R.I.C. is entirely false. They will not compete with the Force—but co-operate with it. They have no pension rights, but are an auxiliary force specially enlisted for a special emergency. When that emergency is past—they will cease to exist in their present form. This information has already been circulated throughout the Force by a special letter, in which it was made plain that these Temporary Cadets—as they have been called—will not absorb vacancies in the rank of Sergeant, or operate in any way whatever against the promotion of Constables. As a matter of fact, during the present month, nearly 150 Constables have been promoted to the rank of Sergeant, and the great majority of these were ordinary Constables on the seniority lists.

It is urged, that the "new pound-a-day Sergeants"—as the members of the Auxiliary Division have been called, are Englishmen. It is true. Many of them are—and the more credit to them.

They are enlisted from motives of patriotism—inspired by the fine fight that the R.I.C. has been putting up throughout the country. The idea that these men are out to pilfer promotion from the Force is ridiculous, and were it desirable to give the names and records of the members of the Auxiliary Division, the publication of these would be a sufficient answer to the calumny.

Dependent as the public are for their news from sources which, to say the least of it, are a trifle biassed, it is necessary to be continually on one's guard against the statements current in the Press. Nothing is printed without a purpose, and, with the best will in the world, reports inevitably take on the colour of the point of view of the man who writes them.

The Royal Irish Constabulary and the Dublin Metropolitan Police may rest assured that the Government stands solidly with them in the present fight for the maintenance of law and order in the land. Nothing will be spared to give the Police Forces of the country the maximum of moral and material support.

The promises of the Government are neither vague or empty. What it declares it will do—that will be done. This year has seen many improvements in conditions of service, and among these may be mentioned:—

1. Increased lodging allowance is paid in certain cases where families are unable to secure accommodation in their husband's districts.
2. Disturbance allowance of 1s. or 2s. a day is paid to Head Constables, Sergeants and Constables in certain "disturbed" areas.
3. Where—in the opinion of the County Inspector—it would be unsafe for a member of the Force to take his leave in the country, a free railway warrant may be issued to England.
4. The restrictions in respect of marriage have been removed.

These are only precursors of other improvements in the conditions of the Force. The whole of the Empire knows what the Force stands for to-day, and every citizen who loves constitutional government and loathes and abominates murder recognizes that no reward can be too high for the men who make up what has rightly been described as "the finest Constabulary Force in the World."

MURDEROUS ATTACKS ON POLICE AND MILITARY.

HUNGER-STRIKERS MAY DIE.

In view of the numerous, and in some cases misleading, reports which have appeared in the Press regarding the Hunger-strike of prisoners in Cork Prison, the Government think it right to issue the following statement:—

Some time ago it was decided to release all prisoners whom it was not intended to bring to trial, and it was laid down as a definite policy that no person should be detained in prison under the Defence of the Realm Regulations unless it was intended to bring him to trial at an early date.

It was further laid down that no person who had been convicted of an offence should be enabled to secure his release by hunger-striking.

This policy has been strictly carried out.

On the 11th instant 65 prisoners in Cork Prison began a hunger-strike.

Of these, 22 have been convicted of various offences, in respect of which they were undergoing sentences of imprisonment, and all these were at once transferred to England, there to complete their sentences.

The remainder were either awaiting trial, and had already had summaries of the evidence against them taken in their presence, or (in the case of those who had been recently arrested) were detained in custody pending the decision whether they were to be tried or discharged.

The majority of the unconvicted prisoners had either been arrested in the act of making murderous attacks on police or soldiers, or upon direct and clear evidence of complicity in such attacks.

These men will not be released unless after trial they are acquitted of the offences with which they have been charged; and if in consequence of their voluntary abstention from food they render themselves unfit to take their trial, the Government must disclaim responsibility in the matter.

A few of those in custody, however, are awaiting trial for less serious offences; and the Government has decided that such men may be temporarily released from custody. Two men, whose cases fall within this category, were released on the 13th inst.

In addition to the prisoners mentioned above, the Lord Mayor of Cork and the eleven men arrested with him on the 11th inst. began a hunger-strike on the 13th inst.—*Evening Standard*.

STRONGLY DISAPPROVES OF VIOLENCE.

THE HOLY SEE AND IRELAND.

"All sorts of reports," writes the "Universe" Rome correspondent, "have been current of late in the Italian and Foreign Press concerning the attitude of the Holy See towards the Irish question. The "Petit Parisien," followed by the "Tempo," of Rome, stated that when Mr. Balfour visited the Vatican he asked the Holy Father to bring pressure to bear on the Irish Bishops and to publish a document openly condemning Sinn Fein.

"I have had the honour of an audience with Cardinal Gasparri, who authorised me to contradict these statements most emphatically. 'Mr. Balfour,' said his Eminence, 'is too experienced a statesman to be guilty of anything even remotely lacking in tact. With regard to the Irish question, the Holy See, of course, strongly disapproves of violence, both verbal and resulting in bloodshed, and it is to be hoped that the voice of the bishops and clergy will result in a general improvement in the situation.'"—*Irish Independent*.

Dublin Castle has added a new feature to the "government" of Ireland.

It has instituted an official propagandist weekly organ.

The Weekly Summary has been prepared, printed by the official Government printers, and distributed free of cost to all the police barracks and some military depots.

The object of this is, frankly, anti-Irish propaganda, and certain portions of the matter can only be described as a direct incitement to the forces of the Crown to "make Ireland a proper hell for those whose trade is agitation."

We understand that copies of the weekly sheet are read aloud in some police barracks for the "edification" of the Royal Irish Constabulary.

The work of the English "Black-and-Tans," the nature of which is well known, is held up to the Irish constables as heroic and worthy of emulation.

Newspapers hostile to Ireland, and others which publish matter antagonistic to the cause, are quoted.

Amongst these are the *Morning Post*, *The Belfast News-Letter*, and the *Globe*.

In some cases reports issued by Dublin Castle are quoted on the authority of a newspaper, as though they were gathered from independent sources.

The sheet is not only anti-Sinn Fein and deals not only with the suppression of "crime," but Dominion Home Rule is described in a headline as "a trap for the unwary," and the notorious over-taxation of Ireland is examined and described as an imaginary grievance.

The above is a reproduction of the first page of one number, which bears the imprint, "14406 Wt. (5722) 3,1,000. 8/20," and exemplifies the quality of the "dope" the unfortunate policemen are given to swallow:—

That "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery," is a true saying, and not the least interesting feature of this latest Castle effort is seen in the first column, where the form of the principal leading article of the FREEMAN'S JOURNAL has obviously been copied.

LORD MAYOR WEA...

"The Patient's Life Hangs by a Thread."

"PRODUCE THE EVIDE...

ENGLAND'S NEW W...

"NOT TRUE IN FAC...

SPORTING PROPHECIE...

WORKERS AND LORD MA...

Large Numbers Attend Mass... Dublin

GIRL'S £1,000 HAUL

of General Paine's reprisal policy came up. An MP questioned Greenwood about the reproduction of the General's proclamation and asked: *'whether he will see that this incitement to reprisals on the part of the police is withdrawn and the official responsible for its insertion is reprimanded.'* Greenwood responded: *'…this paper has done great service in maintaining the morale of the police. I resent the suggestion that anything contained in it would justify a reprimand of its editor…I cannot go into the merits of every paragraph in this paper.'* Two days later Herbert Asquith, former Prime Minister and leader of the opposition, also referred to the piece where the words of the sanguinary American general had been

reprinted. He expressed his surprise at the 'Weekly Summary' calling it *'an extraordinary journalistic adventure at Dublin Castle…which the Chief Secretary admits to be an official document…It contained a number of the most inflammatory extracts you could take from most extreme organs of one section of opinion in this country… it cited, not with disapproval, a proclamation issued in the…American Civil War by perhaps one of the most bloodthirsty of the Federal generals.'* Asquith continued: *'Why was that published? Why was that document…dug up… at a time when passions are inflamed in Ireland?'*

Greenwood was indefatigable. A question was put to him on 24 February 1921 in the Commons asking if he was aware that an article in the 'Weekly Summary' contained the statement that: *'Sinn Féin always was, and still is, a movement based on a murder policy, the aim of which is the apotheosis of assassins; Shinnerea (the Summary's nickname for the Sinn Féin movement) is a blight and a pestilence, and Shinnerea is crime incarnate, and for its propagators the rope and bullet are all too good'* and continued to ask: '*if he is considering taking action against the editor… in view of this direct incitement to murder?'* Greenwood sloughed off the criticism: *'I have read the article in question and do not agree that it is an incitement to murder.'* With Hamar Greenwood acting as a mudguard and fending off accusations in the House of Commons, the brace of Captains, Pollard and Darling, were able to continue, without hindrance, on their propaganda journey.

The first major challenge on the news management front for Basil Clarke and his colleagues occurred in August 1920 after Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork, began his hunger strike. This had generated widespread support in Ireland, Britain and further afield. It spurred the British propaganda machine to go into overdrive. Statements were issued that MacSwiney had endorsed violence. Insinuations were spread that MacSwiney was secretly taking sustenance. The likely initiators were the two Captains in the Information Section of the Police Authority, as the 'Weekly Summary' was the first to print the allegations. After MacSwiney's prolonged fast and death, there was an outpouring of grief. In London 30,000 mourners filed past his coffin at Southwark Cathedral. Nervous of large demonstrations in Dublin, the British Government ordered that the coffin be diverted at Holyhead onto a steamer which sailed directly to Queenstown, the port of Cork. MacSwiney's sacrifice was appreciated by one Ho Chi Minh, then working in Paris, who noted: *'a nation which has such citizens will never surrender.'*

The first major propaganda challenge for Basil Clarke when he arrived in 1920 was the ongoing hunger strike of Terence MacSwiney, Lord Mayor of Cork. Statements were issued that MacSwiney had endorsed violence and rumours spread that he was secretly taking sustenance. However, there was an overwhelming wave of sympathy around the world, as evidenced by 'Le Petit Journal's' portrayal of 'Le Martyr Irlandais' (right).

The Information Section of the Police Authority cannot be accused of idleness. The industrious Captain Pollard and his associates wrote many propaganda articles, with the intention of planting these in pliant newspapers. The historian Ian Kenneally, researching for his book 'The Paper Wall', unearthed an abundance of these articles in the British National Archives. It is unclear how many of these managed to evade the normal capacity of newspaper editors to detect nonsense, and actually reached

Le Petit Journal

ADMINISTRATION
61, RUE LAFAYETTE, 61

15 CENT. — SUPPLÉMENT ILLUSTRÉ — 15 CENT.

ABONNEMENTS

Les manuscrits ne sont pas rendus

31me Année

Numéro 1.552

On s'abonne sans frais dans tous les bureaux de poste

DIMANCHE 19 SEPTEMBRE 1920

	SIX MOIS	UN AN
France et Colonies.....	5 fr.	8 fr.
Etranger	6 fr.	10 fr.

LE MARTYR IRLANDAIS

M. Térence Mac-Swiney, lord-maire de Cork, accusé d'intelligences avec les Sinn-Feiners, refuse, dans sa prison, toute nourriture, et se laisse mourir de faim pour servir la cause de l'indépendance de l'Irlande

the printed page. However, some did appear in loyalist and jingoistic papers of the time such as 'The Irish Times', the 'Belfast Telegraph' and the 'Yorkshire Post'. One of the articles notes the sworn testimony of a Mrs Holloway, a spirit medium. She recounted, how, while having a cup of tea on a night in November 1920 after the execution of Kevin Barry, she heard a voice cry out from the heavens. It was none other than Kevin Barry. Heaven had changed him, he informed her, and *'had melted his wicked heart.'* He urged her to pass on a message to the people of Ireland. In particular, she should tell his friends to *'stop their wicked deeds.'* Another article related that in early 1921, a parish priest in County Cavan had placed a curse on IRA Volunteers, particularly two brothers. The brothers lived, the story continued, but their family fell ill and died one after the other. This, it concluded, was *'a great blow to the IRA in the locality so far.'*

For the Captains of the Police Information section, the War of Independence must have been something of a 'jolly jape', and gave a chance for imperialists to play the Great Game once again. The rapidly changing events across Ireland gave ample opportunity to use their fantastical expertise in, what was in effect, their private newspaper. However, life in close confinement in Dublin Castle, jammed with administrators and spies, must have been somewhat claustrophobic and constraining. And so, when there was a request from English newsreel operators for permission to tour the disturbed areas of Ireland to get pictures of the daily life of the RIC, it proved an opportunity for Captain Hugh Pollard to get out of the Castle and go on a jaunt. A select press party was duly assembled, which included Pollard, Captain Garro-Jones from the press section in the Irish Office in London (previously Sir Hamar Greenwood's personal secretary), Clifford Hutchinson of the 'Yorkshire Post' and another journalist. Two Pathé 'kinematograph' operators, 'Jock' Gemmel and Harry Starmer, were also included. The convoy was made up of two Crossley cars escorted by Auxiliaries in two Crossley tenders. The original plan, as approved, was to start with a morning visit to the Auxiliaries' HQ at Beggars Bush Barracks, then in the afternoon a visit to the Curragh Camp, thence to Thomastown to overnight. The next day the party was to travel onto Macroom Castle (the Auxiliary base from where, little more than a fortnight later, two Crossley tenders of 'C' Company were to depart on their ill-fated journey for Dunmanway, passing by Kilmichael). A visit to the Limerick area was scheduled for the third day. However, it is likely that the press party responded to events and diverted to where there were reports of potentially interesting incidents. On Armistice Day (11 November) the camera operators were in action at Dungarvan Co. Waterford. The newsreel in the Pathé Archives begins with the intertitle: *'Dungarven* [sic]. *No one can insult our flag — Sinn Féiners who had on Armistice Day, of all days, turned down the Union Flag, were made to parade the village and re-hoist it.'* Two men in civilian clothes, namely, the 'Sinn Féiners', are first shown marching through the centre of the

town, flanked by British soldiers with fixed bayonets. The group obligingly stops while the camera pans over the scene. The Union Jack spans between the two men, pinned or tied in some manner to them. They are shown marching down a track and the clip ends with a view of the Union Jack flying on top of the local castle, the ruined McGrath's Castle. The 'Munster Express' in its report, noted that two men, identified as Jack Keohan and Roger Foley, were ordered to march through the streets under the threat of *'a prod of the bayonet.'* Earlier that day there had been tension in the town when Crown forces had forced shopkeepers to close their shops for the Armistice. The parade with the flag was obviously staged for the camera — and it certainly was very convenient for the touring camera operators that the 'Sinn Féiners' had carried out their dastardly deed just the very day the pressmen arrived in town.

Our story of the press posse now moves to Co. Kerry in the southwest of the 'troubled' island. After the kidnap of two RIC constables, during the first week of November, Tralee had been convulsed by reprisals carried out by the Crown forces. On the morning of 12 November 1920 there was a fracas at Ballymacelligott (near Tralee). Lorryloads of RIC had appeared at the Ballydwyer Creamery there and opened fire at members of the Ballymacelligott Active Service Unit, who were nearby. Two of the IRA were killed and two others were wounded. That afternoon, at around 4 pm, Pollard and his press party had left Castleisland (it would have been possible to have travelled there from Dungarvan either the previous afternoon or that morning) and arrived at Ballymacelligott. In his later Witness Statement, the local IRA Active Service Unit commander (and later TD), Tom McEllistrim, picks up the story. He explained that he had showed up later along with a dozen men and was in the creamery yard, when: *'We were surprised by three lorries of Auxiliaries which sailed in on us from Castleisland direction. This section was not a raiding party but was, I believe, making a tour of the country. When they saw our men take cover the lorries stopped immediately and shooting started. We had only six rifles in action but two of our party, armed with rifles, who had left the Creamery yard five minutes earlier, came to our aid and opened fire from a little hill on the Auxiliaries at 300 yards range. At the same time a lorry coming from the Tralee direction, seeing the ambush, pulled up immediately about 300 yards from the lorries which had been occupied by the Auxiliaries. The officer in charge of the British forces, believing that they had been surrounded, rushed to his car, ordered his men to turn the lorries and they drove back to Castleisland. Our riflemen kept on firing at them as they retreated.'* McEllistrim recounted in a later interview with Ernie O'Malley that, during the action: *'...there was a fellow standing up in the lorry taking a picture. The little fight lasted 20 minutes.'*

On the afternoon of the following day, the Crown forces returned and set fire to the creamery. Several homesteads were burned and three hayricks were put to the torch. In the Pathé Archives is a clip of burn-

Left: the location where the so-called 'Battle of Tralee' occurred on 12 November 1920. The creamery at Ballymacelligott, around eight kilometres from Tralee, was burnt out the following day in the presence of Captain Hugh Pollard and his press party.

Below: the remains of the creamery today.

ing hayricks, which possibly was taken on 13 November at Ballymacelligott.

According to the Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland published in early 1921 (which called the press party '*The Dublin Castle Circus*'), *'Captain Pollard and others who had taken part in the previous afternoon's proceedings were again in the party.'* Thus, it appears that Pollard and the pressmen had happened to encounter an exciting, but fairly routine engagement with the IRA — and had returned the following day to experience the *frisson* of a reprisal, the burning of a creamery. The Captains returned to Dublin Castle, bringing back stirring tales of adventure. Mark Sturgis noted in his diary on 16 November that he *'saw Pollard and Garro-Jones fresh back from their Kerry battle. I exhorted them now to drop the gun and assume the pen in good earnest and give us some red-hot eyewitness stuff.'* The two captains took this to heart and went off to make arrangements for what turned out to be probably the most egregious example of Fake News during the entire War of Independence. Reports soon appeared in the British press of what appeared to be a large battle in Tralee. At the end of November, the front page of 'The Illustrated London News' told of dramatic scenes. The caption informed readers that it was taken during the 'Battle of Tralee' where a convoy of RIC cadets was ambushed by Republicans. In the photograph one cadet was wounded – he and two of the dead Sinn Féiners are seen lying on the road. In the background, near a prominent lamp post, cadets can be seen taking Sinn Féiners prisoner. The photograph also appeared on the front page of 'The Graphic' periodical, which played up the dramatic news. It related: *'If you did not read this caption, you might naturally think we were reproducing, in connection with the celebration of Armistice Day, a picture of an episode in the war against Germany. It is, on the contrary, a picture taken at the present time in Ireland, where, instead of an Armistice, there is an appalling carnival of bloodshed.'*

Matt Rice, staff photographer of the 'Irish Independent', had just returned from the Tralee area and, looking at the published photograph, could not recall any such lamp post there. After some investigation he determined that the location was at Killiney, Co. Dublin. On 27 November, the 'Irish Independent' published the photograph of the supposed battle scene *'from the Kerry front'* that had appeared *'in most of the leading English newspapers and magazines.'* It juxtaposed it with a photograph taken at the junction of Vico and Victoria Roads in Killiney. The caption drily adds that the photograph *'would go to show that the 'Battle of Tralee' ended for the convenience of the photographer in Co. Dublin.'*

Thus the quiet seaside suburb of Killiney in Co. Dublin had been portrayed as the scene of the 'Battle of Tralee'. There was commotion in the House of Commons about this blatantly obvious attempt at chicanery. On 2 December 1920, Jeremiah MacVeagh, the nationalist MP (and bane of Hamar Greenwood), asked the Chief Secretary for

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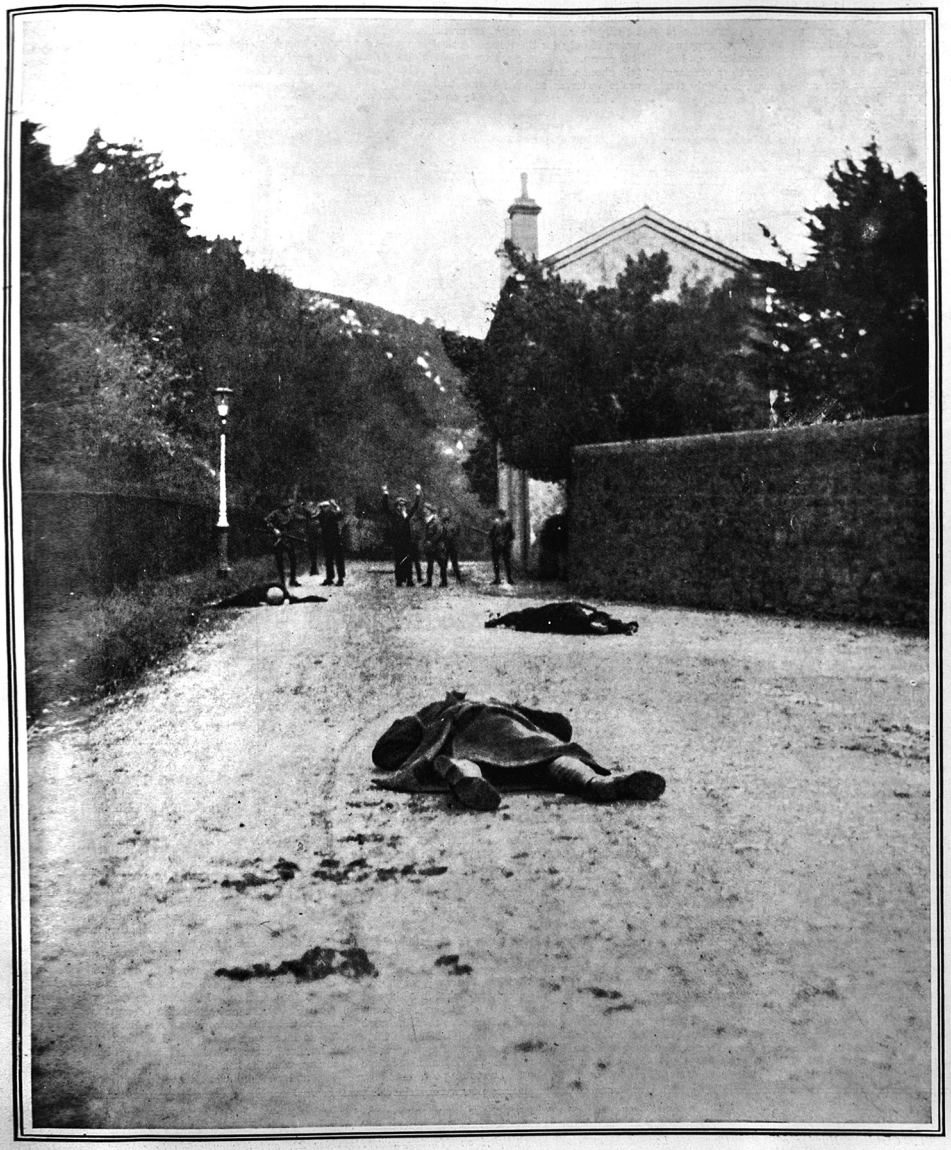

THE REIGN OF ASSASSINATION IN IRELAND: AFTER A STREET BATTLE—DEAD AND WOUNDED; AND SINN FEINERS "HELD UP."

The condition of affairs in Ireland has grown worse and worse. Terrible events took place in Dublin on Sunday, November 21, when fourteen British Army officers and ex-officers were murdered in their homes by gangs of assassins, and a fight between troops and a football crowd resulted in twelve deaths and the wounding of over fifty people. The above photograph is typical of the state of things in the country. It was taken during the "battle of Tralee," where a convoy of R.I.C. Cadets was ambushed by Republicans. Three Sinn Feiners were killed and one cadet was wounded. The cadet and two of the dead Sinn Feiners are seen lying in the road. The cadet is in the foreground. In the background, cadets are taking Sinn Feiners prisoners.

PHOTOGRAPH BY TOPICAL.

Above: Vico Road at Killiney, Co. Dublin, today (the lamp post is long gone) scene of the so-called 'Battle of Tralee'.

Left: the 27 November edition of 'The Illustrated London News' shows the 'Battle of Tralee'. It tells how dead Sinn Féiners lie on the ground while Auxiliaries take prisoners. Note the distinctive lamp post on the left (not a typical sight then in Tralee), which gave the alert that it was not the actual location.

Ireland in the House of Commons about the faked photograph, and also whether a Government armoured car and soldiers were lent for the purpose of preparing the picture. Denis Henry (Attorney-General for Ireland) replied on behalf of Greenwood: *'I know nothing as to the circumstances in which the picture...was taken. It was not issued officially…'.* There is also reference to a newsreel that had been taken. MacVeagh asked: *'Can the right honourable gentleman tell me if a film was also taken of this scene, and that at a private show of the film it was found that it would have to be abandoned because one of the 'corpses' moved?'* Denis Henry also denied any knowledge of this.

The 'Daily News' reported on the release of a film by Pathé on 18 November 1920. It described how the film, *'which was taken under fire'*, showed wounded and struggling Sinn Féiners being led away by the Auxiliaries. A local girl is shown pleading with the captors to free her brother — however, he is led away in a lorry.

At present in the Pathé Archives there is a newsreel that starts with the intertitle *'Guerilla Warfare in Ireland. Pathé operator — one of ambushed Press Party secures remarkable pictures.'* It opens with a scene at a side road in the country. Auxiliaries rush around, while civilians hold their hands up, and a woman pleads for what may be her relative. Next we see prisoners on a Crossley tender, being given tea by a woman —

Above: heroic Auxiliaries face the enemy in Killiney, a quiet south Dublin suburb, temporarily doubling as being 'on the Kerry front.' The men are from 'I' Company and their platoon commander, District Inspector Charles Vickers, can be seen on the left, crouching behind the Crossley tender.

Left: a 'Sinn Féiner' being arrested at Vico Road. DI Vickers, on the right, searches his pockets.
However, the fakery lives on. This well-composed photograph is continually inserted in present-day newspapers to illustrate historical articles — the picture editors assume the photograph is a factual one depicting a scene from the War of Independence.

perhaps this scene may actually have been taken near Ballymacelligott. The piece ends with two Crossley tenders parked against a wooded hill, in what seems like a decidedly un-Kerry scene. On the orders of an officer, the prisoners are taken off the Crossley tenders — one of these, blindfolded, struggles as he is hauled away.

It is likely that the film taken by the Pathé cameraman during and after the brief action near the creamery in Kerry needed spicing up and the fake episodes were staged for insertion. However in the present-day Pathé Archive there is no trace of these faked scenes with Vico Road in the background — namely, a moving film of the events depicted in the still photographs, such as appeared in 'The Illustrated London News'. It is likely that these scenes were rapidly withdrawn when they were exposed as fake.

Unsurprisingly, the conclusion of the 1921 Report of the Labour Commission to Ireland was that 'The Battle of Tralee' was a figment of the imagination. The whole affair was an embarrassment for the Government, and Greenwood was blamed by the 'Manchester Guardian' for distancing himself from the deception. It stated that he should be held as *'admitting that the soldiers who posed for the photograph, as well as the motor-lorries, guns and other military accessories utilised to make up the battle-piece, had been used for the purpose without authority.'*

Yet there is no evidence of any subsequent opprobrium falling on Pollard and Garro-Jones for their actions (indeed Mark Sturgis' comment on the need for *'red-hot eyewitness stuff'* demonstrates that the official mood in Dublin Castle was to hype up the Tralee events). The pair had staged the event at Killiney in an effort to give the impression that the Crown forces were winning the war. The Auxiliaries in the photographs were later identified as being from 'I' Company, under the command of the platoon commander District Inspector third class, Charles Vickers (who had also commanded the escort for the press tour of the south). One wonders what Pollard was thinking when he staged the fake scene in a location which was sure to be identified. Undoubtedly, it is indicative of his fantastical 'Legion of Frontiersmen' approach. He had achieved success with outlandish fake news before ('The Phantom Russian Division' and 'The German Corpse Factory') and he also harboured views about the dim Irish, who clearly would not spot the trickery. He impulsively charged ahead and set up what was the height of deception, a theatrical tour-de-force.

The Pathé camera operators' pliant cooperation with the authorities during the Irish troubles merely reflects the fact that at that time the British producers of newsreels invariably presented the official version of events. Motion picture cameras were heavy and every scene took time to set up — thus it made sense to be embedded with the authorities, who would facilitate this. Other than clips of the aftermath of reprisals such as burnt-out houses, much of the Irish pieces were staged action shots — and Auxiliaries heroically going through their paces feature in many. As evidenced in the various newsreels of the time in the

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LA TRIBUNA ILLUSTRATA

Supplemento settimanale de "LA TRIBUNA"

Anno XXVIII - N. 48 ‡ 28 novembre-5 decembre 1920

IN QUESTO NUMERO:
Molti chilometri di spavento
La settimana in fotografia
Perduto nel Marocco - Due novelle - Lettere alla sorella brutta - Il mondo dei capricci - Le risposte degli astri - Giuochi a premio, ecc.

Il terrore in Irlanda

La popolazione della città irlandese di Balbriggan abbandona le proprie case, trasportando i mobili e le masserizie potute salvare dal saccheggio delle truppe inglesi.

(*Disegno di* A. MINARDI)

Left: 'Il Terrore in Irlanda'. 'La Tribuna Illustrata' shows women abandoning Balbriggan after the reprisal burnings here. Such was the extent of the destruction, coupled with the fact that the town was close to Dublin (and thus easy for journalists to visit), that the story of the sacking of the town was widely reported in the British and international press.

Pathé Archives, the cameramen spent some time at Woodstock House, Inistioge, Co. Kilkenny. This fine house, located in landscaped grounds by the River Nore, had been occupied by 'A' Company of the Auxiliaries from August 1920 to the end of January 1922 as a principal divisional headquarters. In the archives there are many vignettes taken at the house and surrounding district. In one clip Crossley tenders full of Auxiliaries leave the house, then we see them driving along a road, approaching a trench, and the Auxiliaries then vigorously fill the trench. Another scene shows blindfolded prisoners being hustled up the steps into Woodstock House. These are totally staged and it is highly probable that the 'prisoners' were Auxiliaries in civilian clothes.

As 1920 rolled on, unofficial reprisals by Crown forces had become the norm. Cities and towns across the country bore the brunt of shootings and burnings. Amongst many others, Limerick, Thurles, Bantry and Fermoy suffered. The sack of Balbriggan on 20 September 1920

gained particular notoriety due to the extent of the destruction. Scores of houses and building were burnt and much of the population had to abandon the town. The sacking of the town got much publicity in the press, simply due to the fact that it was close to Dublin and thus easy for journalists to visit. The shocking news flashed around the world. 'La Tribuna Illustrata' of Rome showed women abandoning the ruins of the town, entitling it *'Il terrore in Irlanda.'* After Balbriggan, the 'Daily Mail' noted in October 1920: *'half the world is coming to feel that our Government is condoning vendetta and turning a blind eye upon the execution of lawless reprisals… the slur on our nation's good name becomes insufferable.'* Reprisals continued, nevertheless, and became official after martial law was applied across Munster in 1921.

As the news of the rampage at Balbriggan flooded the world newspapers, there was another violent action by the Crown forces, this time in the heart of Dublin. A John Aloysius Lynch from Kilmallock had been staying at the Royal Exchange Hotel in Parliament Street. Lynch was a Sinn Féin member of Limerick County Council and was in Dublin to hand over £23,000 of Dáil Loan subscriptions to Michael Collins. The build-up in Dublin of military intelligence officers — drafted in from all over the Empire, by Brigadier-General Ormonde de l'Épée Winter — now yielded its murderous fruits. At 3 am on the morning of 22 September a group of 12 officers in dark coats and wearing military caps arrived at the hotel. After consulting the register, they rushed directly to Lynch's room, crashed in and shot him. The official story was that Lynch had opened fire with a revolver (one was conveniently found in the room) and that a member of the party had shot him in self-defence. Michael Collins immediately recognised it as murder and wrote: *'There is not the slightest doubt that there was no intention what-*

On 23 September 1920, John Lynch, a Sinn Féin county-councillor from Limerick, was shot dead in his room at the Royal Exchange Hotel, Dublin, by one of a squad of ten military officers. Right: in the aftermath, a large crowd gathers in front of the hotel, as the coffin is carried out.

ever to arrest Mr Lynch. Neither is there the slightest doubt that he was not in possession of a revolver.'

At the time the IRA were assiduously gathering intelligence on the British spy network in Dublin — and they obtained information on those implicated in Lynch's murder. Two of the officers involved, Captain Baggallay (the duty officer who had arranged the raid) and Lieutenant Angliss, were amongst those shot on Bloody Sunday on 21 November. Another officer in the party was Major George Osbert Smyth, who had requested transfer from Egypt to Ireland, to avenge the death of his brother. (Lieutenant Colonel Gerald Smyth, whose words of incitement had sparked the mutiny by the RIC in Listowel, had been shot by the IRA in July 1920 at the Cork County Club.) Major Smyth was himself killed while mounting a raid in Drumcondra on 12 October 1920, where Dan Breen and Seán Treacy managed to effect an escape.

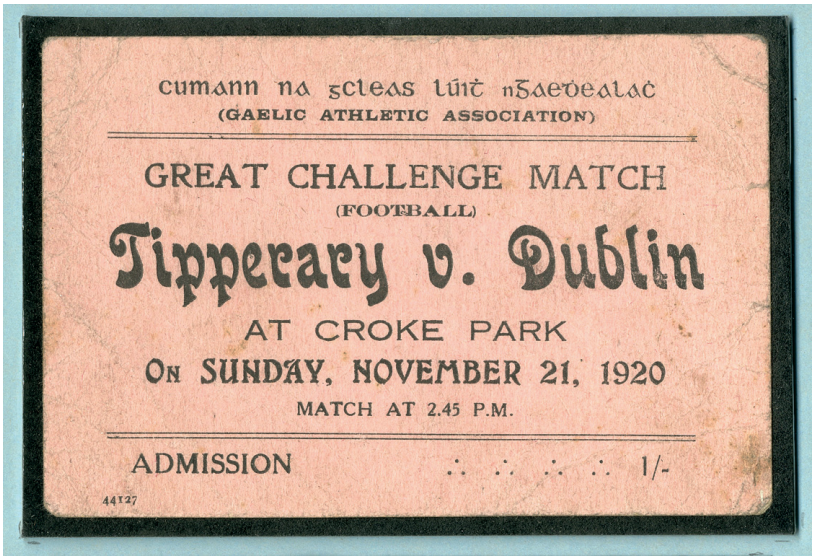
On 24 September, in the aftermath of the sack of Balbriggan and Lynch's murder, Hamar Greenwood called a meeting of senior administration figures to review the propaganda effort. They criticized the failure to issue a clear statement on the 'Lynch affair'. A military court was assembled to inquire into the death of Lynch. (The press were refused admission.) On 27 September, unsurprisingly in the absence of any transparency, it concluded that the fatal shot *'was fired by a member of the Forces of the Crown in self-defence and in the execution of his duty.'*

Bloody Sunday proved to be the most violent day of the War of Independence — and Fake News was soon emitted to refract the facts that might prove embarrassing to the British cause. The lead-up to these sanguinary occurrences arose after Michael Collins' Squad had effectively eliminated the 'G' Division of the DMP. Accordingly, the British needed to refresh their Intelligence network in Ireland. Around 60 men, mostly young veteran officers selected for spying duties, were drafted in from Britain and the Empire and lodged throughout central Dublin. On the morning of Sunday 21 November 1920 the IRA set out to assassinate those who, according to intelligence they had gathered, were British spies in Dublin. Twelve officers (including, as we have seen, two implicated in the recent murder of John Lynch) as well as two Auxiliaries were killed. The British issued press statements emphasising the callousness of the killers. Hamar Greenwood spoke the following day of *'this series of cold-blooded and carefully planned atrocities…one of the foulest tragedies in the history of our Empire.'* A later spin gave emphasis to the innocuous nature of the murdered officers, one of whom was a court-martial officer, Captain Baggallay, who had been instrumental in setting up the killing of John Lynch two months previously. Hugh Pollard, in his 1922 book 'Secret Societies of Ireland', wrote: *'The passionate national enthusiasm which animates a Dublin grocer's assistant to go in cold blood with a score of comrades to assassinate an English Court-martial officer in his bed needs further analysis than this...Court-martial officers are not high in rank, nor are they great*

Above: 'murder most foul'. 'The Illustrated London News' depicts a scene from 'Bloody Sunday'.

personalities in the legal machine. They are simply subaltern officers whose duty is the administration of the law, a purely impersonal task. They are not persecuting judges abusing a legal system...Yet, in the eyes of the Irish, these officers (and in the case of the Dublin murders of Sunday morning, November 21st, 1920, not one of them had ever passed a death penalty on any rebel.' Alison Phillips, ardent Unionist and holder of the Lecky Chair of History at Trinity College, Dublin amplified this bending of the truth in his 1923 book 'Revolution in Ireland' where he noted that the *'officers were mainly engaged in court martial work — and as often as not in the interests of prisoners'*. He made reference to the official report which *'stated that the Sinn Féiners were becoming alarmed at the quantity of information which the authorities were receiving...and that they desired to...terrorise the officers connected with the machinery of justice.'*

However, on the same day as the assassinations, another event was to unfold which forced Basil Clarke and his colleagues to change gear: from a position of denouncing IRA murder, to one where they had to fend off accusations that Crown forces had been guilty of an atrocity — that of killing innocent people. In the afternoon of that Sunday, Auxiliary cadets (including DI Vickers and his 'I' Company, lately of Vico Road), began firing at ticket sellers at a football match at Croke Park (mistaking them for IRA pickets). As these men ran away, the Auxiliaries directed fire at the panicked and fleeing crowd, resulting in



Left: a ticket for the fateful match at Croke Park held on 'Bloody Sunday'.

the death of 14 civilians. Dissimulation was required and the official British account, as recounted by Hamar Greenwood in the Commons on 23 November, said how that there had been a plan to search the spectators with the object of securing 'Sinn Féin gunmen', who had taken part in the assassinations of that morning. *'The police force approached the neighbourhood of the field while the military were encircling it, but before the military cordon was complete the police were observed by civilians, who had evidently been specially posted to watch the approaches to the field. The police were fired upon from two corners of the field. Simultaneously, men rose from their places on the grand stand, and fired three quick shots with revolvers into the air. Of this there is indisputable evidence. It seems quite clear that these shots were a pre-arranged signal of warning to certain sections of the crowd. A stampede was caused not by the firing alone, which caused considerable alarm, but also by a rush of men seeking to make their escape from the field...a number of people were crushed. Meanwhile, the armed pickets outside joined, no doubt, by gunmen escaping from inside the ground, were maintaining a fire in the direction of the police, who returned the fire. The firing lasted not more than three minutes. About 30 revolvers, thrown away by men who had formed part of the spectators, were picked up on the ground... The responsibility for (the deaths), however, rests entirely upon those assassins whose existence is a constant menace to all law-abiding persons in Ireland.'*

In the event, the Dublin Castle administration were lucky: the next day most of the London newspapers gave their full attention to the assassinations of the officers in the morning rather than the afternoon killings of the civilians (afternoon news, in any case, was too late for the following day's newspapers). The 'Daily Mirror' even managed to misspell the stadium as *'Crow Park'*. Clarke was relieved: on the following Monday he told his associates that the British press reaction was for the most part *'very good.'*

But it was not all uncritical. The 'Manchester Guardian' correspondent doubted the official statement and concluded that *'it seems too clear that the full story of Croke Park, when it can be told, will unveil one of the most awful incidents in the Irish troubles...'.* As might be expected, the press in Ireland gave full coverage. The 'Freeman's Journal' carried the headline *'Amritsar Repeated in Dublin'* and, in an editorial, compared the Croke Park events to the Amritsar massacre in India (where in 1919 the British Army had fired at an unarmed crowd). It concluded that *'The innocent were shot down in blind vengeance.'*

What occurred on the night of Bloody Sunday at Dublin Castle led to a particularly egregious attempt to manipulate the news. Three men had been arrested in the early hours of 21 November: two were senior IRA officers of the Dublin Brigade, Dick McKee and Peadar Clancy. The third man, Conor Clune, was not a Volunteer. The three were brought to a guardroom in Dublin Castle (the former detective offices, located just off Exchange Court). Brigadier-General Ormonde Winter, head of the Intelligence Service, led the interrogation. Subsequently it emerged that the three had been shot that night while in custody. There was unease in Dublin Castle about the event, as it looked as if the prisoners had been shot out of hand. Mark Sturgis, the senior official there, noted in his diary that it was *'a strange and possibly unpleasant affair.'* Basil Clarke and his Public Information Bureau prepared an official account which explained how the prisoners had been placed in the guardroom, as prison accommodation was full. It described how army material was stored there — quantities of guns and grenades. It continued: *'the three prisoners suddenly rose to their feet and the sentry turned round on hearing the noise. One of the prisoners had a Mills bomb in his hand which he had abstracted from a box of bombs under his bed.'* He threw it at the guard, but it did not detonate. Next the prisoners grabbed a rifle and a shovel and fired at their guards, who killed them in an exchange of fire.

It was widely believed in Ireland that they had been tortured to extract from them the names of the assassins of that morning and summarily murdered. There was extensive bruising on the bodies, with multiple bullet wounds. The official story was patently ludicrous: why had the prisoners been held in a location with guns and grenades strewn around? Accordingly, the Castle press office had to shift up a gear, to bend the truth about the three prisoners shot on their own doorstep. They hit on the idea of staging a re-enactment of the events, purporting to show how the prisoners had tried to escape. The 'Daily Graphic' duly published photographs under the heading *'How the three Sinn Féin leaders were shot.'* The first shows the three 'prisoners' sitting quietly in a corner while the 'captors' (a mixed bunch of Auxiliaries and military) lounge around. The second photograph shows the escape: armed Auxiliaries lurk behind a bed while a prisoner grasps at the barred window. The caption concluded with *'a fierce struggle ensued in which the guards quickly gained the mastery, all the three desperadoes being*

Left: photographs in 'The Graphic' periodical recreate the events where prisoners were shot dead in Dublin Castle on the night of 21 November tries to show how the prisoners 'tried to escape and were all three shot dead'.

killed within a few moments.' The press statement and re-enactment worked. The British and international press, in the main, reported the official version uncritically. Not so the 'Manchester Guardian', which wondered why the prisoners would attempt to escape, given that if they had managed to get away from the guardroom, *'the position of the guard at the main gateway meant that they would face the certainty of instant death.'*

A mere week after Bloody Sunday, the British cause in Ireland was rocked once again. At Kilmichael, Co. Cork, the 3rd West Cork Brigade flying column under Tom Barry ambushed two Crossley tenders full of Auxiliaries travelling from Macroom. By the end of the action 16 Auxiliaries lay dead. Ironically, in the edition published just a week before Kilmichael, the 'Weekly Summary', endeavouring to show that the IRA had lost its appetite for ambushes, had included the *'Ruminations of a Republican',* where an IRA Volunteer was bemoaning his lot: wet ditches, the cold and the danger — and also, how the well-armed police were responding by killing ambushers. The supposed Volunteer finished with the plaintive cry *'Why does the Commandant order it?'* In the event, the ambush proved to be a stunning victory by IRA guerrilla fighters over an elite paramilitary force — and it was one of the key incidents which shook the British authorities to their core as they prosecuted the war.

In recent decades the Kilmichael ambush has suffered, if anything, from over-analysis, based on tendentious or false evidence. The present-day controversy hinges on why all the Auxiliaries had been killed. In explanation Tom Barry stated that some of the Auxiliaries made a false surrender, resulting in his men being shot by other Auxiliaries — and no quarter was given after that. The American military historian, WH Kautt, concluded that the most likely scenario was that some Auxiliaries did indeed call out a surrender, but that others, out of sight or hearing, may have been reloading and fired when they saw the Volunteers move from cover. (In the encounter on 20 February 1921 at Clonmult, Co. Cork, 12 IRA men lay dead by the end of the action. The British later contended there was a false surrender. Strangely, this event, called 'Kilmichael in reverse' has not garnered the same exhaustive analysis as the Kilmichael ambush.)

It is interesting that at the time, the British propaganda system did not make any mention of the 'false surrender' hypothesis. A Military Court of Inquiry held at Macroom took evidence from Dr Jeremiah Kelleher of Macroom who had carried out the examination of the bodies of the Auxiliaries. (Coincidentally, his son, District Inspector Philip Kelleher had been assassinated by the IRA at Granard, just weeks before, on 31 October). Dr Kelleher reported on the extensive bullet and other wounds found on the bodies. In one case he noted that a skull wound was inflicted after death by an axe or some similar heavy weapon. In another, he concluded that fractures of the head had been caused by a heavy blunt instrument and inflicted after death. He did

Above: after the scenes of blood and flames — a burnt-out Crossley tender lies in the bleak and remote Kilmichael countryside. The British soon propagated the story that the dead Auxiliaries had been mutilated by the IRA 'fiends' using axes.

not specifically mention mutilation, but the District Inspector of the Auxiliaries, Lieutenant Hampshire, who had arrived at the scene the following day, gave his opinion that *'all bodies were badly mutilated'*. The military court accepted Hampshire's evidence (as opposed to Kelleher's more detailed examination) and concluded that the Auxiliaries *'were ambushed...and wilfully murdered and mutilated by some persons unknown. In most cases they were murdered after being wounded'*.

The encounter had indeed been intense and bloody — there had been close-quarter combat with bullets, bayonets, Mills bombs and rifle butts. Barry was characteristically forthright in giving details of the bloody encounter in his book, 'Guerilla Days in Ireland'. He recounted: *'the Auxiliaries (were) firing their revolvers at the IRA, who were pouring lead into them. Some of the Auxiliaries were now fighting from the road and the fight became a hand-to-hand one. Revolvers were used at point blank range, and at times, rifle butts replaced rifle shots. So close were the combatants that in one instance the pumping blood from an Auxiliary's severed artery struck one attacker full in the mouth before the Auxiliary hit the ground. The Auxiliaries were cursing and yelling as they fought, but the IRA were tight-lipped, as ruthlessly and coldly they outfought them... Once I got a side glance of (John Nyhan's) bayonet being driven through*

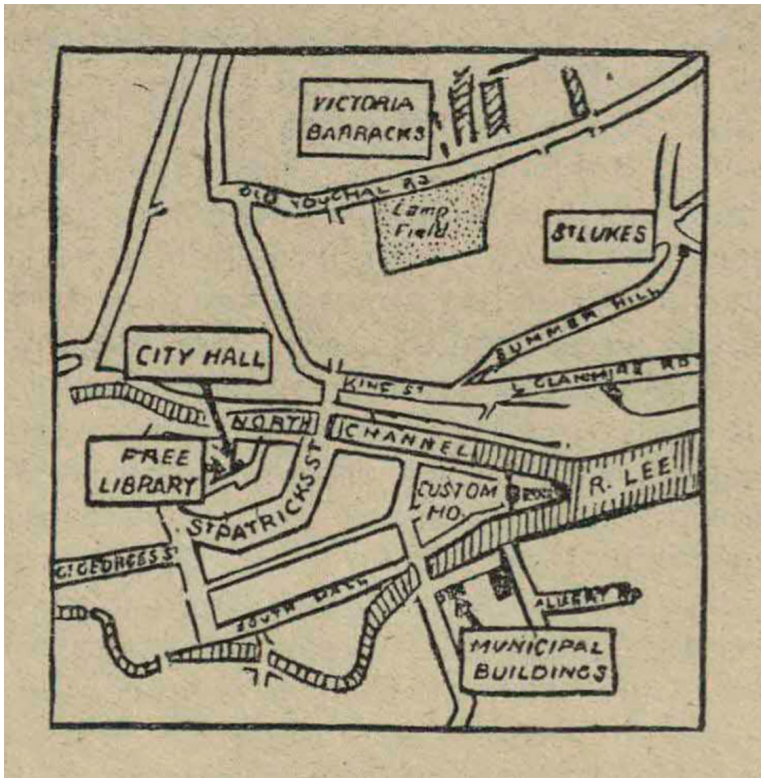
an Auxiliary...' Such was the ordeal, that in the aftermath *'a few (Volunteers) appeared on the point of collapse because of shock'*, so he ordered them to drill and march to cause them to be *'jerked back to their former efficiency.'* As they set the two Crossley tenders ablaze, it must have appeared as a scene from a particularly dramatic Greek tragedy. Barry continued: *'Like two huge torches, they (the tenders) lit up the countryside and the corpse-strewn blood-stained road, as the Flying Column marched up and down, halted, drilled and marched again between them.'*

The remoteness of the area and the subsequent prohibition of journalists from entering the Macroom area meant that the British were able to maintain full control of the narrative. It provided Basil Clarke and his associates with an opportunity to manipulate the news and depict the IRA as brutal savages. On 2 December in a report in 'The Times', under the headline *'Murdered Cadets, Mutilation with Axes'*, a *'senior officer of police in the Cork neighbourhood'* gave details, including: *'The dead and wounded were hacked about the head with axes, shotguns were fired into their bodies, and they were savagely mutilated.'* Exposing the depravity of the enemy was meat and drink for the irrepressible 'Weekly Summary' which, in its 10 December 1920 edition, referred to Kilmichael under the headline *'Murder and Mutilation'* and compared the deeds of the IRA to atrocities by the Turks, describing them as *'fiends and not men*' whose behaviour was *'bestial.'*

Kilmichael and the 'axe' trope were used to justify the imposition of martial law across most of the south-west of Ireland, as signed by Lord French on 10 December. A statement was issued by Dublin Castle detailing the counties where it would apply and declaring that Crown forces had suffered *'repeated murderous attacks'* specifically referring to the 16 Auxiliary cadets who were victims of *'ambush, massacre and mutilation with axes.'* Barry was not one to let the accusations of barbarity continue unchallenged. In his book, 'Guerilla Days in Ireland', he vigorously responded to the allegation about axes that had been mentioned in the Martial Law Proclamation: *'The foulest of all British weapons has ever been "atrocity" propaganda. No axe was in possession of the IRA and no corpse was interfered with. The mutilation allegation was a calumnious lie.'*

On the night of 11 December 1920, Auxiliaries on a patrol were ambushed at Dillon's Cross in Cork City. One was killed. The Auxiliaries had been on edge after the recent Kilmichael ambush, and Dillon's Cross turned out to be the tipping point. A crowd of Auxiliaries headed for the city centre and began an orgy of drunkenness and looting. As civilians fled, the burnings began. The mayhem continued and Cork's centre was devastated. Twenty stores were burnt on Patrick's Street and 35 premises wrecked in the side streets. By 4 am the City Hall was ablaze.

The events were difficult to justify in any country, not to mention the fact that they had been inflicted by the forces of law and order in the supposed 'United' Kingdom. However, 'Cometh the hour, cometh



Left: fake geography. The map of Cork as published in the 'Daily Chronicle' of 13 December 1920 depicts the City Hall as having moved north of the south channel of the Lee and now located close to Patrick's Street, which had been set on fire. This neatly chimed with Hamar Greenwood's dissimulation that fire had spread to the City Hall from Patrick's Street (as opposed to the reality that Auxiliaries had separately torched the building.)

the man'— Sir Hamar Greenwood, master of dissimulation, took up the mantle when on 13 December 1920 he informed the Commons that he protested most vigorously *'against the suggestion...that these fires were started by the forces of the Crown'*. He continued: *'Every available policeman and soldier in Cork was turned out at once and without their assistance the fire brigade...could not have (done) the work that they tried to do.'* In reality, as the Fire Brigade struggled to put out the flames, they were intimidated by the Crown forces. Hoses were cut by bayonets and deliberately run over by lorries. Firemen were shot at and two were wounded.

This destruction in Cork proved desperately embarrassing for the British administration. As evidenced by Sir Hamar Greenwood's statement, a major attempt to engineer the news was required. Greenwood had also stated that *'despite the best efforts (of the Fire Brigade) the flames spread to a number of buildings including the City Hall, Carnegie Library...'* Later in the Commons debate, Greenwood emphasised that the *'City Hall and the Free Library were not fired but were burned down by the spread of the fire...'*

The first building on Patrick's Street, Grant's Department Store, had been torched around 9.30 in the evening. No natural spreading of a fire would have cause it to leap over the south channel of the River Lee, and thence to City Hall, a distance of around 500 metres. In fact, later on in their rampage, the Auxiliaries travelled to the hall and deliber-

Right: 'The Illustrated London News' could always be relied on to repeat the British version of events. On the front page of the 18 December 1920 edition, it shies away from reporting the culpability of the Crown forces — instead it reports that the fires 'were evidently the work of incendiaries, but of what faction it is impossible to say'.

THE ILLUSTRATED LONDON NEWS

REGISTERED AS A NEWSPAPER FOR TRANSMISSION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND TO CANADA AND NEWFOUNDLAND BY MAGAZINE POST.

No. 4261—VOL. CLVII. SATURDAY, DECEMBER 18, 1920. ONE SHILLING.

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THE BURNING OF CORK: DEVASTATION IN THE HEART OF THE CITY AFTER A NIGHT OF FIRE.

A new scene in the Irish tragedy was enacted on the night of Saturday, December 11, when fires broke out at several points in the central part of Cork. They were evidently the work of incendiaries, but of what faction it is impossible to say. The City Hall, the Corn Exchange, the Carnegie Free Library, and many important business premises—some three hundred buildings in all—were destroyed. The total damage was estimated at over £3,000,000. On the next day many people left the city, fearing fresh trouble. At the request of a deputation of citizens, General Strickland, the officer commanding the district, posted military patrols in the streets, with orders to shoot looters. On December 14 it was announced that martial law had been proclaimed in the counties of Cork, Tipperary, Kerry, and Limerick. Our illustration shows ruined buildings in Patrick Street, the chief business thoroughfare of Cork.

PHOTOGRAPH BY L.N.A.

ately set it on fire around 4 am — a 'Cork Examiner' reporter had said how a fireman had told how he had seen men in uniform carrying cans of petrol into City Hall.

With perfect timing, on 13 December the 'Daily Chronicle' published a map which coincided with Hamar Greenwood's dissimulation that the City Hall had not been fired, but had gone on fire due to the flames that had spread from Patrick's Street. The map depicted an inter-


La Tribuna Illustrata

La caccia alle jene fra le rovine di Cork

Durante l'incendio di Cork, in Irlanda, — incendio che ha distrutto in breve ora oltre trecento case della storica città nordica — la truppa ha dovuto affrontare e disperdere numerose bande di saccheggiatori che attorno all'immenso braciere depredavano i cadaveri e frugavano fra le rovine che le fiamme avevano abbandonato.

(*Disegno di* E. Asso)

PD CTB VHS: T82502

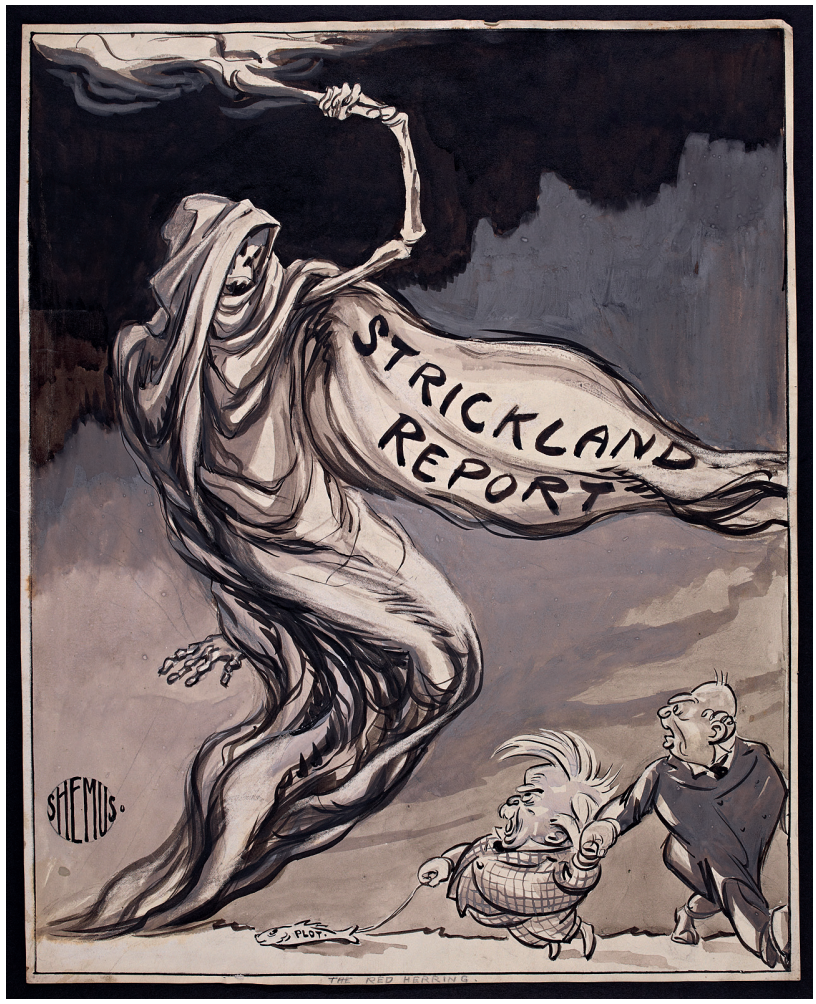
Left: 'La Tribuna Illustrata' accepted the official British line that troops were defending the city. It says that in the 'historic…city the troops had to…disperse looters'.

esting but geographically impossible version of Cork city: the City Hall had now been moved to the north of the south channel of the River Lee and was shown conveniently within a spark's distance of Patrick's Street.

Reliable as always, the 'Morning Post' assumed that the burning was the work of Sinn Féin. As we have seen with the 'Battle of Tralee' affair, 'The Illustrated London News' could also be relied on to swallow everything official. In the 18 December edition, it noted that the fires *'were evidently the work of incendiaries, but of what faction it is impossible to say.'* A Topical Budget newsreel maintained the mystery, with scenes of the destruction, and the intertitle ran: *'Ireland's Agony. Desolation follows Mystery Fires in Cork.'*

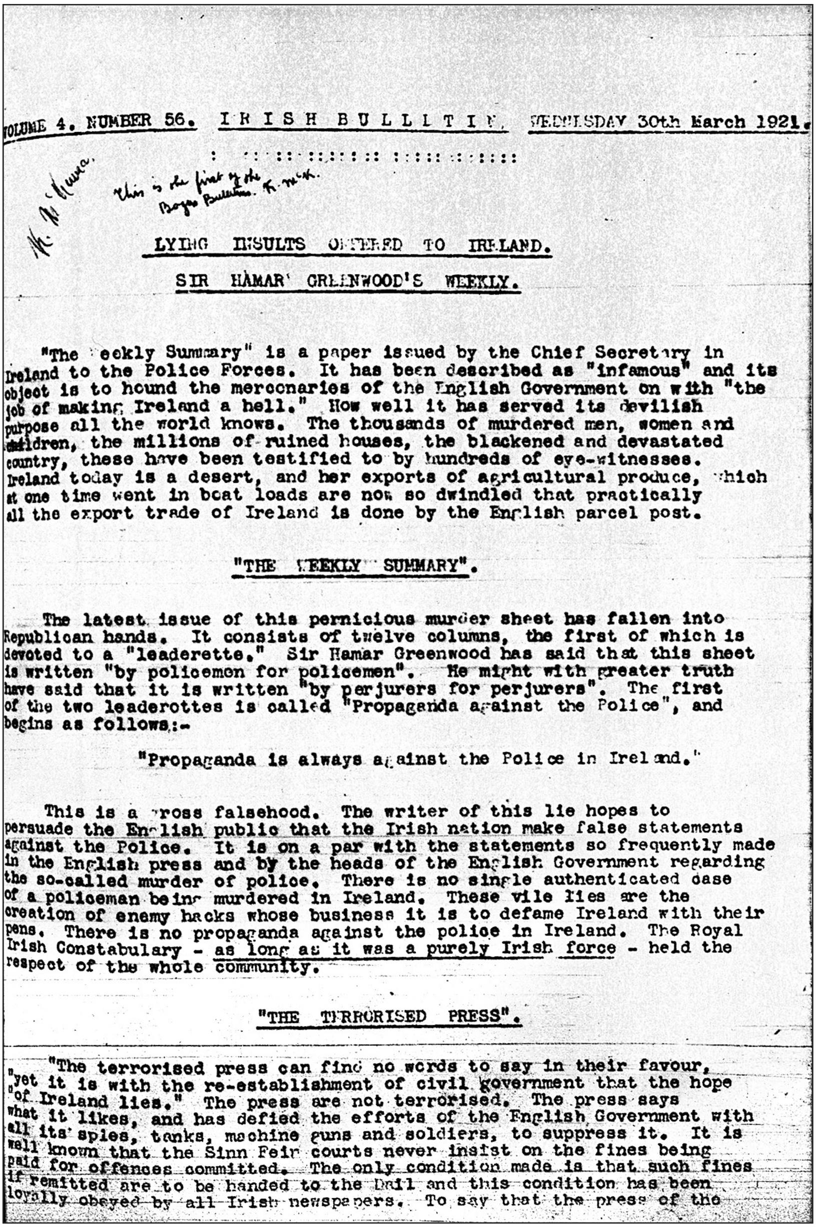
Some of the continental press accepted the British narrative of events. 'La Tribuna Illustrata' accepted the official British line that troops were defending the city. In a depiction of a fracas between

Right: the cartoonist Shemus depicts the 'Strickland Report' on the burning of Cork as a spectral danger to the Government — Lloyd George and Hamar Greenwood look on, shocked. Lloyd George dealt decisively with the report, which told the truth about the burning of the city by the Auxiliaries – in February 1921 he decided not to publish it.



looters and troops the caption says that in the *'historic city, the troops had to disperse looters.'* The 'New York Times' reported on the huge property loss and how large parties of Auxiliaries had marched through the streets, holding up pedestrians, following an ambush of their colleagues. There was an element of *briathar saor* (the passive voice in Irish) in the report, though: *'Cork is swept by incendiary fires.'* There was no direct statement as to who did this, although it was possible to infer who. Eventually the real nature of the Crown forces' actions seeped through. Many British newspapers reported on the evident truth. 'The Times' and the 'Catholic Herald' were both disapproving and shocked. The 'Daily Herald' reported that there was *'abundant evidence that the fires were started by the forces of the Crown.'* The 'Manchester Guardian' called the events in Cork *'the crowning wickedness of the reprisals campaign*.'

A wide-ranging army enquiry was held under Major-General Strickland (Commander of the 6th Division, based at Victoria Barracks, Cork) — it reported in February 1921. Known as the Strickland



VOLUME 4. NUMBER 56. IRISH BULLETIN. WEDNESDAY 30th March 1921.

LYING INSULTS OFFERED TO IRELAND.

SIR HAMAR GREENWOOD'S WEEKLY.

"The Weekly Summary" is a paper issued by the Chief Secretary in Ireland to the Police Forces. It has been described as "infamous" and its object is to hound the mercenaries of the English Government on with "the job of making Ireland a hell." How well it has served its devilish purpose all the world knows. The thousands of murdered men, women and children, the millions of ruined houses, the blackened and devastated country, these have been testified to by hundreds of eye-witnesses. Ireland today is a desert, and her exports of agricultural produce, which at one time went in boat loads are now so dwindled that practically all the export trade of Ireland is done by the English parcel post.

"THE WEEKLY SUMMARY".

The latest issue of this pernicious murder sheet has fallen into Republican hands. It consists of twelve columns, the first of which is devoted to a "leaderette." Sir Hamar Greenwood has said that this sheet is written "by policemen for policemen". He might with greater truth have said that it is written "by perjurers for perjurers". The first of the two leaderettes is called "Propaganda against the Police", and begins as follows:-

"Propaganda is always against the Police in Ireland."

This is a gross falsehood. The writer of this lie hopes to persuade the English public that the Irish nation make false statements against the Police. It is on a par with the statements so frequently made in the English press and by the heads of the English Government regarding the so-called murder of police. There is no single authenticated case of a policeman being murdered in Ireland. These vile lies are the creation of enemy hacks whose business it is to defame Ireland with their pens. There is no propaganda against the police in Ireland. The Royal Irish Constabulary - as long as it was a purely Irish force - held the respect of the whole community.

"THE TERRORISED PRESS".

"The terrorised press can find no words to say in their favour, yet it is with the re-establishment of civil government that the hope of Ireland lies." The press are not terrorised. The press says what it likes, and has defied the efforts of the English Government with all its spies, tanks, machine guns and soldiers, to suppress it. It is well known that the Sinn Fein courts never insist on the fines being paid for offences committed. The only condition made is that such fines if remitted are to be handed to the Dail and this condition has been loyally obeyed by all Irish newspapers. To say that the press of the

Left: one of the forged editions of the 'Irish Bulletin' written by Captains Pollard and Darling of Dublin Castle (The begetters of the 'Weekly Summary'). This forged edition contains convoluted argument and palpable nonsense (regarding the 'Weekly Summary' and the RIC). It is difficult to see how the pair thought anyone would treat the purported newsletter seriously — or that it emanated from Sinn Féin.

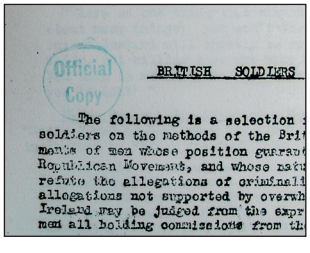
Report, it determined that while the Army and the RIC did their job efficiently that night, the Auxiliaries were to blame. This conclusion, to pardon the pun, proved incendiary for the British Cabinet. On 15 February, Lloyd George managed to deflect the embarrassment through a masterful performance in the Commons. Yes, he agreed, there had been acts of indiscipline on the part of the auxiliary force. *'Seven of (the particular company which was involved)...have been dismissed.'* As to publishing the report: *'if we publish the report of one inquiry, there is no reason why we should not publish every report.'* And that was it, the Strickland Report was not published.

On Wednesday March 30th, Dublin Castle began the daily issue of forged copies of THE IRISH BULLETIN. The officials at Dublin Castle were not aware on this date that Vol. 4. No. 56 had appeared as usual on Tuesday, March 29th, and the first copy of the forged BULLETIN dated March 30th bears the same numbering. It is typed on a new typewriting machine fitted with pica type. As the machine was new there is no internal evidence in the script itself that the identical machine taken in the "Government lorry" from the Republican Publicity office was used. The second forged issue dated "Thursday 31st March 1921" and numbered "Vol. 4 No. 59" is typed on the machine fitted with elite type. This machine, as it happened to be in use for a year, had developed certain characteristics. These were most marked in the typing of the word "Ireland" in which the alignment of the letters was faulty; the "I" and "r" striking low, the "e" high, the "l" in its correct position, the "a" lowered slightly and close to the "n" and the "n" and "d" in their correct alignment. These peculiarities reappear in the forged issues. Other marks such as the faulty alignment of the capital "T" and small "h" when these letters occur together, and the distinctive striking of the "e" and "a" place it beyond doubt that the identical machine taken to Dublin Castle from the Republican Publicity Department is being used in producing these ofrgeries. It is clear also that the faked BULLETINS are being printed on the "Roneo (Getstetner) duplicator" mentioned in the official report, and that the large stock of watermarked paper taken from the office is being used. These points are of importance in that Dublin Castle is evidently preparing a defence for its own action by introducing a small element of humour into its forgeries so that when challenged with them it can make a plausible pretence of mere practical joking "by some person or persons unknown." It is obvious, however, that the forgeries have a more sinister purpose. They are issued in

Above: the (real) 'Irish Bulletin' states how the issue of forged copies began on 30 March 1921 and continues with forensic detail on the irregularities to be found within these.

As we have seen, the Sinn Féin news-sheet, the 'Irish Bulletin', had built up an enviable reputation for accuracy. This was of course well appreciated by the Dublin Castle authorities. In his book 'The Secret Societies of Ireland', written in 1922, Hugh Pollard referred to the 'Irish Bulletin', as a *'malignant and lying sheet, issued in secret, but widely circulated to all parts.'* The handful of staff that produced the 'Irish Bulletin' was forced to lead a peripatetic life, moving offices frequently across different Dublin locations. On Holy Saturday, 26 March 1921, the Auxiliaries raided the office of the 'Irish Bulletin', then at Molesworth Street in central Dublin, and seized the typewriter and duplicator as well as the circulation list. According to the later Witness Statement by Kathleen McKenna (mainstay of the periodical), the Auxiliary raiding party brought the equipment back to their base in the London and North Western Hotel at North Wall. The seizure must have been manna from heaven for Captain Pollard. Immediately after the raid, he, together with Captain Darling, hit on the wheeze to use the captured equipment to issue fake versions of the 'Irish Bulletin' — and to send these to the addresses on the circulation list. The counterfeit issues contained blatant nonsense such as: *'18,321 enemy strongholds were taken by the Republican forces in the month of February.'* Another piece noted that *'the RIC held the respect of the whole community.'* A further article, attempting to blacken the credibility of Sinn Féin, called on Republicans to invent stories about British brutality.

Below: after the forgery, genuine copies of the 'Irish Bulletin' were stamped 'official copy'.


Official Copy

BRITISH SOLDIERS

The following is a selection
soldiers on the methods of the Bri
ments of men whose position guaran
Republican Movement, and whose nat
refute the allegations of criminali
allegations not supported by overwh
Ireland may be judged from the expr
men all holding commissions from th

The deception was soon discovered. On 7 April 1921, An MP in the House of Commons posed a question for the Chief Secretary *'whether the forged issues are being prepared and posted in any government Depart-*

ment in Dublin?' The reply was the usual denial of any knowledge of this. The redoubtable IPP MP, Jeremiah MacVeagh, followed up with the question: *'Is the right hon. Gentleman aware that the Government has admitted having forged newspapers in imitation of the 'Pravda' for circulation in Russia?' Is this a case of the Irish Office following the example of the Home Office?'* On 21 April the matter of the fake 'Irish Bulletin' was raised again in the Commons and an MP asked the authorities *'not to waste their money in sending me any more of their forgeries.'* The real 'Irish Bulletin' soon resumed publication: genuine copies were stamped 'official copy' in green ink. In her Witness Statement, Kathleen McKenna said that the production of the bogus bulletin was *'terminated when Michael Collins had bombs thrown into the… (London and North Western Hotel).'*

Now we look at the curious case of the 'Sinn Féin Typhoid Plot'. This, as it turned out, was the opposite of 'Fake News'. The basic facts were true, but when the British tried to publicise this, few believed them because of their reputation for propaganda. The affair started with a raid. Since his arrival in May 1920, Brigadier-General Ormonde de l'Épée Winter had injected a new vigour into the British intelligence system. Amongst other initiatives, he set up a Raids Bureau, which organised targeted raids in Dublin, based on intelligence sources. *'It is fortunate that the Irish had an irresistible habit of keeping documents. They would hide them in the most unexpected places, but they seldom evaded discovery by the trained sleuth…'* he wrote patronisingly in his autobiography. All captured documents that came into the Bureau were carefully analysed and inserted in a card index system. Winter claimed that in the period from October 1920 to July 1921 over 6,300 raids and searches were carried out in the Dublin District area (and we have already seen what occurred when the equipment of the 'Irish Bulletin' was seized in a raid in March 1921).

On Tuesday 16 November 1920, one such raid occurred at 5 am at the two-storey Victorian red-brick home of Michael Hayes at Longwood Avenue, just off the South Circular Road. IRA Chief of Staff, Richard Mulcahy, was in hiding there. (Mulcahy later recalled that from 1920 to the Truce in 1921 he had to stay in 25 places in Dublin while 'on the run'.)

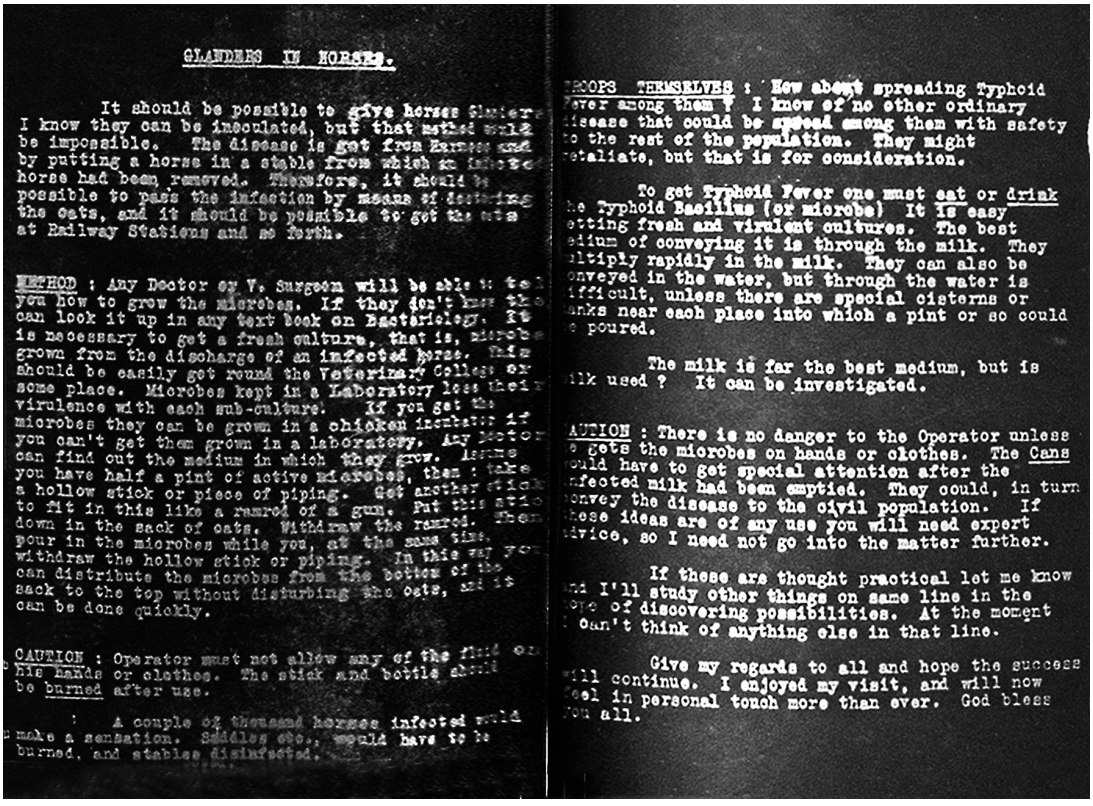
As the Crown forces began the raid, Mulcahy made a swift departure out the window over a wall and thence to a nearby house owned by a Jewish couple who sheltered him. He later departed by bicycle. Reports of the raid appeared in the press, including photographs purporting to show the Auxiliaries removing items that had been seized. According to the 'Irish Times' *'a man…escaped from a window in his shirt…A search of the rooms he had occupied revealed two brown leather attaché cases, full of papers.'* Raids, happening all over Dublin, were ten-a-penny and the Castle Press office or the newspapers got their facts mixed up — the photos used showed another raid in November that had occurred at 42 North Great Georges Street (home of the Socialist Party of Ireland and

REMOVING THE BLACK BOX WHICH CONTAINED THE NOTORIOUS TYPHOID PLOT PAPERS : SOLDIERS AT A HOUSE IN DUBLIN.

Above: removing the 'notorious Typhoid Plot papers' according to 'The Illustrated London News'. The periodical got it wrong — the photograph is of another raid.

various trade unions.) But what was particularly noteworthy was that various captions to the photographs referred to the Auxiliaries removing *'the black box which contained the notorious typhoid papers.'*

The British claimed that, during the raid, they had captured papers belonging to Richard Mulcahy. These included plans for a series of attacks in Britain, such as the bombing of Liverpool Docks, but the most shocking document found, they claimed, was one which proposed germ warfare against the British military. In the present era, that of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is easy to understand the alarm that this engendered. However there was also an immediate appreciation in Dublin Castle of the opportunities for propaganda. Mark Sturgis wrote in his diary: *'A raid last night on the house of the IRA Chief of Staff…has been productive of some amazing good stuff…the papers seized give evidence of the most thorough and complete plots to murder individuals, poison troops, horses, etc. – to blow up the Manchester Ship Canal, etc., etc. This will look good in print'*. Later he noted: *'The papers collected in the Mulcahy raid are absolutely smashing and should practically kill the English support for (Sinn Féin)…Hamar is delighted with this and will smash the debate with it next week.'* Brigadier-General Ormonde Winter underscored the importance of the documents when, on the same day the documents had been captured, he arranged to have them flown post-haste to London by an RAF Bristol BF.2b fighter. Sir Hamar



GLANDERS IN HORSES.

It should be possible to give horses Glanders I know they can be inoculated, but that method would be impossible. The disease is got from Earth and by putting a horse in a stable from which an infected horse had been removed. Therefore, it should be possible to pass the infection by means of dressing the oats, and it should be possible to get the oats at Railway Stations and so forth.

METHOD : Any Doctor or V. Surgeon will be able to tell you how to grow the microbes. If they don't know they can look it up in any text book on Bacteriology. It is necessary to get a fresh culture, that is, microbes grown from the discharge of an infected horse. This should be easily got round the Veterinary College or some place. Microbes kept in a Laboratory lose their virulence with each sub-culture. If you get the microbes they can be grown in a chicken incubator if you can't get them grown in a laboratory. Any Doctor can find out the medium in which they grow. Assume you have half a pint of active microbes, then : take a hollow stick or piece of piping. Get another stick to fit in this like a ramrod of a gun. Put this stick down in the sack of oats. Withdraw the ramrod. Then pour in the microbes while you, at the same time, withdraw the hollow stick or piping. In this way you can distribute the microbes from the bottom of the sack to the top without disturbing the oats, and it can be done quickly.

CAUTION : Operator must not allow any of the fluid on his hands or clothes. The stick and bottle should be burned after use.

: A couple of thousand horses infected would make a sensation. Saddles etc., would have to be burned, and stables disinfected.

TROOPS THEMSELVES : How about spreading Typhoid fever among them ? I know of no other ordinary disease that could be spread among them with safety to the rest of the population. They might retaliate, but that is for consideration.

To get Typhoid Fever one must eat or drink the Typhoid Bacillus (or microbe) It is easy getting fresh and virulent cultures. The best medium of conveying it is through the milk. They multiply rapidly in the milk. They can also be conveyed in the water, but through the water is difficult, unless there are special cisterns or tanks near each place into which a pint or so could be poured.

The milk is far the best medium, but is milk used ? It can be investigated.

CAUTION : There is no danger to the Operator unless he gets the microbes on hands or clothes. The Cans would have to get special attention after the infected milk had been emptied. They could, in turn convey the disease to the civil population. If these ideas are of any use you will need expert advice, so I need not go into the matter further.

If these are thought practical let me know and I'll study other things on same line in the hope of discovering possibilities. At the moment I can't think of anything else in that line.

Give my regards to all and hope the success will continue. I enjoyed my visit, and will now feel in personal touch more than ever. God bless you all.

Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland, could not wait to publicise the shocking document on germ warfare. On Thursday 18 November, he stated in the House of Commons: *'The following document was found in the papers belonging to the chief-of-staff of the Republican Army, which were captured during recent raids. There follows a series of remarkable and, I think, horrifying statements which refer to the spread of typhoid fever among the troops and glanders among the horses.'* However, the British had cried wolf too often — the immediate reaction from nationalist MPs was that it was a forgery. Joseph Devlin, leader of the IPP and member for Belfast Falls reacted: *'Was not the whole thing concocted in Dublin Castle? On the face of it the thing is a lie.'*

The press duly reported Hamar Greenwood's assertions, using headlines like *'Sinn Féin Plot to Spread Typhoid Among Troops.'* One piece in 'The Times' mused on the spread of glanders and recalled that *'on two occasions the Germans were found to be employing glanders against the British Army.'* One of these was the *'infection of a shipload of mules from Argentina to Mesopotamia.'* International newspapers picked up the story on the wire service. *'Says Irish Planned to Spread Microbes'* ran a headline in the 'New York Times' of 19 November.

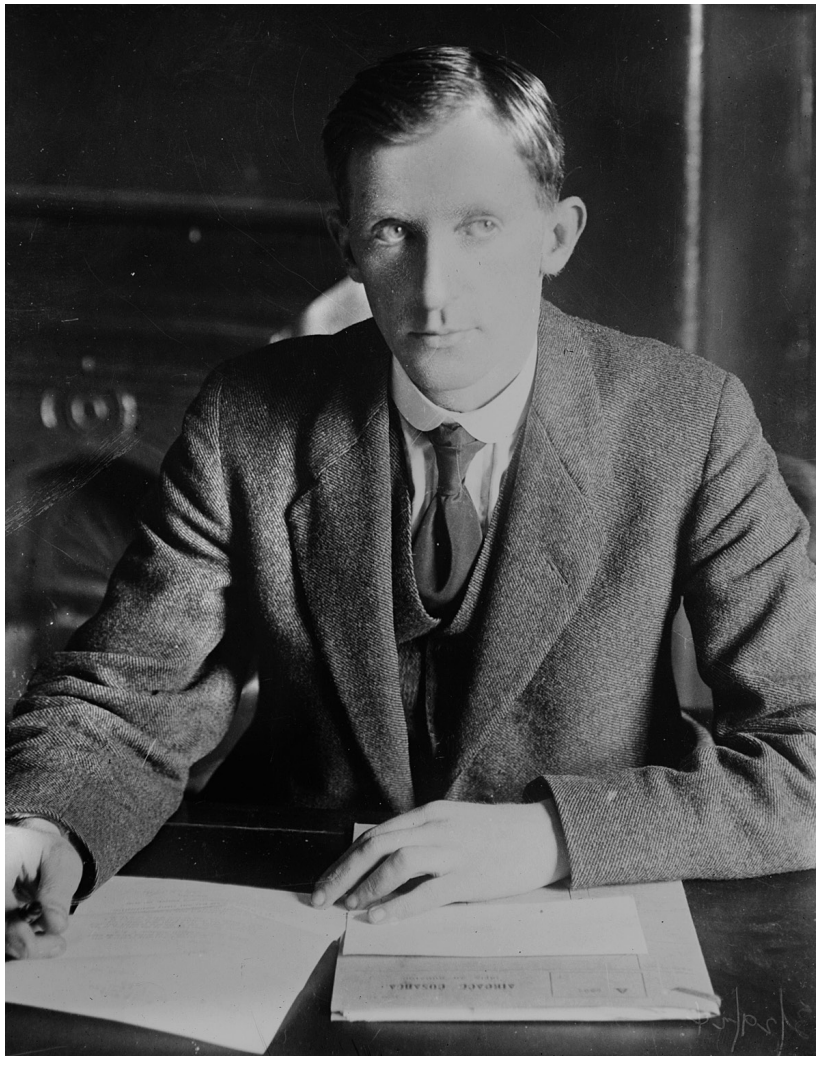
A certain level of panic set in. An *'alarming outbreak of typhoid'* in the Skibbereen district of West Cork was reported in newspapers on 25 November. This led to an investigation by the authorities, but no evidence was uncovered *'to connect the outbreak with the alleged plot by the*

Above: a copy of the document (in negative, the copying technology of the time), as presented by Hamar Greenwood, and printed in 'The Illustrated London News'. It starts off by telling how it should be possible to pass glanders by infecting the oats of British army horses. 'A couple of thousand horses infected would make a sensation', it adds. Then, 'how about spreading typhoid fever among the troops? — Milk is far the best medium.'
The author finishes with 'I will study other things on the same lines in the hope of discovering possibilities.'

Sinn Féin [sic] *to spread typhoid germs.'* Joseph Devlin's scepticism was an understandable reaction to any pronouncement by Dublin Castle, with its reputation for fakery, particularly when this revelation appeared to be at the more exotic end of supposed atrocity stories.

When asked by newsmen about subject of the alleged plot, Arthur Griffith said: *'The lie is so ridiculous that it is almost impossible to believe that the man who denied the burnings of towns in Ireland would venture to state it.'* The London correspondent of the 'Freeman's Journal' reported on 20 November that*: 'Nobody here takes seriously the 'Typhoid Plot'. (*He continued humorously: *'Everybody is interested in the story of the escape of the Sinn Féin Chief-of-Staff in his shirt. Dean Swift used to say that ten armed men could always beat one man in his shirt.')*

However, it turns out that the captured documents were genuine. For once, this was not Fake News – the IRA had indeed made plans to attack infrastructure in Britain and, at the end of November 1920, they burnt out a large number of warehouses in Bootle and Liverpool.



Right: meticulous and introverted — Richard Mulcahy who, on 16 November 1920, had to make a rapid departure from his safe house at Longwood Avenue in Dublin. He was Chief of Staff of the IRA, and despite the constraints of a clandestine life, endeavoured to give firm direction to the IRA during the War of Independence.

Left: Patrick McCartan, a TD and medical doctor, the originator of the document which proposed to spread typhoid and glanders.

The document on germ warfare was also authentic, but it was just an unsolicited discussion paper sent in by Dr Patrick McCartan, (a TD, medical doctor, and, at the time, Sinn Féin's representative in the USA). In an interview in 1962 Richard Mulcahy told of the raid at Longwood Avenue and explained how the document had come into his possession — and how the leadership had disregarded it. He recounted: *'Another of the papers was a thing that Pat McCartan had sent to Mick Collins showing how the horses of the British Military could be infected by glanders, and how the milk supplied to Dublin barracks could be infected by typhoid. Mick had written on Pat McCartan's note "this is your department!"… I had marked it up at the top "medical" and put it into the waste paper basket system. And this was a joke as far as Mick and myself were concerned…'.*

Just days after Hamar Greenwood's unveiling of the 'plot' in the Commons, on the morning of Sunday 21 November, the IRA assassinated British secret service officers across central Dublin, and the events of Bloody Sunday began. The assassinations, the shootings at Croke Park and the killings in Dublin Castle soon dominated the headlines. The British unquestionably would have made more of a propaganda meal of the 'plot', but a few days later they were overcome by the hammer-blows of Bloody Sunday, and other staggering events like Kilmichael and the burning of Cork. The alleged plans for germ warfare were forgotten. There was now new propaganda to be made and stories to be spun. And so, the 'Sinn Féin Typhoid Plot' faded from history.

Chapter 5
Conclusion

The spark of Irish independence had flared into brilliance during Easter 1916 in Dublin. The Rising was quickly suppressed, but the flames of the struggle for independence flickered once again as the internees from Frongoch and elsewhere in Britain were released. Sinn Féin gained new impetus and the Irish Volunteers regrouped. Growing public support translated into an overwhelming victory in the 1918 general election. The first Dáil held in January 1919 and the ambush at Soloheadbeg (coincidentally on the same day) heralded the political and military direction the struggle was to take over the next years. Sinn Féin, with a keen appreciation of the need to promote the cause of Ireland's independence, set up a Department of Propaganda. At the end of 1919 it established the 'Irish Bulletin'. Even through it was produced on a shoestring, this simple news sheet was circulated to influential people in Britain, the continent and elsewhere.

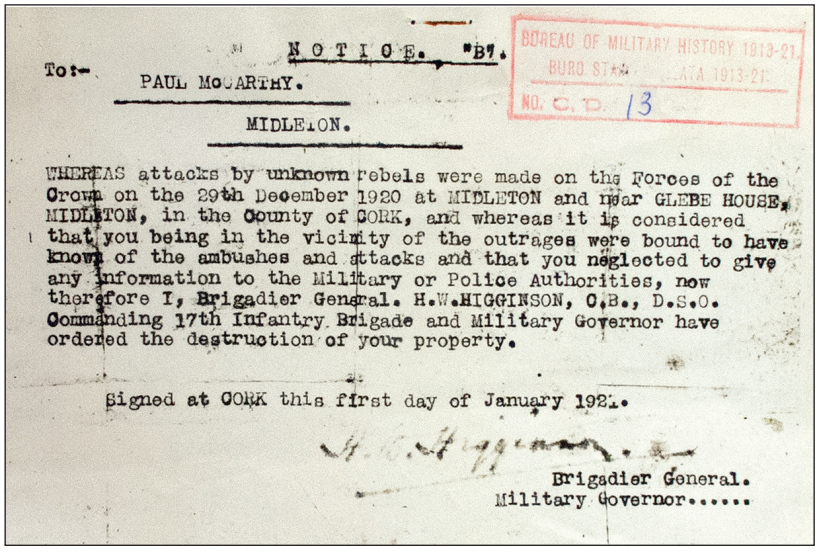
In early 1920, amidst growing disorder in Ireland, the British cleared out the Dublin Castle administration and assigned what they hoped were the brightest and the best to sort out the mess. General Macready and Major-General Tudor were expected to bring a new ruthlessness and application to the military and police, respectively. Propaganda was not neglected and several press offices were established. Great expectations would be had in this area as the British had built up much expertise in propaganda during WWI where they developed a comprehensive and efficient network which pumped out the British viewpoint across the world. Leading the new British propaganda effort in Dublin was Basil Clarke, an experienced newsman, who adopted the relatively sober approach of 'Propaganda by News'. Clarke did enjoy some success with events such as the Kilmichael ambush, a very remote location for journalists, where the British claim that the IRA attackers had used axes was widely reported in the British newspapers. Other new arrivals at the Castle included two Captains, Darling and Pollard, who formed the Information Section of the Police Authority. Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard, (who claimed authorship of the two most outlandish examples of Fake News during WWI, the 'Phantom Russian Division' and 'The German Corpse Factory') brought a decidedly new and racy approach to spreading the British interpretation of events. The Captains got down to producing the 'Weekly Summary', which described weekly incidents for circulation among the RIC and the press. From the outset, it adopted a strident, exhortatory tone. It suffered a basic structural problem — it was difficult to know who the target audience was. The

Irishmen in the Royal Irish Constabulary would not swallow such patent nonsense, nor would any of the Irish and international press that caught sight of it. In turn, it made the Sinn Féin 'Irish Bulletin', with its concise factual style, look good by comparison. For many journalists and politicians, this provided a more reliable source of information than that from Dublin Castle.

The second half of 1920 was marked by a rapid rise in attacks on the Crown forces. These in turn, responded with numerous reprisals. While Auxiliaries, Black and Tans and the British military rampaged through towns and torched buildings, Lloyd George and his Government turned a blind eye. As the conflict intensified, many international journalists arrived in Dublin to see for themselves. Those who contacted Sinn Féin were treated courteously and articles sympathetic to the cause of Irish independence began to appear in newspapers around the world. On 20 September 1920 the killing of two RIC men in Balbriggan, Co. Dublin, resulted in an orgy of violence by Auxiliaries who burned out scores of houses and other buildings. The sacking here brought the issue of reprisals sharply to world attention, helped by the simple fact that the town was close to Dublin and thus easy for journalists to visit.

The news continued to worsen for the British towards the end of 1920: the huge sympathy engendered for Terence MacSwiney, Bloody Sunday, and pivotal events like the Kilmichael ambush and the burning of Cork. Reprisals were made official in the martial-law areas at the start of 1921. Ambushes, large and small, continued across the country. May 1921 was punctuated by a 'spectacular' — the burning of the Custom House in Dublin.

Even as the Chief Secretary for Ireland, Sir Hamar Greenwood, stonewalled in Parliament denying press accounts of atrocities, there was unease in the highest levels, particularly in the Cabinet. There was a significant intervention when on 6 April 1921 the Bishop of Chelms-



NOTICE. "B".

To:- PAUL McCARTHY.

MIDLETON.

BUREAU OF MILITARY HISTORY 1913-21
BURO STAIR ...ATA 1913-21
NO. C.D. 13

WHEREAS attacks by unknown rebels were made on the Forces of the Crown on the 29th December 1920 at MIDLETON and near GLEBE HOUSE, MIDLETON, in the County of CORK, and whereas it is considered that you being in the vicinity of the outrages were bound to have known of the ambushes and attacks and that you neglected to give any information to the Military or Police Authorities, now therefore I, Brigadier General. H.W.HIGGINSON, C.B., D.S.O. Commanding 17th Infantry Brigade and Military Governor have ordered the destruction of your property.

Signed at CORK this first day of January 1921.

Brigadier General.
Military Governor.....

Left: in this notice, dated 1 January 1921, Brigadier-General Higginson informs Paul McCarthy that his property is about to be demolished (after an IRA ambush in Midleton just days before). Over the following months official reprisals across Munster became commonplace.

Above: the human face of reprisals. After an IRA ambush on 4 January 1921 at Meelin, Co. Cork, there was an official reprisal. Here, a woman stands with her furniture after the destruction of her home.

ford and 19 other Protestant churchmen sent a letter to 'The Times' condemning the reprisals policy and asking for a negotiated truce.

Despite the efforts of the press offices in Dublin and London, the British began to earn an international reputation for brutality in what was, after all, a part of the United Kingdom. The news of reprisals in Ireland was scandalous also to British public opinion generally. British exceptionalism harboured a self-image that the country stood for good sense, justice and fair play. The actions by the Crown forces struck at the very heart of this pride and self-regard. The loss of Britain's reputation and good name wounded deeply. It hurt when, in an article in February 1921 condemning the British atrocities, GK Chesterton wrote that *'the whole world thinks that England has gone mad.'*

The British were particularly sensitive to American opinion. Britain was in decline, and felt vulnerable to the United States and its growing influence and power. They saw the US President and Administration as susceptible to being swayed by millions of Irish-Americans, even though in reality the new President, Warren Harding, had no interest in Ireland. Some journalists in the US paid particular attention to Ireland and explained the Irish conflict with depth and insight — although most of the press there took a more neutral stance. A further blow to the British reputation was caused by the American Commission to Ireland whose damning conclusions in March 1921 included

We would extend our sympathy to the great British people. The army which is the instrument of their Government in Ireland would also seem to be the instrument of the destruction of that moral heritage which was their glory and which cast its luster on each and all of them. The sun of that glory seems finally to have set over Ireland. British "justice" has become a discredited thing. The official Black and Tans in Ireland compete for the dishonor of Anglo-Saxon civilization with our unofficial lynch mobs. And decent folk everywhere are shamed and scandalized that such things can still be in their day and generation. We welcomed the British Labor Report on Conditions

Left: an extract from the Interim Report of the American Commission to Ireland, issued in March 1921. It extended its sympathy 'to the great British people... The official Black and Tans in Ireland compete for the dishonour of Anglo-Saxon civilisation with our unofficial lynch mobs.' It was also of the opinion that it appeared 'that the Imperial British Army in Ireland has been guilty of proved excesses, not incomparable in degree and kind with those alleged...to have been committed by the Imperial German Army' in Belgium. The conclusions of the Commission were deeply wounding to the British imperial cause. This was even more so as the British were particularly sensitive to American opinion. Britain was in decline, and felt vulnerable to the United States and its growing influence and power.

the statement that the Irish people *'…are at the mercy of Imperial British forces which…have instituted in Ireland a "terror".'* It also concluded that *'it would appear ... that the Imperial British Army in Ireland has been guilty of proved excesses, not incomparable in degree and kind with those alleged, by the Bryce Report on Belgian atrocities, to have been committed by the Imperial German Army.'* This comparison was not only ironic, but also deeply wounding, given the strong and effective British campaign in the United States during WWI which promoted the concept that barbarities were carried out by the German Army. It was also wounding and damaging in the passages where the Commission extended its sympathy *'to the great British people... The official Black and Tans in Ireland compete for the dishonour of Anglo-Saxon civilisation with our unofficial lynch mobs.'* That begetter of the Auxiliaries, Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for the Colonies, advised his Cabinet colleagues in May 1921 that it was time for a respite in Ireland, as the news from there was damaging *'the interests of this country all over the world; we are getting an odious reputation, poisoning our relations with the United States.'*

The two press offices in Dublin Castle were the Public Information Branch (under Basil Clarke) and the free spirits of the Information Section of the Police Authority. In addition there was a press office at the Irish Command Army Headquarters at Infirmary Road, under General Nevil Macready. Sometimes these offices worked together but on many occasions they did their own thing. There were tensions — General Macready, in particular, harboured misgivings about Basil Clarke's competence, while Clarke was of the opinion that soldiers were not good at propaganda. Over the course of the War of Independence the British propaganda system was fragmented, lacking a sense of direction — and, thanks to Captain Pollard and his colleagues, often unbelievable. However, the British message was not totally lost. Much of the British and the world's press reported Clarke's output, verbatim, without any analysis. However, as the War of Independence increased in intensity, the British had to push against the grain: the underlying narrative of atrocities by Crown forces was so blatant and obvious, that an impression of British brutality seeped through, almost by osmosis.

Right: as 1921 rolled on, reprisals continued. The 'Irish Bulletin' lists IRA actions on the left and, on the right, the resulting reprisals.

The British propaganda efforts in WWI had clearly outshone those of the Germans. However during the War of Independence, this situation was totally reversed. Sinn Féin, through their Propaganda

Official Copy

THE SYSTEM OF INDISCRIMINATE REPRISALS.

HOW IT WORKS IN PRACTICE.

The following are some peculiarly vivid and striking instances of reprisals in Ireland carried out, not "officially" — though these are brutal and cowardly enough— but with all the licence and excess of men inflamed against the nation by Government publications, and given to understand that whatever they do no punishment will fall upon them. Mr. Lloyd George denies that any such system of indiscriminate reprisals was ever instituted, but it is in daily operation in Ireland. It will be seen from the incidents given in the parallel columns below that an attack by Republican troops upon British Constabulary and Military is regularly followed by assassinations and arson on the part of the Crown Forces. The district in which the attack upon them has been made is visited at night by parties of undisciplined men, fully armed and often drunk. The scenes that result may be imagined from the incidents cited. These are merely a selection of scores of similar acts committed throughout Ireland during the last three months.

Ireland and England are at war. The British Government has itself declared a state of war. Irishmen attack only the armed forces of the British Crown and its spies and paid informers. The British forces, not only attack the Irish troops, but wreak vengeance upon the non-combatant population. Crown Forces frequently refuse action when engaged by armed Republicans, but some hours later, under cover of darkness, they carry terror, death and rapine among the population of the districts in question.

Jany. 18th. 9.40 a.m. Auxiliary Police Patrol attacked by I.R.A. at Headford, Co. Galway. Six Auxiliary Cadets wounded.

Jany. 26th. 10 p.m. Constables Thos. Heffron and M. Quinn, R.I.C. shot dead in Roddy's Hotel, Belfast.

Jany. 31st. 10.20 p.m. Capt. King, Co. Inspector, R.I.C., wounded at Mallow, Co. Cork. His wife accidentally shot dead.

Feby. 2nd. 3 p.m. Auxiliary Police Patrol attacked by I.R.A. at Ballinalee, Co. Longford. District Inspector and two cadets killed; nine wounded.

Feby. 9th. 9.30 p.m. Constable Mullahy shot at and wounded by I.R.A. at Abbeydorney, Co. Kerry.

Feby. 10th. Clondrohid Bridge, three miles from Macroom, Co. Cork, blown up by members of I.R.A.

Feby. 20th. George Lester, R.I.C. agent, of Rosslea, Co. Fermanagh, fired upon and wounded by I.R.A.

Jany. 18th. 7.30 p.m. Thomas Collins of Keelkill, near Headford, murdered by Auxiliary Police; 11 p.m. Eleven residences, shops and farmhouses destroyed by fire. Many persons arrested and illused.

Jany. 22nd. 12.50 a.m. Michael Hood, James Kirwin and Wm. Walsh, all of Headford district, murdered by constabulary. Three other houses burned.

Jany. 27th. 12.50 a.m. Michael Garvey, chemist, a well-known Republican, shot dead in his home at Bray St., Belfast, by Constabulary. Houses of other Republicans raided, but men not at home.

Jany. 31st. 11 p.m. Railway workers at Mallow Railway Station rounded up by Constabulary, ordered to run and fired upon. James Bennett and Daniel O'Mullane killed; Partrick Daitt mortally wounded. Five others wounded.

Feby. 3rd. Afternoon. Michael Farrelly of Ballinalee, aged 70, murdered by Crown Forces at the scene of previous days' action. Farrelly's house then destroyed.

Feby. 9th. 12 midnight. Nine shops, residences, outhouses and crops on many farms destroyed by Constabulary at Abbeydorney. Many men beaten in their homes.

Feby. 11th. 4.30 a.m. Daniel Mahony, aged 17, shot dead at Clondrohid, by Crown Forces for "failing to halt."

Feby. 21st. Nine houses destroyed; twenty-seven damaged at Rossles, Co. Fermanagh by Special Constabulary.

Left: a Shemus cartoon depicts Sir Hamar Greenwood and General Nevil Macready. Entitled 'Perhaps?', it depicts a woman offering them a go at 'Reprisals'.

Department, had opened channels which engaged with newsmen and decision-makers and their reasoned message proved clearly superior to the Dublin Castle-originated propaganda. This was despite the difficulties of having to manage with miniscule resources while being obliged to operate clandestinely. Sinn Féin told the truth (albeit while holding back on embarrassing news such as the execution of the small number of women spies) and their narrative was strong and clear: a struggle for independence, underpinned by a parliament and a legitimate counter-state, in the course of being established.

By mid-1921, the British Cabinet vacillated between a drive to intensify the war and the urge to negotiate a truce. The military option was an unpalatable one that involved extending martial law over the whole country and flooding it with troops. Viscount FitzAlan, the Lord Lieutenant, captured the mood when he wrote *'the general view (was that) now it must be peace or real war and no fooling.'* As the Cabinet well knew, any increased military action was difficult in the glare of publicity. As the stories of violence by the Crown forces continued to flood the press, both in Britain and internationally, the British had no

Right: a 'spectacular'. The burning of the Custom House in May 1921 was one of pivotal actions of the War of Independence which demonstrated the continuing potential of the IRA. The sum of the pinprick small ambushes across the country, the significant spectaculars like the Kilmichael ambush and this one, added up to an enduring quagmire for the British. This, plus the odious reputation garnered from the reprisals, forced them to negotiate a Treaty.

option but to enter into talks. On 24 June 1921 Lloyd George invited Éamon de Valera and James Craig, the northern premier, to go to London to explore the possibility of a settlement. In response, de Valera called a conference for 4 July in Dublin to discuss Lloyd George's proposal. Prime Minister Craig refused to come. De Valera, 'spokesman of the nation', as he described himself, met the southern Unionists at the Mansion House in Dublin. General Macready met de Valera on 8 July and terms for a truce were agreed. In the months that followed, negotiations led to the Anglo-Irish Treaty of December 1921, which resulted in a limited form of independence for the 26 counties — very definitely not a Republic. The Dominion status which was granted under the Treaty was the principal cause of the Civil War, which broke out six months later.

Did the Fake News issued by the British make any difference? The answer is a definite 'no'. The bending of news such as the dissembling on the burning of Cork by the Auxiliaries did gain some initial currency. However, the outlandish stuff such as the staged 'Battle of Tralee' and the issuance of the forged 'Irish Bulletins' was soon exposed. Propaganda is only effective where it is believable. As the historian Ian Kenneally called it, this was 'slapstick propaganda'. The originators, such as Captain Pollard, were not the sharpest quills in the ink pot — they totally misunderstood the Irish situation and were full of impe-

Above: de Valera and colleagues, en route to London for negotiations, July 1921.

rialist racist nonsense about the 'natives'. Some of their stories were accepted by the loyalist press like the 'Morning Post', which would tolerate anything that accorded with a jingoist world-view. In many cases, the mainstream news media possessed a built-in ability to detect absolute nonsense.

Even Basil Clarke was aware of the poor message he had to sell — he knew that public opinion would never accept the story of the forces of law and order burning buildings and terrorising innocent people. He acknowledged this in a memo (which self-servingly blamed the message, not his own propaganda methods): *'the fault is not that of the propaganda but of the subject of the propaganda. It is a bad case, and no propaganda will win a public sanction for it.'*

As mentioned, much of the British spin was indeed disseminated worldwide. However, most of the hyper-fake news had a very short half-life, and indeed its exposure tended to emphasise the malfeasance of its originators. In the end, the general international perception of the situation in Ireland was based on undeniable facts — British reprisals and atrocities. Faced with worldwide opprobrium, Lloyd George and his Cabinet blinked, and were forced to negotiate.

Appendix

The Aftermath

Back in distant The War of Independence ended with the Truce of 11 July 1921. Six months later, a Treaty was signed, whereby the British granted the 26 counties Dominion status — not a Republic. This led to the bitter Civil War of 1922-23. A hundred years after the British left the southern part of a partitioned island, we take a brief look at how the main protagonists in the last chapter of imperial rule in Ireland fared. Some, bestowed with the usual accolades of the British honours system, faded into history. A few continued as they had in Ireland, pushing against the boundaries.

Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland, and stout stonewaller in the House of Commons on British atrocities in Ireland, never held Government office again. The author Tim Pat Coogan has colourfully claimed that, after Greenwood's service in Ireland, his name *'was to pass into Irish folklore — "telling a Hamar"— as a synonym for lying.'* Perhaps wisely, after his less than stellar performance in Ireland, he maintained a relatively low profile and was ennobled as Baron Greenwood in 1929.

The clever new brooms that had been sent to Dublin Castle in early 1920 received their just deserts. Sir John Anderson, Under-Chief Secretary for Ireland, enjoyed a notable career. After serving as Governor of Bengal from 1932 to 1937, he was elected as MP and served under Churchill as Home Secretary during WWII. He was the begetter of the effective 'Anderson' shelters, which were used by civilians to take refuge from German bombs. Anderson was Chancellor of the Exchequer from 1943 to 1945 and in 1952 was granted a hereditary peerage, as Viscount Waverley. Of the two Assistant Under-Secretaries, Andy Cope was awarded his knighthood in 1922 and that vigorous diarist, Mark Sturgis, received his a year later.

Major-General Hugh Tudor continued in command of the Auxiliaries and the RIC until their disbandment in early 1922. His friend Winston Churchill (then Secretary of State for the Colonies) came to his rescue and assigned him to another imperial hot spot. Tudor was appointed supremo of all British forces in Palestine: General Officer Commanding and Inspector-General of Police and Prisons. Once again, he raised a police force run along semi-military lines, this time the British Section of the Palestine Gendarmerie, which served along with a locally recruited Gendarmerie. He enlisted many former RIC (including Black and Tans and Auxiliaries), who in July 1922, according to one account, made up around 70% of the British section.

Left: a Shemus cartoon depicts Hamar Greenwood holding a small Union Jack. Against the background of Greenwood's reputation for dissimulation, the caption had ironically commenced with Greenwood saying: 'This flag stands for justice, truth and freedom — freedom of speech and freedom of the press...'. Greenwood maintained a low profile after his Irish service and was ennobled as Viscount Greenwood in 1937.

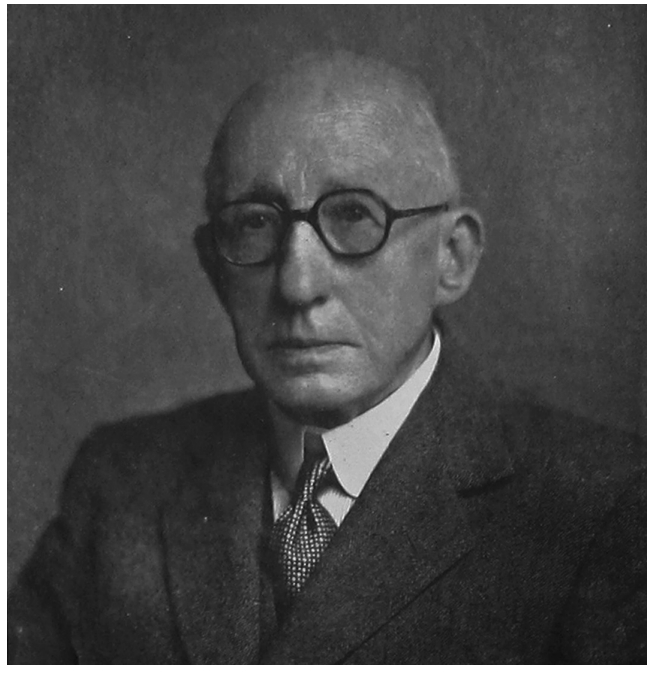
Once more, this new force established what has been called *'a notorious reputation for ruthlessness.'* Tudor received his knighthood in 1923. His tenure in Palestine was not marked by any particular success and he left there in 1924, retiring to Canada. The spymaster, Brigadier-General Sir Ormonde de l'Épée Winter, was made director of the agency for resettlement of the RIC. His friend, Major-General Tudor, wanted to appoint him as deputy Chief of Police in Palestine, but was frustrated by the army, who wanted their own candidate. There were other failed attempts by Winter, a restless soul, to provide his skills to others. It was paradoxical that, given his experience in trying to suppress revolution in Ireland, these new positions were potentially in support of insurgency or upheaval. Winter offered his services to an intermediary who was recruiting for the Berber leader, Abd el Krim, who was leading a major rebellion during the 1920s in the Rif Mountains against the Spanish occupation of northern Morocco. In the event it did not come to anything. He was also consulted by Slovak nationalists, then plotting

a rising against the government of the newly-hatched Czechoslovak Republic — this fizzled out when a prominent conspirator was arrested.

Back in London, Winter became involved in the senior ranks of the British Fascisti, an anti-socialist group, who, inspired by Mussolini's movement, had adopted the Italian name. Many adherents shared the ideals of the Legion of Frontiersmen (see Chapter 2) and were enthused with hyper-loyalty to the Empire. Several splits and a regrouping followed and, a decade afterwards, numerous members ended up in Oswald Mosley's British Union of Fascists.

Winter's appointment as spymaster in Dublin in 1920 had been an unlikely one, given that he was an artillery officer with no intelligence experience. Equally unlikely, given his participation in the ranks if the British Fascisti, was his role as Director of Communications to the International Board for Non-Intervention in Spain over the period 1938-39. In any case, the net effect of this so-called international 'non-intervention' was that Italy and Germany were able to send high-grade assistance to Franco's forces; the legitimate Spanish Government was starved of support, save that from the Soviet Union. Toothless and useless, the Non-Intervention Board's mission was at an end in February 1939, when both France and Britain recognised Franco's Government as victor of the Civil War.

Not for Winter to fade away into the quiet retirement of old age. At the end of November 1939, the Soviet Union launched a broad attack along the Finnish frontier. The British Government, desirous of gaining command over the strategic challenges in Scandinavia (such as the issues of Swedish neutrality and supplies of iron ore), decided to support the Finns. Using the precedent of the non-intervention arrangements

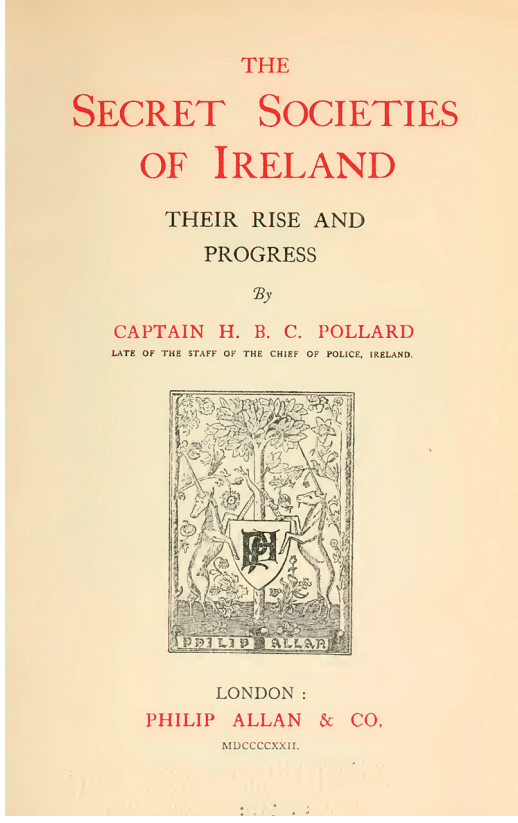


Right: spymaster Brigadier-General Sir Ormonde de l'Épée Winter enjoyed a varied career after his service in Ireland. Despite being aged 65, in March 1940 he joined the British contingent of the International Volunteer Force to Finland.

Left: a stirring poster for the Finland Fund (predecessor of the Finnish Aid Bureau, a front for British Government intervention) in the war against the Soviet Union that broke out at the end of 1939.

during the Spanish Civil War, the British Cabinet in January 1940 decided to intervene militarily, using the sophistry that the units sent were 'volunteers'. A Finnish Aid Bureau was set up to recruit volunteers to fight in Finland and raise money. It was in effect a facade for the British Government — the Director who was appointed, Harold Gibson, was a high-ranking member of the Security Intelligence Service (MI6) who had been involved in running a spy network in the Soviet Union. Brigadier-General Winter, despite being aged 65, volunteered his services and was sent to Finland to command the British volunteers. However, he fell seriously ill on board ship en route. On arrival in

Right: Major Hugh Bertie Pollard. In the years following his departure from Ireland, he was – variously – a sportsman, journalist and spy.



Right: after his time in Ireland, Pollard emerged as a self-styled expert on Irish matters. In this 1922 book he outlined how the recent epidemic of murder and crime 'is a problem of the Irish race, and is neither a by-product of politics nor of environment, but is rooted in the racial characteristics of the people themselves.'

Finland in March, Winter had to be hospitalised at Tornio (the receiving point for volunteers). In the event, Finland and the Soviet Union signed a peace treaty on 12 March 1940 and the British volunteers, amounting to around 200, returned home without having engaged in combat. Winter died in 1962. An army colleague wrote a tribute in the 'The Times' noting that: *'He had many of the qualities of a gentleman adventurer of the middle ages, who feared neither God nor man.'*

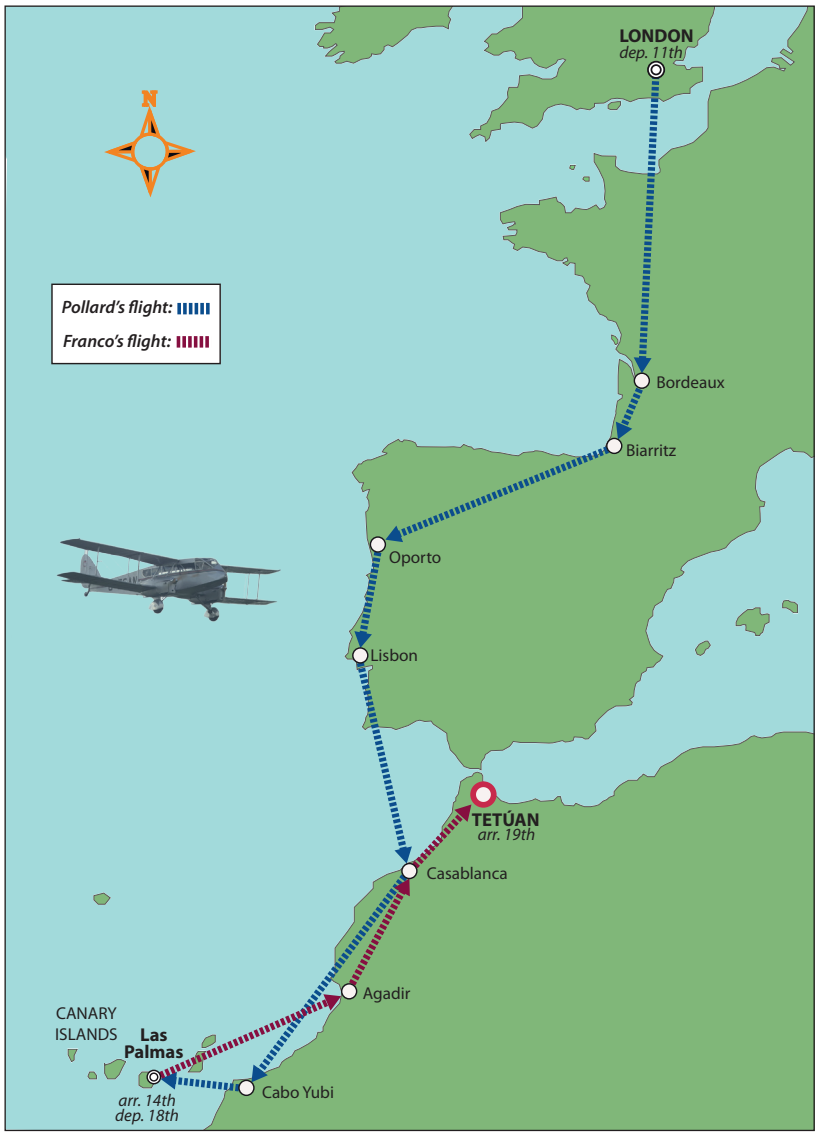
And what of the subsequent lives of those in Dublin Castle's shady press world? We first look at the career of the man who was principally responsible for staging the Vico Road events: Captain Hugh Bertie Pollard. As we saw, he had freewheeled along the edges of imperial adventure before WWI. On his return to England in 1922, Pollard became an instant expert on the nearby, but wild and exotic, island called Ireland. In that year he wrote a book entitled 'The Secret Societies of Ireland: Their Rise and Progress'. His interpretation and views were decidedly odd and highly racist. In the introduction, referring to the recent *'epidemic of murder and violent crime',* this savant pointed out that the Irish problem *'is a problem of the Irish race, and is neither a by-product of politics nor of environment, but is rooted in the racial characteristics of the people themselves'.* He continued with his theme: *'The root of the matter lies in the inability of the Gael to conceive the abstract fetish of Law as it appears to the Briton and the other dominant northern races'.* He also helpfully added: *'The student of Irish social history is, therefore at length confronted by the question —"what proportion of the Irish, if not congenitally criminal, is yet racially disposed to crime?"'* Claiming that the book was based on extensive research in archives and on confidential material including that seized in raids, he included a miscellany of appendices giving information on matters such as Fianna Éireann and the constitution of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Appendix C in the book rises to the heights of fantasy when he tells of a pamphlet that was intercepted which gives a version of the *'Sinn Féin Oath'* (Pollard explains that this *'has been stigmatised by Sinn Féiners as a forgery...but I do not think that it is...A phrase here and there may have been changed or amended during the passage of the centuries...I think that it is unmistakably the oath form of an Irish Secret Society*'). The oath as presented is indeed very sanguinary — here the aspiring member of Sinn Féin swears to almighty God a variety of terrifying things including the undertaking *'to fight until we die, wading in the fields of Red Gore of the Saxon Tyrants…'* and *'when the English Protestant Robbers and Beasts in Ireland shall be driven into the sea, like the swine that Jesus Christ caused to be drowned, we shall embark for and take England…'.* The extraordinary thing is that (unlike the multitude of Fake News stories that he had concocted during WWI and the War of Independence) Pollard presumably believed this nonsense, having published the book under his own name.

Pollard threw himself into the usual pastimes of a gentleman of his class, indulging his interest in firearms, pursuing small furry animals

in the season and visiting his mistress of long standing in London. He wrote several books on guns and hunting and was sporting editor of 'Country Life' magazine.

During the 1930s, Spain seethed with tensions between left and the right. In February 1936, a left-wing coalition, the Popular Front, narrowly won the general election. In the months that followed the right conspired, planning to overthrow the Government. The Spanish multi-millionaire Juan March (who had started off as a tobacco smuggler, and who was responsible for what has been called *'spectacular corruption'*) provided the necessary funds for a coup. A nervous Government, viewing General Francisco Franco y Bahamonde as a potential coup leader, had placed him as far away from the mainland as possible, and assigned him as military governor of the Canaries. Franco, a veteran of the Rif wars in Spanish Morocco and of the bloody suppression of striking Asturian miners, had built up a strong reputation amongst the military. The plotters saw it as essential to get Franco to the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco to lead the uprising there. To transport him it was decided to charter an aircraft in Britain and Juan March provided £20,000 to cover the cost. Britain was a leading aviation centre at the time and the conspirators had many contacts with right-wing circles there. In early July, Luis Bolín, the correspondent of the Spanish monarchist newspaper 'ABC' (later to be appointed Franco's chief press officer and orchestrator of the rebel propaganda during the Civil War) began to make arrangements. For the flight to North Africa, Bolín hired from Olley Air Services, a de Havilland Dragon Rapide aeroplane and crew, who were based at the main London air terminal at Croydon. The Rapide was a

Below: on display in the Museo del Aire, near Madrid, the de Havilland Dragon Rapide which transported Franco from the Canaries to Spanish Morocco. To give cover for the clandestine mission, Hugh Pollard, his daughter and her friend flew in the plane from Croydon to the Canaries.



Left: the eventful flight of the Dragon Rapide in July 1936, from Croydon, near London, to Las Palmas in Gran Canaria, carrying Pollard's party. Days later, with Franco on board, the plane flew to Tetúan.

twin-engine biplane that could accommodate six passengers, and was popular with airlines. (Aer Lingus' first flight in May 1936, between Dublin and Bristol, was in a Dragon Rapide called the *Iolar*.)

On 9 July 1936, Bolín, accompanied by Juan de la Cierva (aeronautical expert and inventor of the autogyro, the predecessor of the helicopter) had lunch at the London restaurant, Simpson's in the Strand, with Douglas Jerrold. (The latter was a committed Catholic, editor of the High Tory journal 'The English Review' and a sympathiser with fascist movements in Europe. Jerrold was also a director of the publishers, Eyre and Spottiswoode. In 1920, in a seeming aberration, these had published the infamous anti-Semitic forgeries 'The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.')

Jerrold later recounted that Bolín had told him that — to provide cover for the proposed mission — he needed *'a man and three platinum*

blondes' to join the flight and pretend to be tourists. Jerrold immediately thought of his friend Major Pollard and phoned him — *'the job was Pollard's by rights, for he had experience of Moroccan, Mexican and Irish revolutions…And he knew Spanish.'* Always up for adventure, Pollard agreed and sourced as companions, not three platinum blondes, but his daughter Diana, aged 19, and her friend Dorothy Watson. The eagle-eyed Jerrold noted that Dorothy *'kept her cigarettes in her knickers. She couldn't, she explained, afford a handbag'* and concluded that *'obviously she was the type that went to Africa.'*

The party departed Croydon aerodrome on the morning of 11 July, piloted by a former RAF officer, Captain Cecil Bebb. Their route brought them via Bordeaux, Oporto, Lisbon and Casablanca. Finally at 2 p.m. on 14 July the Dragon Rapide landed at an aerodrome near Las Palmas in Gran Canaria. It has been suggested that British intelligence and the Foreign Office knew of the escapade and had been tracking the progress of the Dragon Rapide. Captain Bebb later noted that while he was awaiting Franco in Gran Canaria, the British consul showed up and *'passed very favourable comments on the mission I was about to take part in.'* At that time Franco was at his headquarters at Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Pollard, entrusted with secret papers for Franco, took a ferry to Tenerife, accompanied by the girls. There he met Franco's cousin at Santa Cruz and handed over the papers. However, Franco had a problem — to leave his post in Tenerife, he would need authorisation from the Ministry of War in Madrid. The difficulty was solved when General Balmes, commander in Gran Canaria (a government loyalist, who had refused to join the conspiracy), conveniently shot himself in the stomach while on a shooting range. The historian Paul Preston has written that recent research has shown that Balmes was murdered. Franco sailed to Gran Canaria, arriving on 17 July (Pollard and the girls were also on the boat), supposedly to be the main official mourner at the funeral.

On the morning of 18 July, as the first uprisings against the Government broke out across Spain, Franco and his supporters seized Las Palmas. The previous evening, the garrisons in Ceuta, Melilla and Tetúan, the principal cities of the Spanish Protectorate in Morocco, had also revolted. Franco then flew from Las Palmas in the Dragon Rapide, via Agadir to Casablanca. As the party rested for the night in a hotel there, Franco, in an effort to remain incognito, shaved off his distinctive moustache. This led to the later jibe by his fellow-conspirator General Quiepo de Llano (who had an uneasy relationship with Franco) that *'it was the only thing Franco had sacrificed for Spain.'* At 4 am on 19 July the Dragon Rapide set off once again and landed at the Sania Ramel military air base at Tetúan, capital of the Protectorate. (The previous day, Franco's cousin, Major Ricardo de la Puente Bahamonde, commander of the base, had refused to join the rebellion and was subsequently executed). Franco took command of the Army of Africa. This was the most professional and effective division of the Spanish

Left: a medal of the Imperial Order of the Yoke and the Arrows. Versions of this Falangist decoration were later awarded by Franco to those who had flown on the Dragon Rapide — the pilot, Pollard and the two girls.

military, and included Franco's old comrades in the Legión Española as well as the Regulares, the Moroccan units of fearsome reputation. The rebellion spread throughout the Spanish mainland, and within days the rebels had gained control of around one third of the country. Franco, who originally had been only one amongst many rebel commanders, immediately began to assert himself as the principal leader. He set up press and diplomatic offices in Morocco, and press communiques soon referred to him as 'supreme commander'. And so the sanguinary Spanish Civil War developed and was to end with Franco's total victory in the spring of 1939.

On 24 July 1936, Pollard and the two girls returned to Britain, sailing in the Royal Mail Lines ship, the 'Highland Brigade', which had called at the Canaries, en route from Brazil. Franco did not forget the fateful Dragon Rapide flight and his English helpers. Bebb and Pollard were later awarded the Imperial Order of the Yoke and the Arrows (a Falangist decoration); the two girls each received a lower rank of the same decoration. The Dragon Rapide was later presented to Spain and is still on display at the Museo del Aire at Cuatro Vientos Airbase, near Madrid. Pollard's reputation with regard to Spain continued — in January 1937, in an article on the events in Spain, 'Life' magazine called him the 'Spanish Pimpernel' of the Civil War.

In the late 1930s Pollard had been a member of the Secret Intelligence Service (SIS). This proved beneficial to him in 1939, when the Kent home of Mrs Dacre Fox, an ardent fascist supporter, was raided by police searching for evidence of funds flowing from Nazi Germany to Mosley's British Union of Fascists. They found Pollard's name in her address book. He was being considered for arrest but, learning that he was a member of SIS, MI5 instructed their local agent to lay off him. In January 1940, Pollard was appointed by MI6 as head of its 'Section D' ('D' for 'destruction' — its mission was to engage in sabotage across German-occupied Europe) in Madrid. The result of Pollard's drink problems and reputation for indiscretion was that he lasted less than a year in this post — his services were dispensed with later in 1940.

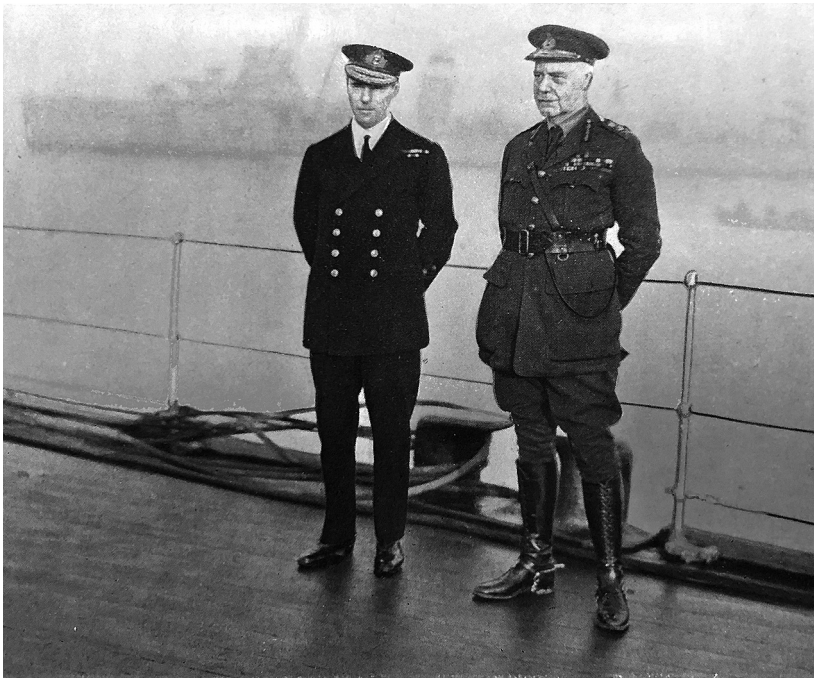
Pollard remained committed to Franco's cause. After the indiscriminate bombing of Guernica at the end of April 1937, when the town was razed by the Luftwaffe Condor Legion and the Italian Aviazione Legionaria, resulting in hundreds of civilian dead, he wrote a letter to 'The Times' which contended that the bombing was not an attack on an unimportant civilian town, but that it was a centre of arms production and thus a legitimate target, noting that the Basques *'are simply reaping what they (had) sown.'* Pollard died in 1966, still supporting Franco's regime to the end.

Compared to Pollard, the rest of the Dublin Castle press gang enjoyed more prosaic careers, although generally more successful ones. His colleague in the Information Section of the Police Authority, Captain William Darling, returned to the family drapery business and received a CBE in 1923. He rose to high political office, becoming Lord Provost of Edinburgh in 1941, and was knighted two years later.

Basil Clarke, who did not succeed in coordinating or controlling the British propaganda effort in Dublin, received his knighthood in 1923. He subsequently established the first public relations agency in the United Kingdom, Editorial Services Ltd — it secured prominent clients such as Heinz and the Lyons food and restaurant chain. In what was a case of poacher turned gamekeeper, in 1930 he developed the first code of conduct for the public relations industry. Undoubtedly an expert after his time at Dublin Castle, he now weighed in against the *'hidden persuaders'* who practised black propaganda. His code of conduct promoted ethical standards and transparency, and decried stunts that would be used to deceive the press or the public.

That mastermind (with Pollard) of the Vico Road stunt, Captain George Garro-Jones, became London editor of the 'Daily Dispatch' in 1923. The following year he was elected MP and duly climbed the political ladder, chairing important Government quangos, and in 1947 was ennobled as Lord Trefgarne.

We finish our look at the protagonists of British rule in Ireland with General Sir Cecil Frederick Nevil Macready, he of stern mien, who had always maintained a no-nonsense military approach. Throughout the War of Independence he had been distrustful of the press and



Left: at Kingstown, General Macready and Admiral Fox on board the 'HMS Dragon' at Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire). As he was departing from Ireland in December 1922, shaking the dust of that benighted place off his feet, in an inadvertent piece of Fake News, a newspaper had the effrontery to suggest that he was Irish.

contemptuous of Basil Clarke and his Public Information Branch. In July 1921, he had negotiated the details of the Truce with de Valera. After the Treaty of December 1922, as the nascent Provisional Government struggled to establish mastery during the Civil War, Macready remained in charge of the 5,000 British troops who were confined to barracks in an arc around Dublin. He continued to reside in the Royal Hospital in Kilmainham. In December 1922, confident that the Free State Government was winning the Civil War, the British decided to make their final withdrawal from the 26 counties. On 17 December 1922, Macready made his last review of the troops and left for Kingstown (Dún Laoghaire), where he received the honour of a 17-gun salute and departed on the cruiser 'HMS Dragon'. Even at that last moment, the press in Ireland got it wrong, and made a shocking allegation about Macready — an inadvertent bit of Fake News perhaps? In his memoir, he described the happenings on the pinnace of the warship as he stood there with Admiral CH Fox, most likely elated to be at last shaking the dust of that benighted island off his feet: *'We had to submit to that modern infliction of being photographed together by an ubiquitous pressman, but it came as a shock to me, two days later to see the picture in a Dublin paper, headed "Two Gallant Irishmen". To anyone who knows the Admiral's record the adjective was certainly well applied in his case, and I was only too happy to share his reflected glory, though I was not aware that he claimed the nationality of the land we left. I certainly never had, the only drop of Irish blood in my veins having filtered through from a grandfather who was born in the days of George II.'*

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Glossary

ADRIC	Auxiliary Division of the Royal Irish Constabulary. Recruiting for this paramilitary force began in July 1920.
Black and Tans	A nickname (after a name used for the beagles of the Scarteen Hunt, Co. Limerick) applied to the (mostly British) ex-servicemen recruited to the RIC from early 1920 onwards. They were initially clad in a mixture of khaki and green uniforms, due to a shortage of RIC uniforms.
Bloody Sunday	On 21 November 1920 the IRA set out to assassinate British spies in Dublin. That afternoon Crown forces fired on the crowd at a football match at Croke Park. Later that night, three men in custody in Dublin Castle were 'shot trying to escape'. Thirty people died that day, with several others dying later of their wounds.
Dáil Éireann	The first Dáil (assembly or parliament) met on 21 January 1919. It was established by Sinn Féin MPs (who won a majority of Irish seats) elected to the UK parliament in the December 1918 UK general election.
Easter Rising	Advanced nationalists seized central parts of Dublin on Easter Monday, 24 April 1916 and declared an Irish Republic. It took a week for the British military to wrest back control. The leaders of the Rising were executed shortly afterwards.
Flying Column	Permanent units of the IRA engaged in fighting the guerrilla war, usually operating from remote areas in the countryside. These were established after August 1920.
'German Plot'	In April 1918 the British erroneously became convinced that Sinn Féin was plotting with the Germans. In May 1918 there was a roundup of the senior leadership of Sinn Féin.
GHQ	General Headquarters.
Information Section of the Police Authority	The press section of the Police Authority, established by Major-General Hugh Tudor soon after his arrival in Ireland at the end of May 1920. It was staffed by the free-spirited Captains, Hugh Pollard and William Darling.
Irish Bulletin	A newsletter issued by the Sinn Féin Department of Propaganda.
IRA	Irish Republican Army, which had its origins in the Irish Volunteers established in November 1913. During Easter 1916, as the Irish Citizen Army and Irish Volunteers fought as a combined force, James Connolly had used the term 'Irish Republican Army'. The term came into general use at an early stage of the War of Independence. It is a title that has had many claimants over the past century.
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood. A secret oath-bound society, prepared to use force to establish an independent Irish Republic, which represented the continuation of the Fenian tradition. The organisation dissolved itself in 1924.
Irish Volunteers	A nationalist militia founded in November 1913 at the Rotunda in Dublin to 'secure the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland'. After the outbreak of WWI in 1914, as the Redmond majority departed with the objective of supporting the British war effort, the remaining radical nationalists, effectively under the IRB, reorganised and made plans for a rising.
MI7	A department of the British Directorate of Military Intelligence which covered overall propaganda and censorship.
MI7.b	A section of MI7, established during WWI, which dealt with foreign and domestic propaganda. As well as issuing a mountain of propaganda articles, members of the section were responsible for initiating the biggest hoax of WWI, the so-called 'German Corpse Factory'.
Pathé News	A newsreel company founded by the French pioneers, the Pathé brothers. Its London branch was founded in 1910. Along with other newsreel companies such as Topical Budget, they covered the various phases of the Irish Revolution from 1916 to 1923. Given the unwieldiness of, and the time needed to set up, their camera equipment, the cameramen were frequently embedded with the police or military. Hence the news they presented was the 'official' version.
Public Information Branch (PIB)	The information section with headquarters in Dublin Castle, established in July 1920. Directed by Basil Clarke, it also had a branch at the Irish Office in London.
RIC	The Royal Irish Constabulary, an armed police force in Ireland (outside of Dublin), in existence up to 1922.
Sinn Féin	Nationalist movement founded in 1905, under the leadership of Arthur Griffith, who wished to establish a national legislature in Ireland. Griffith and the organisation did not participate in the Rising, despite it being dubbed the 'Sinn Féin Rising' at the time. It was restructured in 1917 to take a more radical nationalist and republican direction.
TD	Teachta Dála (a deputy elected to Dáil Éireann).
Truce	The Truce of 11 July 1920 — under its terms, the British were to end manoeuvres, raids and searches. The IRA were to cease attacks on Crown forces.
'Typhoid Plot'	After seizing papers belonging to the IRA Chief of Staff, Richard Mulcahy, on 16 November 1920, the British claimed (to widespread disbelief) that amongst these was a document proposing germ warfare against the British Military. The document was genuine — it did indeed propose spreading typhoid among the troops. However, it turned out much later that it was a unsolicited paper from a Sinn Féin supporter, and had been destined for the wastepaper bin.
War of Independence	Generally regarded as commencing on 21 January 1919 (the day of the Soloheadbeg ambush and coincidentally the same day the First Dáil was held). The war between the Crown forces and the IRA grew in intensity throughout 1920 and only finished when a Truce came into effect on 11 July 1921.
Weekly Summary	A weekly newsletter produced, from 13 August 1920 onwards, by the Information Section of the Police Authority, based in Dublin Castle. It was circulated to the RIC with the intention of boosting their morale. It was also available to the press, many of whom pointed out its strident tone and blatant incitements to reprisals.

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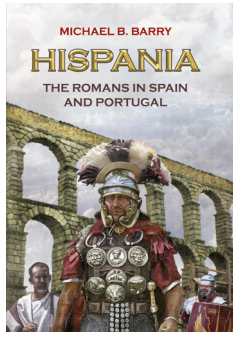
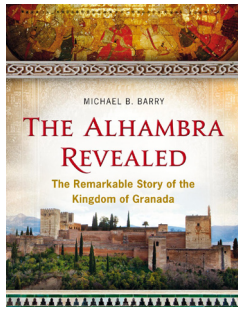


Hispania, the Romans in Spain and Portugal

The landing by Roman soldiers on the Iberian Peninsula in 218 BC, in what they called Hispania, heralded a conquest which took two centuries to complete. As the peninsula's riches flowed back to the imperial city Hispania developed into the most favoured of all the Empire's provinces. In this masterly book, Michael B. Barry, using a wealth of full-colour images, tells the story of the six centuries of the Roman presence in Spain and Portugal.



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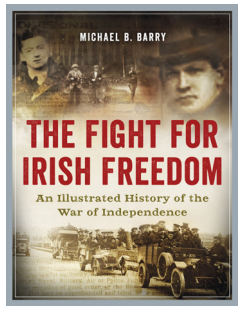
The Alhambra is one of the world's great monuments. Within this palace complex is an array of buildings which contains outstanding examples of Islamic architecture. Richly illustrated, this book is essential not only for those visiting the Alhambra, but also for those who wish to explore the history of the Kingdom of Granada.



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